

**Restart the ‘World’ with Revolutionary Ruptures: Imagining Identity  
through War & in Crisis – Apocalyptic Rhetoric & the American Civil Religion**

by

Sarah Sharp

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Post Doctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario

© 2021  
Sarah Sharp

## **Abstract**

The response to 9/11 involved appealing to apocalyptic rhetoric to capitalize on the affective chaos following the tragedy to discursively mobilize actors while engaging in historical (re)imagining of the state. This thesis uses Benedict Anderson's concept of Imagined Communities as it concerns national/historical-time to expand upon Paul Fussell and Lillie Chouliaraki's work on the War Imaginary. It demonstrates how the operative value of myth mirrors and is serviceable to the discursive-reconstitution of the state in times of crisis and how individual self-understanding emerges via Narrative Identity. The major mythic structures that provide the source of authority to American self-understanding include: the American civil religion and the American culture-wars. Crisis compels identification to make sense of unfamiliar events according to one's origin myth; adaptive 'editing' for familiarity permits those in-crisis to shape/eliminate anything that contradicts their moral-truth to consolidate it as 'authentic' when faced with the 'inauthentic' threat of an alternative.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Neil Gerlach for his ongoing support as a mentor. If not for his guidance there is a good chance that I would not have completed this thesis. He introduced me to the War Imaginary and provided the opportunity to explore related subject matter as his research assistant. Working with him has allowed me to develop confidence and realize my potential in this area of research, for which I am truly grateful.

I would like to thank my second reader Mike Mopas and the external examiner Christiane Wilke for taking the time to read my work and provide critical feedback to use as a basis for improvement. I would also like to recognize Xiaobei Chen for her support at a pivotal moment, as well as the staff of the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities.

I would like to express my appreciation for the support staff in the Department of Sociology, who were always helpful, generous and above all else kind.

Special thanks to my partner, Kevin Johnson, who provided endless encouragement and care throughout this process, and our family: Link, Patrick, Fable and Winston, without which my 'world' would be terribly dull.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv-v
<b>Chapter 1: The ‘Rupturing Discontinuity’ to an American Imaginary</b>	
Thesis Statement	7-8
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review – The War Imaginary</b>	
Imagining War & Modern Consciousness	15
The Wilsonian Paradigm & an Emotional Crusade	20
An American Civil Religion & Eschatological ‘Hope’	25
The American Culture War: One Nation Under Two Impulses	28
Identity Crisis (of masculinity) and the Performance of Wartime Ritual	31
<b>Chapter 3: Theory – The Operative Value of Myth &amp; Apocalyptic Rhetoric</b>	
The Operative Value of Myth	34
Crisis, the Production of History & Interpretive Procedure	39
Narrative Identity: the function of ‘emplotment’ & mimesis (poetical imitation)	42
Mimetic (triangulated) Desire & the Mobilization of National Self-Understanding	48
Breaking with Continuous Time, Revolutionary Ruptures & Apocalyptic Rhetoric	51
<b>Chapter 4: Methods – Rhetorical Criticism as a ‘Synecdoche for Agency’</b>	
Rhetorical Criticism	58
Interpretation, Scope & Validity	60
Methods – Rhetorical Analysis & Time	63

From Selection to the Listening Process	64
Charting the Course of Themes	67
Podcasts & Identity	69
<b>Chapter 5: Data Analysis – Mapping the Crisis of Authentic Faith</b>	
Prologue: Powerful JRE – The Joe Rogan Experience	72
The Problem with Authenticity: Representational Breakdown	73
The Problem with Human Nature: Weakness as Moral Failure & Mastery	81
The Problem with Crisis: Not Wanted in the Brotherhood (In/security of Character)	88
The Problem with Religion: Myth, Contradictions & Judgment	99
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion – The Problem with Dis/belief</b>	
The Crisis of Authentic Faith	111
Bibliography	115

## Chapter 1: The ‘Rupturing Discontinuity’ to an American Imaginary

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon have been described as a ‘nodal point’ or a “singularity that forever cuts the world off from what came before and fundamentally alters everything that occurs after” as a ‘point of rupture’ that “corresponds with the end of Cold War ideologies” in which the U.S. military-industrial complex begins to “wane in the face of the onslaught of globalization” (Gibson 2003, in Miller, 2012, p. 106; Bacevich, 2005). The Executive Branch of the United States’ government adopted a “weirdly analogous posture” to the ‘terrorist-threat’ by insisting that “September 11<sup>th</sup> was a break in the flow of history, discontinuous with the past” as they “vigorously [promoted] popular belief in discontinuity” (Meyers, 2008, p. 55). The attacks have mutually been described as representing a “profoundly postmodern [i.e. apocalyptic] event because [of] the real ruptures [to] the American imaginary and symbolic [order]” (Miller, 2012, p. 104-105; Bacevich, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

Apocalypticism is understood as postmodern because of its sense of imminent crisis emerging from a fractured condition characterized by incredulity (p. 123); but, “[t]he adjective 'modern' designates a new regime, an acceleration, a rupture, a revolution in time. When the word 'modern,' 'modernization,' or 'modernity' appears, we are defining, by contrast, an archaic and stable past” (p.10) (Lyotard, 2004, p. 123; Latour, 1993, p. 10). The apocalyptic has more in common with anomie as a cyclic (revolutionary) process of negotiating ‘modern’ identities because it reveals a different possibility in the reinterpretation of historical myth to stabilize

---

<sup>1</sup> Postmodern intellectuals considered the period leading up to the twenty-first century to be the “end of history” and the “final triumph of liberal democratic capitalism”, despite the political atmosphere of this time rendering this issue a moot point in the United States as “conservatives no less than liberals shared in the conviction that the triumph of democratic capitalism over all comers was self-evident and irreversible” (Bacevich, 2005, p. 12).

meaning at a critical juncture. It does this by placing a new frame around existing assumptions about the ‘self’, ‘other’ and ‘world’ in the context of irreversible change.

America’s long-century,<sup>2</sup> or its period of hegemonic economic power in the world-system,<sup>3</sup> shares its origin with the ascendant postmodern sociocultural paradigm, the contemporary Information Revolution with its second phase involving the internet economy, and the growth of the American martial spirit following WWII (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010; Miller, 2012, p.104; Robinson, 2010; Brock, 2003; Bacevich, 2005).<sup>4</sup> American imperialism (and by extension militarism),<sup>5</sup> would not be possible but for a desire to promote national interests predicated upon how a nation imagines its place in the world.<sup>6</sup> A ‘rupture’ in self-understanding such as the 9/11 crisis-event offers an opportunity to examine the contours of an American-military-identity because the response to the attacks would have to correspond to its mythos, otherwise going to war would not make sense to the American public.

This thesis argues that the conservative reflex to 9/11 involved appealing to apocalyptic rhetoric to capitalize on the affective chaos following the tragedy to discursively mobilize actors while

---

<sup>2</sup> Despite President Reagan’s ‘revival’, the 1970s (1973;1979), oil/energy crises have been described as “[signalling] the fading of US hegemony”, as the long century begins with financial expansion of a new regime which coexists with the previous one, the old regime experiences a ‘signal’ crisis followed by a ‘revival’ but it is actually a “sign of autumn”, which is followed by precipitous events (usually war) that ultimately suppresses the old regime and results in its terminal crisis; deficit spending, money lending and “war profiteering conceal crises of over accumulation and foreshadow the decline of hegemonic power” (Arrighi, 1994, in Robinson, 2010, p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> i.e. 16c “Italian city states”; 17c Netherlands; 19c Britain; after 1945 US (Robinson, 2010, p. 7).

<sup>4</sup> Besides the emergence of coextensive phenomena resulting from the American ‘victory’ in WWII, this war also served as a source of revitalization for a dormant ‘heroic’ ethos, the contours of the national character having been drawn from the revolutionary significance of a unifying ‘war story’ (Engelhardt, 1995, p. 10 in Belmonte, 1999, p. 136; Johnson, 2004, p 52).

<sup>5</sup> American Cold War containment policies allowed the United States to wield control over half of the globe via military bases i.e. a ‘Baseworld’; the associated power-transfer gave effect to an imperial presidency and under this new configuration the Department of State has been obscured and displaced by the Department of Defense (DOD), granting the DOD power to determine and administer (interventionist) foreign policy, while effectively eroding any supports for the democratic constitutional republic (Johnson, 2004, p. 5; Johnson, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Even the idea of a global-onslaught betrays a sense of losing a single-minded national-identity to a process of entropic dedifferentiation, under which ‘America’ would lose its specialized characteristics to the ‘world’.

engaging in historical (re)imagining of the state in response to the crisis-event. Expanding the literature on the War Imaginary to include the concept of *Imagined Communities* allows a researcher to demonstrate how the operative value of myth mirrors and is serviceable to 1) the discursive-reconstitution of the state in times of crisis and 2) how individual self-understanding emerges via Narrative Identity. The two major mythic structures that provide the source of authority to American (national) self-understanding include: the American civil religion and the American culture-wars; the former informs the political-religious expression of the institution via its valued symbols, rituals and beliefs; the latter situates the fundamental cultural crisis which manifests as the inverted opposition of ideals emerging from the interpretation of its public myth. The premise of identities-in-crisis and the exploitation of insecurity in late modernity will provide the basis for understanding how a nation could be motivated to fight the War on Terror. Apocalyptic rhetoric (or an epochal/epoch-making discourse) mobilizes actors and gives reality to ‘objects’ to be acted upon when faced with crisis, so it made sense to ask: how do the post-9/11 intersecting discourses of national/military identity produce an ‘American’ war imaginary and coextensive narratives of the ‘self’? What is characteristic of these discourses? How do modern-national-military-subjects negotiate personal meaning between pre-existing myths and the ‘new’ or ‘discontinuous’ productions of ‘History’ in the context of perceived crisis?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review – Imagining War & Modern Consciousness**

This chapter establishes the analytical framework to expand the conceptualization of the War Imaginary by situating Paul Fussell (2000) and Lilie Chouliaraki’s (2013) work on the subject. Specifically, the thesis draws upon the idea of ‘gross dichotomizing’ as a totalizing model of rhetorical-psychological polarization that is understood to be characteristic of modern processes of imagining identity in the context of war. It positions modern ironic consciousness in the

negotiation of past events to inform the present/future and the *application* of what is ‘memorialized’. This connects to how one might understand this ‘imaginary’ as a social-discursive process of giving reality to ‘objects’ to be acted upon in the context of crisis based on perceived normative claims to morality. It expands the applicability of the War Imaginary by referencing Benedict Anderson’s (2006) *Imagined Communities* to factor historical-time into the imaginary social cohesion of nations. It also provides complementary literature to 1) provide an outline of the mythic structures supporting national self-understanding and the interpretation of America’s public myths, and 2) to position the premise of identities-in-crisis, sequestered identity ideals, and the articulation of threat as it relates to war/military culture.

### **Chapter 3: Theory – The Operative Value of Myth & Apocalyptic Rhetoric**

This chapter draws upon Anderson’s notion of ‘simultaneity’ as it reflects Walter Benjamin’s description of *homogeneous, empty time* and *Messianic time* and connects them to Claude Lévi-Strauss’ (1955) description of the operative value of myth. It relies on the fusion of Sussure’s distinction of the structure/statistics of language, with their corresponding time-associations: revertible/non-revertible. This aligns with how the fundamental cultural conflict i.e. one of the mythic structures of national self-understanding, operates based on a divide between *orthodoxy/progressivism*; this divide resembles the elements required for historical-imagining in the context of crisis for the interpretation of ‘events’. <sup>7</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to forge a connection between narrative processes of identity-formation from the individual to the state and link it to motivation in the context of war via apocalyptic (epochal) discourse/rhetoric.

### **Chapter 4: Methods – Rhetorical Criticism as ‘Synecdoche for Agency’**

---

<sup>7</sup> Prefigured-analogical reasoning, which corresponds to a configurational-dimension of time and the serialization of a causal chain, which corresponds to an episodic-dimension of time fused through the operative value of myth (Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Verhesschen, 2003).

This chapter outlines the purpose of using rhetorical criticism to analyze episodes of the Powerful JRE: Joe Rogan Experience. The podcast provided access to informants with a significant connection to the American military, predominantly as veterans to the War on Terror, but also does so in the context of an increasingly popular medium/program. Choosing the JRE as an empirical source seemed like a straightforward decision because of its large audience and given how Rogan has gained status as an opinion leader. Militarism, personal and national identity also present as recurring themes on the program, and he has given a platform to these figures to rhetorically influence his growing audience. Rhetorical criticism aligns with Narrative Identity in its capacity to question perceived ‘neutrality’ and situate ‘morality’ as being what one communicates to others regarding moral-belief, since one cannot verify intention. The analysis is framed by four themes: *authenticity*, *human nature*, *crisis* and *religion*, and they were discovered through the blended use of *a priori* coding and ‘open-coding’.

### **Chapter 5: Data Analysis – Mapping the Crisis of ‘Authentic’ Faith**

The themes are set in this order because *authenticity* is an ideal upheld by the informants, and the capacity to deem anything that does not conform to one’s moral-truth as inauthentic to bolster one’s authority over meaning is how one is enabled to diminish Other’s relevance. Applicability is at the centre of the war imaginary for it concerns what is preserved to be given reconstituted re-presentation to ‘make sense’ of events and mobilize organizational identity formation in relation to mythic historical-time. The maintenance of an idealized identity as a defence against the threat of what is considered Other (or an alternative possibility), is a persistent theme throughout the analysis, and this is why it seemed appropriate to dismantle the ideal to trace the instability of meaning through the descending themes. Deconstructing authenticity meant

compiling examples in which re-presentation was recognized as means to rhetorically mobilize a response, but at the same time, were fraught with contradictions that would recur in the analysis.

The most straightforward example of how the data analysis confirms the established literature regarding identification involves using political-religious (national) products to promote public imagining of solidarity. Marking a national community with flags to promote the idea of unity or ‘sameness’ along the lines of ‘us versus them’ while demonstrating how this provides a sense of security (or a feeling of relief when faced with the possibility of unbelievable chaos) is verified by informant-generated theory regarding the ‘rallying cry of patriotism’. The short-lived solidarity without the continued presence of imminent ‘threat’ on the ‘horizon’ of possibility confirms what Kristol and Kagan suggest regarding how Americans “dismantle the material and spiritual foundations...[of their] national well-being” without a “visible threat to US vital interests” (in Solomon, 2013, p. 114). Using threat to create the conditions for conformity of meaning is central to the crisis of masculinity and how the articulation of threat permits those to imagine a response through the objectification of ‘events’ (De Goede & Randalls, 2009).

The problem with *authenticity* speaks to the tendency to selectively edit reality as an adaptive strategy while attempting to rhetorically mobilize a response, and the mobilization of desire based on perceived insecurities over how one *should be* carries through to the *human nature* assumptions that constitute the crisis of ‘authentic’ faith. Deconstructing *human nature* assumptions permits one to test ideals as they overlap, like ‘freedom’ as it interacts with ‘suffering’, which the informants presume to be inevitable, so freedom becomes a justified trade-off. It illustrates in practical terms how someone is motivated based on insecurity to change the course of their life according to a model; at the same time, there is confirmation that the military organization uses the perception of agency to reaffirm the existing order. Agency connects

freedom/action as rhetorical ‘objects’, to which potential (identity) can be given or be self-textualized into; the principle of leadership learned in the military context aligns with what is described in the case of apocalyptic rhetoric, as it concerns overcoming obstacles in a victory-history by self-textualizing your potential into the structure.<sup>8</sup> Overcoming ‘obstacles’ also ties into Lacanian psychoanalytic theory regarding identification and desire (Solomon, 2013).

Analyzing *crisis* permits one to demonstrate how insecurity is not quelled despite identification; this point was broached in the context of the short-lived solidarity following 9/11, but is exemplified more concretely in the contested space of military brotherhood/stolen valour, as well as the veteran suicide crisis. The tendency to disown mutual identity is displayed in this contested space where veterans seek to defame one another to disqualify relevance to the idealized/revered ‘brotherhood’ identity; it runs parallel to the rejection of anything understood to be ‘weak’ to constitute the strength of the idealized. It also extends to the self in the context of the suicide crisis, where removing one’s purpose as it relates to the structure or the perceived ‘sameness’ of membership in the brotherhood is described in relation to losing one’s identity,<sup>9</sup> which creates the conditions to reimagine the self out of crisis. An inability to negotiate a ‘new’ identity when someone does not feel how they expect to feel translates to a perceived failure to seize an idealized identity based on ‘insufficient’ desire to be the men they *should* be.

This culminates in the remaining theme of *religion* because of what is at stake in the culture wars i.e. the perceived capacity to ‘reason’ as a function of moral-truth, where individualism,

---

<sup>8</sup> It is reminiscent of how Anderson (2006) describes the death of members of an imagined community being accumulated into the national biography to “serve narrative purposes” if one recalls the abstracting symbolic “systems of accumulated expertise” (Anderson, 2006, p. 206; Latour, 1987, p. 220; Giddens, 1991, p. 2-3). It could be taken literally as a means for Historians to speak on behalf of the desires of the dead, possibly in the context of war. It could also be understood in relation to a process through which one gives their life to a cause to serve its purpose, only to leave the contribution susceptible to successive additions as those who come after ironically and poetically transforms everything that came before for ‘use’ regardless of intent.

<sup>9</sup> This occurs in the context of irreversible change, where the veterans can no longer return to the profession.

rationality and skepticism overlap. Individualism informs freedom as an ideal, which is central to the Navy SEAL approach, and the rejection of the 'inauthentic' when paired with skepticism to protect one's idealized identity. This section also demonstrates how the desire for 'good' judgment compels endless mastery alongside the fear of unfulfilled potential. Death becomes rationalized as an acceptable (utilitarian) trade-off for 'success' because death has no weight in America's endless war-making industry,<sup>10</sup> so dying for an ideal gives meaning where it was lacking, which mirrors the problem of identity (or a lack thereof). Finally, the analysis confirms how the president is understood to speak on behalf of and edify God's will to fulfill his role in the American civil religion, but in a way that draws together the skeptical tendency to defame along the lines of superior moral (masculine) conduct and disqualify relevance.

#### **Chapter 6: Conclusion – The Problem with Dis/belief**

Beyond documenting the interpretation of the 9/11 crisis-event, the subsequent discourse and institutional developments surrounding the War on Terror, this study details how idealized identities go through a kind of stress test in the context of crisis because of perceived failure. Failure as a concept ties together what the role of the war imaginary is between institutional literature and imitative 'rumours', which is to 'make sense' of events and "find a simple cause for...[failures]" (Fussell, 2000, p. 121). This need to 'make sense' corresponds to how storytelling/editing for familiarity permits one to plan for the future and consolidate the past, while at the same time reducing equivocality i.e. being open to more than one possibility (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012, p. 6-8). Making sense of events is also central to narrative identity, and what success/failure 'looks like' is embedded in a shared narrative network of ideas about how the world 'works' and what 'actions' mean in relation to prefigured analogues

---

<sup>10</sup> It has been normalized as an honourable sacrifice to the state narrative/collective project.

performed in sequence to give reality to identities that are regularly revised according to models (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453; Samman, 2015).

Ultimately, the problem with dis/belief concerns how people engage with new ideas, especially those that they perceive to compromise their relevance/primacy. This is best illustrated when Kelly (2016) and Faludi (1999) describe how existing insecurity surrounding the crisis of masculinity compelled those in-crisis to latch on to the Other i.e. women's/civil rights movements to objectify enemies to justify their rage,<sup>11</sup> instead of adapting to meet what could be understood as irreversible change. The response to the transitional failure is a maladaptive strategy borne out of unchecked historical privilege and dominance over legitimate storytelling, including but not exclusive to all institutional forms, and the highest presiding authoritative position over the state, which has been endowed with supernatural powers. The events of 9/11 merely amplified narratives of in/security to create the conditions to respond to disrepute, since the attacks undermined how 'America' imagines its place in the world; this resembles what is described in the case of the doomsday preppers, only at a national scale, and with all the resources of its military industrial complex (Kelly, 2016; Meyers, 2008).

---

<sup>11</sup> The word justify here serves in the multifold: Anderson (2006) describes how modelling for reality via communicatory instruments permits the concretization of paradigms because these mechanisms are the frame to impose control (so they are not required for the justification of claims) (Winichakul in Anderson, 2006, p. 173-174). However, to make 'just' holds more than one meaning, especially if one considers the bifurcation of spiritual/enlightenment themes via orthodoxy/progressivism: to make right/eous, so virtuous or correct. If one conflates these two meanings with yet another meaning: to make blameless (or beyond reproach), it would make sense that those with historical privilege would feel justified to discursively transform the Other to fulfill the requirement of their assumed authority over meaning, which helps explain the obsession with authenticity.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review – The War Imaginary

This chapter begins by establishing the War Imaginary and then appends complementary literature to encompass American myth-making structures: i.e. its American civil religion (made up of its norm/signs/rules to qualify its temporal ‘structures of action’, which demand narration)<sup>12</sup> and the fundamental culture war division (Ricœur, in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453; Hunter, 1991). It includes some historical reference, but only does so to demonstrate how ideological paradigms come to be carried forward. The chapter ends by establishing an operative premise involving the discursive-construction of threat in the context of a warrior’s identity-crisis.

Paul Fussell’s (1975) *The Great War and Modern Memory* establishes the basis for a War Imaginary by examining how dominant writing forms, whether popular or privileged in English literary canon, have pervaded the act of remembering in the context of war (in Chouliaraki, 2013). He considers conventional myth-making through literary remembrance via the “most effectively memorialized” texts pertaining to the *Great War*,<sup>13</sup> which are described as having preserved the ‘event’ with “conspicuous imaginative and artistic meaning” (Fussell, 1975, p. xv in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 439). The purpose of the “formal literature of the war [was to]...make sense...of events which otherwise would seem merely accidental or calamitous”; ‘rumours’ came to resemble the formal literature and developed into “fully fleshed narrative fictions...bred by anxiety as well as by the need to find a simple cause for...[failures]” (Fussell, 2000, p. 121).

One of the prominent ideas his work focuses on is ‘gross dichotomizing’, or a “persisting imaginative habit of modern times” (p. 82) and how this ‘obsession’ can be understood as a “model of modern political, social, artistic, and psychological polarization” (p. 83) (Fussell, 1975

---

<sup>12</sup> This point will be elaborated in the theory chapter.

<sup>13</sup> It only became known as WWI by fashioning history up time subsequent to WWII (Anderson, 2006, p. 205).

in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 82-83). Criticism has emerged about how framing binaries in this generalized way brings the risk of diluting one's argument, and how it may have been undermined by Fussell himself in the way that the stark categorization becomes susceptible to later successive additions. McLoughlin (2014) provides the example of how "the staff in the rear" (p. 90) and the "civilians at home" (p. 94), are qualified in this sense, suggesting that the 'us versus them' arrangement becomes generalized to 'and them', 'and them' (McLoughlin, 2014, p. 442). She further suggests that Fussell undercuts the argument for gross dichotomizing when he proposes that the "division of front, support, and reserve made it 'natural to see everything as divisible by threes'..." (Fussell, 1975, p. 135 in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 442).<sup>14</sup>

I disagree with this criticism because 'gross dichotomizing' is an 'imaginative habit' or mode of perception/expression to justify 'total submission' of one extreme pole to another because of the perceived impossibility of negotiating peace (Fussell, 2000, p.79). It deals with what is unthinkable/unimaginable across this "sharp dividing...landscape [of] known and unknown, safe and hostile, [and] is a habit no one who has fought ever entirely loses" as a "[practice] of simple distinction, simplification, and opposition" (*Ibid*). Fussell (2000) acknowledges how it would be a mistake to assume that 'four years of dichotomizing' were entirely responsible for the "rhetorical formulations and conventions following the war" (p. 105).

He was proposing that the rhetorical pattern established during the Great War, or the tendency to view "Great international questions...in simple moralistic and idealistic ways, as emotional

---

<sup>14</sup> The triadic structures reference is taken out of context, as it was a reflection on the appearance of 'threes' in romantic/dramatic/folkloric literature which imported special meaning in the military context as a "magical number" (Fussell, 2000, p. 128,135). The argument made by Fussell (2000) is that any literate soldier in the *Great War* would have read the popular "Victorian pseudo-romance" (p. 135) and therefore would recognize its narrative structures and themes (*Ibid*).

crusades” permeated modern culture because it was modelled through literature (and anxiety-inducing gossip) to make ‘sense’ of the calamity (Fussell, 2000, p. 109). Gross dichotomizing will be examined in the context of the culture wars, but for now it appears to be a means to an end. Believing there is no common ground makes it easier to dehumanize/erase those you have no interest in tolerating, and it ties into the strategies surrounding how the Other may be imagined: whether voyeuristically dehumanized or eliminated from consideration/made irrelevant to the narrative of one’s experience (Fussell, 1975 in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 82).

Another idea he engages with is modern ironic consciousness i.e. the potential to apply a pattern of ironic action to past events via ‘subsequent vision’ (Fussell, 2000, p. 30). This overlaps with how Fussell (1975) considers the perception of ‘war-as-rupture’ i.e. how the ‘discontinuity’ of an ‘event’ renders it unique from everything that came before (in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 444). The way that it overlaps is in the paradoxical circumscription of events where discontinuity can only exist in the context of an accepted continuity, but a difference in expectation is the basis for irony, which “constitutes the exploitation of a gap or difference between the apparent and the actual” (Meyers, 2008; Rutherford, 2012, p. 323). Fussell (1975) suggests that the *Great War*, was discontinuous with the world *before* and thus precipitated a unique kind of remembering, stressing the “novelty of 1914” (in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 444).

Criticism resulting from this argument concerns how Fussell actually demonstrates continuity, where Jay Winter (1995) suggests that “if the war created [modern memory]...[then] it was a traditional, even archaic, kind of memory that came out of the conflict” (in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 445). McLoughlin (2014) responds to this criticism by describing how modern memory in this context is “meant not so much [as] a new way of remembering [,] as a new way of *using* the old ways of remembering” and how the ‘war-as-rupture’ debate taps into the ironic appreciation of

past action and *application* of that which is ‘memorialized’ (*Emphasis added* p. 446). Fussell (1975) states: “by applying to the past a paradigm of ironic action [one] is enabled to locate, draw forth, and finally shape into significance an event or a moment which otherwise would merge without meaning into the general undifferentiated stream” (p.31 in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 446). While Fussell’s book and subsequent criticism informs part of my analytical framework, so does the next iteration to be found in a more comprehensive social theory.

Lilie Chouliaraki (2013) diverges from a centralized literary tract to develop a definition of how the War Imaginary is a “configuration of popular practices of representation through which war is imagined as a constitutive dimension of our public morality” (p. 316). This definition contextualizes the characterization of the First World War as a “great imaginative event” (Samuel Hynes, 1990, p. ix), within Charles Taylor’s (2002) description of “social imaginaries” (in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 319).<sup>15</sup> Taylor’s (2002) concept generates a social-spatial dimension, so one consisting of popular/frequent communication, in which “images, stories and legends” serve as the basis for how “people imagine their social existence”, and specifically “how they fit together with others”, within the context of the “deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (p. 106, in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 318).

Chouliaraki (2013) describes how her understanding of the War Imaginary consists of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century wars, because of the role technology played in cultivating the public’s imagination regarding what war ‘is’ and what constitutes a ‘reasonable’ response within it. Moral subjectivity is understood through the “*constitutive* force” of habituation that mobilizes multimodal communications of war via this imaginary normative dimension, which sustains how a

---

<sup>15</sup> Chouliaraki (2013) also acknowledges the potential to examine the concept of the ‘imaginary’ in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis and Castoriades’ political theory (p. 319).

community imagines its 'virtuous' moral character (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 319). Claims to public morality become muddled when confronted by the contradictions presented in the 'liberal paradox of war' which holds that war is: "denounced as a cause of extreme suffering" but is always "fought in the name of moral principle" and thus "simultaneously carries specific visions of humanity" that everyone is meant to 'endorse' (Michael Howard, 1978 in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 316). The War Imaginary "offers us the resources to imagine who we *should be* and how we *should act* as moral subjects", so it is not simply about 'shaping' present-meaning, or 'healing' past-actions, but maintaining a future-ideal (*Emphasis Added*. Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 319).

Chouliaraki's (2013) work provides a complex array of concepts to explore: the importance of visibility and the reflexive mechanism through which a subject engages with the performative aspects of reproducing a war imaginary; the capacity for transformation through representations of morality; liminality in the context of the representative aesthetic of the sublime; the distancing effect of objectivity; and a pervasive 'media logic' to strategically negotiate the realities of war (p. 328). However, she does not recognize Benedict Anderson's (2006) work on *Imagined Communities*; his perspective on the "figuring of imagined reality" situates (historical) time into the pre/modern 'simultaneous' social cohesion of nations (p. 23). By introducing time referents for simultaneous social cohesion into one's understanding of the war imaginary, one may be able to unpack the "kairoic moment",<sup>16</sup> and the rhetorical mobilization of public belief after the 9/11 crisis-event against a backdrop of widespread fear (Zarefsky in Simons, 2007, p. 183). Having

---

<sup>16</sup> *Kairos* is described as the "moment or occasion of making meaning...in an arrested... infinite point in time" as compared to *Chronos* which represents a "*progression of linear time*" (p. 203); Roberts (2003) consider these concepts in relation to *Chaos*, so what has been understood as an "empty/formless void" or the "randomly generated disorder" or 'mess' between "*order* and *disorder*"; however, 'chaos' "[requires] iteration of a process" and "[shows] a remarkable resemblance to the patterns and rhythms of life" (Roberts, 2003, p. 212).

established the conventional literature, it makes sense to extend the applicable literature to include work that deals with how Americans conceptualize moral-identity.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Wilsonian Paradigm & an Emotional Crusade**

Fussell (2000) established how gross dichotomizing assists in generating the rhetorical pattern to give rise to an idealistic/emotional crusade (p. 109). In the American context, this totalizing imaginative habit has informed the character of “foreign policy from [the] intervention in the First World War through the 2003 invasion of Iraq” because of the Wilsonian paradigm and its revivals (Johnson, 2004, p. 47; Bacevich, 2005, p. 10).<sup>18</sup> This paradigm represents the ideological shift from the ‘classical’ notion of empire-building inherited from America’s British predecessors to what “contemporary ideologists [use to] justify American imperial power in terms of exporting democracy” (Johnson, 2004, p. 48). President Woodrow Wilson earned the nickname: the “patron saint of the...crusades”, as a Christian idealist; he believed America would bring an “ultimate peace to the world” by remaking it in its own image to eliminate what he understood to be the conditions that produced war (*See Note for excerpt of Wilson’s 8<sup>th</sup> annual message to Congress*; Johnson, 2004, p. 47; Bacevich, 2005, p. 10).<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The War Imaginary is not explicitly referred to in other sources, although the notion of an ‘imaginary war’ comes up in relation to American Cold War culture (via Cold War/Global Imaginaries) and civil defense strategies (Oakes, 1994; Eken, 2017; Ulianova, 2014; Lee, 2011). Clarke (1975/1966), and Vaughan, Skroce and Hollingsworth (2016) discuss the representation of future wars in science fiction; Dupuy (1993) writes about the representation of hypothetical future wars as a military analyst, and Der Derian’s (2009) work concerns the ‘consequences of a new military-industrial-media-entertainment network’.

<sup>18</sup> This Wilsonian paradigm has been described as representing the attainment of an optimum stage of development based on principles (or ideological claims) made in the last century by American statesmen (Bacevich, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Excerpt of President Woodrow Wilson’s (1920) 8<sup>th</sup> Annual message to Congress: “By this *faith*, and by this *faith alone*, can the world be lifted out of its present confusion and despair. It was this faith which prevailed over the wicked force of Germany. You will remember that the *beginning of the end of the war* came when the German people found themselves face to face with the conscience of the world and realized that right was everywhere arrayed against the wrong that their government was attempting to perpetrate. I think, therefore, that it is true to say that this was the *faith which won the war*. Certainly this is the faith with which our gallant men went into the field and out upon the seas to make sure of *victory*. This is the mission upon which Democracy came into the world. Democracy is an assertion of the right of the individual to live and to be treated justly as against any attempt on the part of any combination of individuals to make laws which will overburden him or which will destroy his equality among his fellows in the matter of right or privilege; and I think we all realize that the day

Believing that it was America's destiny to bring "history to its predetermined destination" as an "article of faith" he justified an intervention into the European war in the spring of 1917, based on the "certainty that he was acting as a divine agent, [and] that America's mission was a providential one" – this mission was to "make the world itself at last free" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 11). Sending young Americans into the "abattoir of the Western front" became the "ultimate expression of how far the Old World had deviated from God's plan", but for Wilson, resorting to arms would never be more than an "expedient...temporary measure reluctantly employed" by the United States, "not a permanent expression of the nation's character" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 11).

World War I ended with the emergence of the League of Nations, which aligned with Wilson's vision for the future, as articulated in his 'Fourteen Points';<sup>20</sup> the United States did not end up joining due to a lack of support from the U.S. Senate, as they believed ratifying the Treaty of Versailles would encroach upon American sovereignty (Johnson, 2004, p. 51).<sup>21</sup> Beyond giving primacy to American principles because of Wilson's deeply held belief in American

---

has come when *Democracy is being put upon its final test*. The Old World is just now suffering from a wanton rejection of the principle of democracy and a substitution of the principle of autocracy as asserted in the name, but without the authority and sanction, of the multitude. This is the time of all others when *Democracy should prove its purity and its spiritual power to prevail*. It is surely the *manifest destiny of the United States to lead in the attempt to make this spirit prevail*" (Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/207615>).

<sup>20</sup> The Fourteen Points included: "self-determination, freedom of the seas, economic openness, disarmament, [non-intervention], and replacement of the balance of power with a...covenant of cooperative peace" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 10-11). To adopt the Fourteen Points formula would mean abiding by the "principles of liberal democracy and free enterprise" in a "world of sovereign states" who would in turn accept the "values distinguishing the United States itself"; however, Wilson also asserted that: "These are American principles, American Policies. We could stand for no others....they are the principles of mankind and must prevail" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 11).

<sup>21</sup> Bacevich (2005) provides some background information regarding how the Pan-American Union (which served as a precursor to the Organization of American States) "provided a model suitable for worldwide application"; while the Pan-American system was meant to represent a "community of equals" it actually only "existed to enhance and perpetuate the hemispheric primacy of the United States" – so there is a notable pattern of entering agreements on the basis of creating a unified front of equals only to promote American ideals (p. 10).

Exceptionalism, it was revealed that he had no intention of extending his principle of ‘self-determination’ to any non-white citizens of the colonized world (Johnson, 2004).<sup>22</sup>

Examining the paradox of “practicing power politics to end power politics”, allows one to unpack war-making as an industry that mobilizes political interests, adjacent industries, and citizens while displacing/disturbing foreign populations (Kennedy, 2009, p. xiii-xiv; Seib, 2004).

Ross A. Kennedy (2009) suggests that Wilson was aware of the pacifist anxiety surrounding the “anti-Progressive character of [military] preparedness” but acknowledged to Americans how he would not be a ‘dupe’ to the ‘arms business’, thereby downplaying “the notion that munitions manufacturers influenced preparedness planning” (Kennedy, 2009, p.4). He also “signaled his desire to link preparedness with Progressivism by suggesting that voluntary military training could be accompanied by...a great system of industrial and vocational education” (p. 4), to demonstrate how military “preparedness could work in the interests of the many instead of the few” (p. 5) (Kennedy, 2009, p. 4-5). Progressives bought into the idea of preparedness and the professionalization of the military forces because of this, while recognizing the need to limit expansion, understanding how it might affect domestic life/policy (*See Note. Ibid*).<sup>23</sup>

Wilson’s vision for America is purportedly not to be defined by war, but depends upon imprinting values on every other nation, a point that is relevant to the discussion of the culture

---

<sup>22</sup> He rejected the request of the Japanese to include an article “recognizing the principle of racial equality” (p. 50), this paradoxical inclusion in the League but exclusion from equal recognition in the Treaty is commensurate with Wilson’s earlier attempts to ideologically imprint upon Mexico (Johnson, 2004, p. 47-48, 50).

<sup>23</sup>Kennedy (2009) references the *New Republic*, a progressive journal of which the editors were proponents of “liberal internationalism in the press” and who were in agreement with “Wilson’s perspective on preparedness”, and “stressed the idea that professional military forces possessed a political outlook at odds with democracy” (p. 5). Chief Editor Herbert Croly describes how America could maintain “a small standing professional army which was really no more than a national police force” and so they had “no reason to fear the corruption of its democratic institutions and ideals by a military caste or spirit” (p. 5). Increasing the force beyond this would “have a profound reaction on American domestic life, because as a consequence of its increased size and authority it will be constantly making imperative demands upon the civil authorities which they will be reluctant to grant and which will raise the issue between civil and military control over American policy” (Croly in Kennedy, 2009, p. 5).

wars and the myth of capacity (Hunter, 1991; Meyers, 2008). Regardless of Wilson's overall lack of success during his tenure, he created the "intellectual foundations for an interventionist foreign policy, expressed in humanitarian and democratic rhetoric" (Johnson, 2004, p. 48). It should be noted that for the majority of U.S. history,<sup>24</sup> maintaining a minimum military force to respond proportionately to threats as they appeared led policymakers to scale down its military establishment as soon as the threat dissipated, and this was the general policy until WWII (Bacevich, 2005; Johnson, 2004).<sup>25</sup> Even then, many Americans wanted the country to demobilize so that it could focus on domestic issues; this point should not be lost for it will be relevant to the discussion regarding the connection between transitional failures and crisis (*Ibid*). For now, it offers a threshold for a national-military-identity in the context of threat.

President Ronald Reagan, an ardent follower of Wilson, resuscitated the public image of the armed forces after the 'end of' victory culture (WII-Vietnam),<sup>26</sup> when others failed to do so (Engelhardt, 1995; Bacevich, 2005, p. 10; Johnson, 2004, p. 47, 52). Using a parable to reconstitute the soldier as a virtuous character, he drew upon the [real prior achievements of his nation in war](#), but suffused facts with nostalgia, thereby allowing patriotism to be revitalized/reimagined to inspire faith in the "cause of freedom" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 107, 106-109). This is relevant to what has already been discussed regarding how one can shape the past to inform the present/future, but also situates the resonance of neoconservative discourse in the timeframe

---

<sup>24</sup> i.e. the first two centuries of its existence.

<sup>25</sup> Bacevich (2005) describes how the "million-man Union Army of 1865 shrank within a year to a mere fifty-seven thousand and within another five years was reduced to fewer than thirty thousand"; additionally, as of 'Victory Over Japan' Day in 1945, the "U.S. Army consisted of over eight million officers" and "within a year, 1.8 million remained on active duty, a number halved again within the following year" and by 1947 the "army was little more than an occupation force, its combat capabilities virtually nonexistent" (Bacevich, 2005, p. 16).

<sup>26</sup> The 'end of' victory culture has already been established in the postmodern milieu, situating a rebounded and then collapsed "identity of triumph" from WWII to Vietnam (Engelhardt, 1995, p. 10 in Belmonte, 1999, p. 136).

leading up to 9/11 that is still to come; currently, it situates the emergence of the twenty-first century techno-war and a new kind of ‘Top Gun’ soldier (Bacevich, 2005, p. 115).<sup>27</sup>

The Vietnam loss was nested between the 1970s oil and energy crises (1973;1979), and prior to the Iranian Hostage Crisis, which played its part in the 1981 landslide victory of Reagan, as “voters troubled by inflation and by the year-long confinement of Americans in Iran swept the Republican ticket into office” (Freidel & Sidey, 2006).<sup>28</sup> Reagan promised “abundance without end” to counter President Jimmy Carter’s message regarding lowering expectations and trying to cut back on the use of foreign oil (Engelhardt, 1995, p. 10 in Belmonte, 1999, p. 136; Johnson, 2004, p 52; Bacevich, 2005, p. 103). This is despite the fact that the Carter Doctrine, which was only meant as a deterrent against the Soviet Union while notifying them of American ‘vital’ interest in the Persian Gulf region, served as the basis for the Reagan corollary thus supporting the United States’ effort in developing a relationship with Saudi Arabia (Kuniholm, 1986).<sup>29</sup>

The defeat in Vietnam is described as having resulted in the disillusionment of “American leadership elites, [which] set off a never-concluded debate about the [‘lessons’] to be learned from it” (Johnson, 2004, p. 60). President Reagan and Vice President Bush (Sr.) assumed that the “central lesson of Vietnam was not that foreign policy had to be more democratic, but the

---

<sup>27</sup> This soldier has a “novel approach to warfare” and a “talent for organizing technology to exploit its potential”, as well as, a “new lexicon of military terms” combining war with notions of being “surgical, frictionless, [and even] postmodern” (p. 20) (Bacevich, 2005, p. 115, p. 20). Loaded military [spectacle](#) and ‘sanitized expressions’ were carried forward by the Bush Administration following 9/11, and terms like: ‘collateral damage’, ‘regime change’, ‘illegal combatants’, and ‘preventative war’ were used to shape the public’s understanding of the War on Terror (Johnson, 2004, p. 4).

<sup>28</sup> For reference “Reagan won 489 electoral votes to 49 for President Jimmy Carter” (Accessed July, 17, 2019: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/ronald-reagan/> The Presidential biographies on WhiteHouse.gov are from “*The Presidents of the United States of America*,” by Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey. Copyright 2006 by the White House Historical Association).

<sup>29</sup> William Safire (1981/10/04) describes how “under the Reagan Corollary to the Carter Doctrine, the U.S. has guaranteed both the territorial integrity and internal stability of Saudi Arabia. The most direct threats come from potential subversion by the million Yemeni who now work in the world’s oil center, and from the strong Communist army now in Southern Yemen”. Accessed (2020/09/21): <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/04/opinion/essay-the-reagan-corollary.html>

opposite: it had to become ever more the province of national security managers who operated without the close scrutiny of the media, the oversight of Congress, or accountability to an involved public” (*Ibid*). This assumption led to the emergence of a professional class of civilian militarists who were more eager to adopt ‘warrior culture’, as civilians tend to be “driven more by ideology” and are generally more inclined toward ‘ruthlessness’ due to their lack of genuine combat experience, a point that will be demonstrated in the analysis (Johnson, 2004, p. 61).

Despite Reagan’s ‘revival’, the 1970s oil/energy crises have been described as “[signalling] the fading of US hegemony”, or the end of its ‘long century’ (Arrighi, 1994 in Robinson, 2010, p. 7). During this trend the old regime experiences a ‘signal’ crisis followed by a ‘revival’, but it is actually a “sign of autumn”, which is followed by precipitous events (usually war) that ultimately suppresses the old regime and results in its terminal crisis; deficit spending, money lending and “war profiteering conceal crises of over accumulation” (*Ibid*). The Neo-Reaganite group associated with the neoconservatism informing the Bush Doctrine was called the Project for a New American Century (1997-2006),<sup>30</sup> and how the Bush Administration responded to the 9/11 crisis-event appears to correspond with the long-century trend (Johnson, 2004).

### **An American Civil Religion & Eschatological ‘Hope’**

To arrive at the point of benevolent humanitarianism-turned-hegemony, one should look to the American civil religion, or the “religion of the republic...[i.e.] a vague but complex public myth whose symbolism [is] rooted explicitly in the biblical tradition...that [serves] to legitimate national life” (Bacevich, 2005, p. 13; Hunter, 1991, p. 346). The public-religious dimension

---

<sup>30</sup> This was a neoconservative think tank based in Washington, D.C. founded by Bill Kristol, Dick Cheney, and Robert Kagan, which focused on U.S. foreign policy. Access Online: [https://militarist-monitor.org/profile/project\\_for\\_the\\_new\\_american\\_century/](https://militarist-monitor.org/profile/project_for_the_new_american_century/) (<http://web.archive.org/web/20070821161035/http://www.newamericancentury.org/index.html>).

developed in concert so personal “religious belief, worship, and association” are inseparable from American institutions and can be observed in the expression of a certain “set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals” which constitute the American civil religion (Bellah, 2005, p. 42). A public ritual which captures the ‘essence’ of this ‘religion’ is the inauguration of an American president (*Ibid*). The public’s will appears to be “carefully institutionalized as the operative source of political authority”, but it is “deprived of an ultimate significance” because the “ultimate sovereignty has been attributed to God”; the determination of morality belongs to a “higher criterion” of judgment, of which the president is obligated to uphold (Bellah, 2005, p. 42-43).

Robert N. Bellah (2005) examines the almost invariable “references to God...in the [public] pronouncements of American presidents” (p. 41); the concept of ‘God’ appeals almost universally because it “means so many different things to so many different people that it is almost an empty sign” (p. 42). The fundamental obligation to “carry out God’s will on earth” appears frequently in relation to the “revolutionary significance of America”,<sup>31</sup> which corresponds to the ‘motivating spirit’ of its founders, and this spiritual force has been “present in every generation since” (Bellah, 2005, p. 43).<sup>32</sup> This understanding of America’s destiny is “very activist and non-contemplative” and has been “historically associated with the Protestant position” (Bellah, 2005, p. 43). However, it is so deeply entrenched that it was clearly enunciated

---

<sup>31</sup> There is reference to how “it does not matter whether the state is the expression of the will of an autocratic monarch or of the ‘people’, the rights of man are more basic than any political structure and provide a point of revolutionary leverage from which any state structure may be radically altered” (Bellah, 2005, p. 43).

<sup>32</sup> While the founding fathers never appear to explicitly speak of a “civil religion”, Bellah (2005) traces the influence of Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* upon them in the “climate of the late eighteenth century” (p. 43), where he describes how the “idea of God, played a constitutive role in the [thoughts] of the early American statesman” (p. 44). The God of the civil religion is not only rather “unitarian...he is also on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love”, and “he is actively interested and involved in history, with a special concern for America” (Bellah, 2005, p. 45). While the civil religion is “selectively derived from Christianity”, Christ is never explicitly mentioned, but rather there are appeals to ideas of an “American Israel” and the “promised land” where “God has led his people to establish a new sort of social order that shall be a light unto all the nations” (Bellah, 2005, p. 45-46).

in the “first major statement of the first Catholic president”<sup>33</sup> and perhaps more predictably, in the statements of George W. Bush after 9/11 (Bellah, 2005, p. 43; Bacevich, 2005, p. 12).<sup>34</sup>

Chouliaraki (2013) describes moral subjectivity via the “*constitutive* force” of habituation amid normalized communications of war (p. 319), and Bellah (2005) explains how “from the earliest years of the republic” there was a “collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things” institutionalized within the collective (p. 46). The establishment of public holidays involved the American people in the ritualized expression of the religious sentiment of the state (Bellah, 2005, p. 46).<sup>35</sup> The American flag is a political-religious patriotic icon which has become “meaningful to the public through repeated imaging and storytelling” as a “cultural product of nationalism” (Helmets & Hill, 2004, p. 8). Its “Stars and Stripes took on a new symbolic weight during World War II” as a result of Washington’s 1942 Memorial Day parade, in which “flags appeared everywhere and, thanks to [President FDR’s] example, the display of Old Glory on private homes, businesses, and commercial products became common practice” (Marling & Wetchnall, p. 76 in Helmets & Hill, 2004. p. 9).

Allowing the “flag to grace a private home meant that everyone could partake of its meaning, share its association, [while marking] the national community” and in 1946 the “[Congressional Flag Code](#) made the flag a religious object, with rules for devotion”, so now you have a widely distributed object with official regulations supporting its worship (Helmets & Hill, 2004, p. 9).

This illustrates how the American ‘monoculture’ lifestyle model demands ‘certain products’ that

---

<sup>33</sup> Quote from Kennedy’s presidential address: “now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need – not as a call to battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, ‘rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation’ – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself” (Bellah, 2005, p. 43).

<sup>34</sup> George W. Bush’s religious orientation is United Methodist, a U.S. based Protestant-Evangelical denomination.

<sup>35</sup> He notes how the “civil religion...[has] served as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding” (Bellah, 2005, p. 46).

lend themselves to ideological colonization (*Ibid*).<sup>36</sup> The unifying force behind the flag was ‘patriotism’ or focusing on protecting the “country that allowed...individual and collective freedom to flourish”, since the country’s diversity otherwise prevented meaningful cohesion, and as such the flag was an aspirational and intertextual symbol, in the way that it offered “a field of multiple [symbolic] projections” (Hariman & Lucaites, p. 371 in Helmers & Hill, 2004, p. 9).<sup>37</sup>

Bellah (2005) also refers to points of national crisis, or “times of trial” that involve questions of national meaning and require “expression in the civil religion” – the first two trials concerned American Independence/Revolution and then Slavery/Civil War (p. 54). He describes a third trial: “the attainment of some kind of viable and coherent world order” and how “a world civil religion could be accepted as a fulfillment and not a denial of [the] American civil religion” (Bellah, 2005, p. 54). Bellah (2005) states: “such an outcome has been the eschatological hope of [the] American civil religion from the beginning [and]...to deny such an outcome would be to deny the meaning of America itself”; the 9/11 crisis-event was framed as a defence of what America fundamentally ‘is’ morally/economically (p. 54; De Goede & Randalls, 2009).

### **The American Culture War: One Nation Under Two Impulses**

James Davison Hunter (1991) describes what is at stake in a ‘culture war’ where conflicting

---

<sup>36</sup> Henri Lefebvre describes how a society’s space is socially produced, thereby resulting in a “representational space [which] overlays physical space with the force of symbolic meanings and hidden metaphors” (Zagora, 2014, p. 159). These representational spaces are not the result of “spontaneous social processes that have occurred over...time, they are rather projected interventions with the scope of influencing the masses and their everyday life” (*Ibid*). Ideological colonization refers to the process through which “prominent containers of political and cultural iconography” are placed strategically within social spaces, so that certain ideals may be spread among the population, for the pursuit of power has always involved making use of symbols as shorthand for abstract collective ideals (*Ibid*).

<sup>37</sup> The commemoration of war in public social space has been written about in recent years. Nostalgia and emotions are activated through the objectification/materialization of tragedy via ‘events’/monuments/the poppy, and while emotional performance surrounding ‘sacred’ political-religious objects is not my primary focus, it situates an arrangement of cultural products that reflect imagined meaning, and the flag itself is relevant to the analysis (Abousnougá & Machin, 2011; Basham, 2016; Bishop, 2016; Davidson, 2016).

“systems of moral understanding” generate “political and social hostility” between polarized groups whose respective beliefs provide a “source of identity, purpose” and sense of social cohesion, and thus “have a character of ultimacy to them” (p. 42). He engages with Bellah’s (2005) ‘civil religion’, and how the ‘quasi-religious visions’ or philosophies of public life correspond with the “religion of the republic” (Hunter, 1991, p. 346).<sup>38</sup> In America, ‘faith’ is a more appropriate term than ideology, in “capturing the essence of almost everything that passes for belief”, and this applies to “traditional theisms” and “secular ideologies”; those faithful to the conventions contrived in the divide lay claim to “truth about the world” (Hunter, 1991, p. 57). Political power entails a “struggle between competing truth claims” (p. 58) against a shifting landscape in the “realignment of pluralistic diversity” once organized based on traditional theological faith, and disagreements over doctrine, now according to “sources of moral truth” (Hunter, 1991, p.77). These polarized public philosophies contain inverted ideals regarding the interpretation of the same key sources that substantiate the national public myth, and they manifest in the “*impulse toward orthodoxy* and the *impulse toward progressivism*” (p. 43), which provide the “*formal properties* [for] a belief system or worldview” (Hunter, 1991, p. 44).<sup>39</sup> The source of ‘moral truth’ for the orthodox orientation involves the “*commitment on the part of the adherents to an external, definable, and transcendent authority*”; this ‘authority’ defines “at least in abstract, a consistent, unchangeable measure of value, purpose, goodness, and identity,

---

<sup>38</sup> Hunter (1991) describes how for its “proponents, this...civil religion...[is] a special glue that [helps] bind the country together” and for its “critics, it [is] a tool cynically used in the rhetoric of politicians, a hollow ritual exhibited during times of national celebration and grieving” (p. 346).

<sup>39</sup> They may be understood in relation to their “inverted opposition” so where cultural conservatives attribute ‘freedom’ to ‘economic choice’/justice to ‘socially righteous living’, to the progressives, ‘freedom’ is ‘individual rights’/‘justice’ is ‘economic equity’ (Hunter, 1991, p. 115). Hunter (1991) notes that both “biblical *and* Enlightenment themes are present in the historical record” but that either side selectively cite examples to support their cause at the expense of one another in public discourse (p. 115).

both personal and collective” (Hunter, 1991, p. 44).<sup>40</sup> The progressive orientation locates moral authority in the “spirit of the modern age, a spirit of rationalism and subjectivism”; progressivist “moral ideals tend, to derive from and embody (though rarely exhaust) that spirit” and “truth tends to be viewed as a process, [or] as a reality that is ever unfolding” (Hunter, 1991, p. 44).<sup>41</sup>

This conflict represents the “struggle over national identity”, so what Americans “have been in the past”, are presently, and what they “will aspire to become in the new millennium”, as the culture war is fought over the “*meaning of America*” (Hunter, 1991, p. 50). How this cultural conflict ties into American national self-understanding via its public myth corresponds to the fundamental paradox of identity, which I will now demonstrate in relation to the 9/11 crisis-event/point-of-rupture debate.<sup>42</sup> The perception that 9/11 ‘changed America’ as the Bush Administration publicized, runs counter to what two American historians describe.

Robert Kagan (a neoconservative interventionist) and Andrew Bacevich (2005) (a conservative non-interventionist) agree that the 9/11 ‘event’ did not change what ‘America’ was becoming, which was more ‘itself’.<sup>43</sup> Suggesting this assumes 1) that this ‘America’ was inevitable because

---

<sup>40</sup> Sources of moral truth for the orthodox: “linking the nation’s birth to divine will” (p. 109), and “divine providence” (p. 110), where America’s “founding documents [were] ‘divinely inspired by Scripture’; belief in “civic freedom” (p. 110), and that God favours capitalism where socialism is “inherently hostile to Christianity and capitalism [is] an essential mode of human life that corresponds to religious truth”(p. 112), justice is equated to “moral righteousness” (Hunter, 1991, p. 112).

<sup>41</sup> Sources of moral truth for progressivists: they “rarely attribute America’s origins to the actions of a Supreme Being” (p. 113); America’s founding documents guarantee a “secular humanistic state” (p. 113), and they believe in a “living constitution” so one that changes with the times (Hunter, 1991, p. 113). Despite rejecting the “loyalties of the orthodox” they tend to believe in “eternal realities” (i.e. universal principles that align with the humanist tradition) (p. 113); law is “one of the highest expressions of human rationality and must evolve as the society evolves” (p. 114), and it serves the ideals of freedom and justice in the Liberal or “negative sense” thus “granting immunity from interference” (versus ‘civic’ freedom to allow society to govern itself) (Hunter, 1991, p. 114). Hunter (1991) states: “what all progressivist worldviews share in common is the tendency to resymbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life” (p. 44-45). Being ‘oppressed’ is considered an injustice, and social equality is the basis for understanding justice (Hunter, 1991).

<sup>42</sup> i.e. a critical point in time which is discontinuous with the past and changes the future.

<sup>43</sup> Although, this process is described as having been shaped over a long period of time (perhaps even prior to the founding of their nation).

of something intrinsic to the American character, or 2) that so long as something exists and identifies as being itself it will always become more itself, simply by being itself over time. It engages the crux of the orthodoxy/progressivism debate over doctrinal determinacy/volition, which will be unpacked in the theory chapter, but before this, it makes sense to establish a definition of crisis in the context of wartime ritual (Hunter, 1991).

### **Identity Crisis (of masculinity) and the Performance of Wartime Ritual**

Crisis can be defined in relation to how ‘threat’ manifests through “practices of articulation and identity” so involves giving representation to it via multimodal mediation; this informs the process of giving ‘reality’ to it as something that endangers a particular community (De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 861). It operates via the objectification of “events [and] disciplines relations” and creates the demand for “particular forms of social action, from insurance to warfare” (*Ibid*). The most ‘durable’ threat articulated involves characterizing the ‘Other’ as “alien, subversive, dirty or sick”; as such, it is useful for sequestering identity ideals of the ‘at risk’ community (*Ibid*). Terrorism is considered particularly uncertain/unpredictable/incalculable, due to its “dispersed and fluid nature”, and the threat to the American “way of life...underpins its catastrophic potential” (De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 861-862).<sup>44</sup> The articulation of threat creates the conditions to imagine a response to the objectified crisis-event of the community. Casey Kelly (2016) demonstrates how this process unfolds in the context of warrior culture in his analysis of the crisis of masculinity, doomsday preppers and reality television. He describes how ‘masculinity’ involves repeated ritualization to become ‘gendered’ over time;<sup>45</sup> this embodiment “gains power through a cyclical pattern”, and “male primacy is sustained by cycles of

---

<sup>44</sup> This catastrophic potential is addressed with the “precautionary principle” which is “marked by the twin features of (scientific) uncertainty coupled with a possibility of...serious and irreversible damage” – so the ‘incalculable’ is associated with “potential apocalypse” (Ewald, 2002, p. 283-284 in De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 864).

<sup>45</sup> i.e. an “arrangement of traits and behaviors enacted through” embodiment (*Ibid*).

destabilization/re-stabilization” (Hearn; Modleski; Robinson in Kelly, 2016, p. 97). This cycle operates on the fiction that ‘men’ collectively “have been deprived of...status” because of the social (equality) movements of the 1960s (Kelly, 2016, p. 97). He relates this to the apocalyptic performance of ‘manhood’ through the “adoption of paramilitary aesthetics”, the “use of vernacular language”, and the rituals performed, whether “stockpiling, training [or] simulation” (*Ibid*). In this arrangement, ‘warriors’ reconstitute ‘manliness’ under ‘threat’ of ‘feminine power’, while faced with representations of “manhood in decline” (*Ibid*).

Those in-crisis seek out “theatrical [spaces] to perform their feelings of rage and victimhood, deliver monologues about the collapse of civilization, model their armaments, rehearse paramilitary battles with post-apocalyptic marauders, and exhibit their masculine know-how” (Kelly, 2016, p. 95). The format of reality television gives the impression that viewers have “unmediated access to the masculinized survival rituals performed by ordinary Americans” (Kelly, 2016, p.96). This type of programming “recuperates hegemonic masculinity by restaging the plausible real world conditions under which the performance of manly [labour]” can be represented as “instrumental to collective survival” (*Ibid*).<sup>46</sup> Crisis can be characterized in terms of “postmodern apocalyptic rhetoric”, i.e. immanent (internal) subjective crisis and imminent (external) doom-laden projections (Gunn & Beard in Kelly, 2016, p. 97). Those struggling with this ‘anomic crisis’ seek “relief in imminent destruction” to ameliorate the immanent (internal) subjective crisis, but it does not provide a sense of security (Kelly, 2016, p. 110-111).<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> This is relevant for the analysis of the podcasts because of how Joe Rogan characterizes the nature of the medium, and how the course of the conversations tend to trend thematically.

<sup>47</sup> This is because there is no “permanent or sustainable version of manhood that escapes the slippery instability of the subject in late modernity” (Kelly, 2016, p. 110-111).

Crisis serves as a means to enact a ‘pretense’ or “hedge against being revealed as a fraud, an exaggerated set of activities that keep others from seeing through us, and a frenzied effort to keep at bay those fears within ourselves”, so is understood as a “strategic performance of victimhood” (Kimmel in Kelly, 2016, p. 97).<sup>48</sup> This corresponds to the “troubled national mood of the late 1990s”, or the timeframe leading up to 9/11, that Susan Faludi (1999) describes as resulting from a ‘domestic apocalypse’; she traces the crisis back to the “decades following World War II” and a breakdown in the “promises of postwar manhood” i.e. an unsuccessful transition back into civilian life (in Brooks, 2010, p. 24, 26). This era has been characterized as a “time of great restlessness and insecurity” as men were struggling to replace a heroic/warrior self-image with mundane routines of domestic-life despite feeling ‘temporary’ about their existence (Brooks, 2010, p. 25).<sup>49</sup> The degraded ‘blueprint’ of imagined masculine heritage allowed them to experiment with new models (Brooks, 2010, p. 24).

Kelly (2016) describes mass media’s role in constructing ‘national manhood’, and how the National Geographic Society’s television network and magazine “rose to prominence because its rhetoric consummated Theodore Roosevelt’s vision of the sporting man/adventurer who promised to recuperate the virile national manhood of preindustrial America” (Kelly 2016, p.101). This recontextualizes Faludi’s claim, for strategically threatening what is ‘vital’ to one’s self-assurance predates WWII but presenting the opportunity to seize an idealized heroic model of identity, or a paragon of successful masculinity that one can no longer live up to, means that WWII could have sent those already attempting to capture this ideal into crisis-mode.

---

<sup>48</sup> This crisis may “perpetuate male primacy”, but mutually could be an “attempt to escape cycles of alienation and amelioration”, i.e. finding connection/self-improvement within a scope of familiar action (Kelly, 2016, p. 97).

<sup>49</sup> The social-fiction regarding the changes of the 1960s “provided the stimuli for [an existing] disruption of the secure façade of masculine self-assurance and confidence”, resulting from perceived failure (Faludi, 1999 in Brooks, 2010, p. 26).

### Chapter 3: Theory – The Operative Value of Myth & Apocalyptic Rhetoric

Having established the War Imaginary, the mythic structures that serve as the source of legitimacy to public national life, and a definition of crisis as it relates to imagination, articulation, and representation of identities,<sup>50</sup> this chapter will unpack the undergirding apparatus of the imaginative order. It begins by describing the operative value of myth and how historical-myth is modelled to the public while sketching out how possibility becomes circumscribed through objectification. It then positions the production of history in the context of crisis, followed by a deconstruction of narrative identity; the mobilization of desire is then addressed as it corresponds to the discursive construction of threat, and then finally it culminates in a description of the revolutionary significance of the nation-state and apocalyptic rhetoric.

Myth figures into national imagining as a mode of formation via its relationship with language for myth can only exist through acts of being communicated, as such, it makes sense to start with Claude Lévi-Strauss' (1955) description of the operative value of myth (p. 430).<sup>51</sup> This operative-value functions on a fundamental distinction which draws upon Saussure's description of *langue* i.e. structure of language – which belongs to “revertible time” and *parole* i.e. statistics of language – which is understood as “non-revertible” (*Ibid*). The two time referents are combined to produce a ‘third referent’ used in myth, so relies upon how 1) a myth's events are “alleged to have taken place in time”,<sup>52</sup> while 2) simultaneously holding that the “specific pattern described is everlasting”, as it explains the past, present and future (*Ibid*).

---

<sup>50</sup> The idealized self/community versus the durable threat of the Other.

<sup>51</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955) describes how “myth is language”, making it a “part of human speech”, but it cannot “simply be treated as language if its specific problems are to be solved” (p. 430). He then suggests that to “preserve its specificity” one should be in a “position to show that it is both the same thing as language, and also something different from it”, much in the same way that “language itself can be analyzed into things which are at the same time similar and different” (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430).

<sup>52</sup> Even if that time was “before the world was created or during its first stages” (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430).

Lévi-Strauss (1955) describes how politics “have largely replaced...[myth] in modern societies” (p. 430) and demonstrates how in a way that is comparable to Benedict Anderson’s (2006) notion of ‘simultaneity’ as it relates to Walter Benjamin’s description of “homogeneous, empty time” and “Messianic time” (p. 24). Drawing upon an example in which a “historian refers to the French Revolution”, he describes how this event is always understood as a “sequence of past happenings, a non-revertible series of events [,] the remote consequences of which may still be felt at present” (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430). To the politician (and adjacent ‘followers’) it is both a past-sequence (belonging to the historian) and an “everlasting pattern which can be detected in the present French social structure...[which] provides a clue for its interpretation” (*Ibid*).<sup>53</sup>

The historian’s non-revertible time is reminiscent of how Anderson (2006) describes ‘homogeneous, empty time’ in which simultaneity is “transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” (p. 24). The politician’s revertible time is like ‘Messianic time’ or a prefigured “simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present” – which is “vertically linked to Divine Providence [or God]” (*Ibid*). Anderson (2006) also describes how the masses came to be ‘invited’ to ‘history’ by politically influential proponents of nationalism;<sup>54</sup> the events of the French Revolution were reified through the “accumulating memory of print”, as the “experience was shaped by millions of printed words into a ‘concept’ on the printed page, and in due course, into a model” (p. 80).

Nobody appears to have questioned the fact of its fully realized historical basis, and comparably American independence movements became models/blueprints once printed about (Anderson, 2006, p. 81). Somehow through this act, these models lost their outward appearance of being

---

<sup>53</sup> As well as, “a lead from which to infer...future developments” (Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430).

<sup>54</sup> What Anderson (2006) describes as “new middle-class intelligentsia” (p. 80).

created, and instead were understood as being fully formed facts that merely needed to be discovered by (omniscient) historians (*Ibid*). This sense of omniscience corresponds to a reader's capacity to engage with events "all *at once*" via *embedded* presentation devices, i.e. the newspaper/novel (Anderson, 2006, p. 25-26). These devices allow us to imagine national communities as "sociological entities of such firm and stable reality [in which] their members...can even be described as passing each other on the street, without ever becoming acquainted, and still be connected" (*Ibid*). There are also 'disembedding mechanisms' i.e. abstracting symbolic "systems of accumulated expertise" that have their basis in traditional empire-building (Latour, 1987, p. 220; Giddens, 1991, p. 2-3). Latour (1987) describes them in relation to their 'cycles of accumulation', that continue into the post-traditional order to "empty day-to-day life of its traditional content and set up globalising influences" (*Ibid*).<sup>55</sup>

Anderson (2006) describes the impetus behind serialization,<sup>56</sup> which also corresponds to gross dichotomizing as an imaginative habit to 'totalize' or subsume otherness. The mindset emerging from colonial knowledge-production holds that the 'world' is "made up of replicable plurals", and that the "provisional representation of a series" allows one to imagine an identity before it exists in any real form i.e. "a nationalist series before the appearance of any nationalists" (Anderson, 2006, p. 184).<sup>57</sup> The "concretization of these possibilities" is what "[shapes] the grammar" of this warping, totalizing tendency,<sup>58</sup> in the "colonial state's peculiar imagining of

---

<sup>55</sup> Dominance results from the institutionalization of these domains through instantiation of the "principle of radical doubt" i.e. critical reason (Giddens, 1991, p. 3); critical reason subjects knowledge to regular revision, and it affects the "existential dimension of the contemporary social world", permeating the everyday philosophical consciousness, for anything that was once considered 'true' could be abandoned with 'reason' (Giddens, 1991, p. 3; Hunter, 1991).

<sup>56</sup> That is, what drives 'homogenous, empty time' as time-sequence (Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006).

<sup>57</sup> The colonial-state style of thought, best characterized by the interlinked acts of mapping, taking census, and creating a museum, illustrate the 'totalizing classificatory grid, which could be *applied* with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control' (*Emphasis Added*. Anderson, 2006, p. 184).

<sup>58</sup> Anderson (2006) discusses the revolutionary technologies/policies behind military surveillance or the resources for visualizing and imposing meaning on space and persons by 'filling in' boxes of a 'totalizing classificatory' grid to give 'reality' to an anticipatory-model (p. 173).

history and power” (Anderson, 2006, p. 184-185). Asymmetrical power-relations emerge via the embedded/disembedding discursive means for making representational ‘objects’ possible (Latour, 1987; Anderson, 2006; Giddens, 1991; De Goede & Randalls, 2009).

Jean Baudrillard (1988) describes how referential points within a ductile sign-system come to be liquified and resurrected so that they may be translated across every equivalent system, where the resulting ‘reality’ is constituted via substitution of a functional operative-descriptive ‘double’ to deter real-processes, effectively counteracting variability to simplify complex processes via circumscription. Latour (1987) describes this arrangement in relation to how ‘situations’ may be ‘mastered’ by “reversing the flow of time” to capitalize on “paper possible outcomes” (p. 231); ‘objects’ occupy the “beginning and the end of a similar accumulation cycle...[where] they all end up at such a scale that a few men or women can dominate them by sight” (p. 227).<sup>59</sup>

Mapping/anticipatory modelling for reality takes place via such communicatory instruments to give concrete existence to a paradigm that those working within the parameters of i.e.

administrators and military operations, can serve (Winichakul in Anderson, 2006, p. 173-174).

The mechanism is not required for the justification of claims, rather it is the frame to impose control – “triangulation by triangulation, war by war, [and] treaty by treaty” (*Ibid*).

Comparable to how ‘faith’ is a more appropriate term for belief in the context of the culture wars, ‘trust’ generates ‘ontological security’ i.e. the perception of a secure reality so that one can engage practically with abstract mechanisms that create ‘time-space’ distance, which is accelerated through the process of emptying out traditional content (Giddens, 1991, p. 3).

Modernity constitutes a ‘risk culture’ despite the culture not being more prone to risk, rather risk

---

<sup>59</sup> Giovanni Arrighi (1994) describes an “inherently capitalist phenomena” in relation to “systemic cycles of accumulation” that “[points] to a fundamental continuity in world-scale processes of capital accumulation in modern times”(p. 8-9).

perception becomes indispensable to how the social world is reflexively organized – as the “future is continually drawn into the present” (Giddens, 1991, p. 3-4). Modern risk-perception based reflexive organization extends to one’s identity for the ‘self’ is cultivated reflexively through programmes of ‘authentic’ actualization/mastery; post-traditional ‘morality’ is conceptualized as unifying those engaging with emancipatory politics (Giddens, 1991, p. 9).

Post-modernity is characterized by incredulity/skepticism introduced via critical reason permeating the cultural-philosophical consciousness; however, for someone to believe in ‘authenticity’ they would have to be credulous in their desire to locate meaning in traditional modes of unification, i.e. via “speculative narrative” and “[narratives] of emancipation” (Lyotard, 2004, p. 123, 138; Giddens, 1991, p. 3). Unifying self-mastering ‘authentic’ followers,<sup>60</sup> suggests the role of the politician in the culture wars; increasingly polarized models of ‘moral-truth’ bound by inverted interpretation of source texts imbued with *Scriptural/Enlightenment* themes are given reconstituted re-presentation to gain mass support (Hunter, 1991).

The assumed unity (or rhetorical unified fiction) of imagined community speaks to a discursive-organizational principle concerning future-organizing i.e. simplicity, which fuses “sufficient complexity of thought with the necessary simplicity of action”, to account for the large variety of information being registered by individuals that “reflects an increasingly random, entropic world” (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012, p. 6-7). This ties into motivation for it describes how taking ‘action’ results in the clarification of ‘situations’ because it reduces equivocality; sensemaking, storytelling, and narrativization are connected by a ‘story’ that represents what is happening, so to clarify through action means to shape (rather than eliminate) what constitutes a “lack of clarity” (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012, p. 6-7). Sensible events are said to resemble their

---

<sup>60</sup> i.e. those engaging in ‘authentic’ mastery under a metanarrative of becoming ‘free’ from the ‘inauthentic’.

predecessors,<sup>61</sup> so this process entails editing “in the interests of familiarity”, meaning that for discourse to be effective it needs to resonate with the interpretation of one’s origin myth (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012, p. 8). The shaping capacity of ‘print’ memory is instrumental in creating the tapestry for what is assumed to be self-evident (Anderson, 2006; Lévi-Strauss, 1955, p. 430). Lexical gaps or ‘holes’ in conditioned patterns require a lengthy explanation,<sup>62</sup> but “myth is the part of language where the formula traduttore, traditore [i.e. translator, traitor/lacuna] reaches its lowest truth-value” (or logical-value) (*Ibid*).

### **Crisis, the Production of History & Interpretive Procedure**

Amin Samman (2015) considers the role of historical myth and fiction in the portrayal of crises, or an appeal to the imaginary dimension to construct events-as-crises, and how subjective interventions influence outcomes via the discursive-construction of future crises through the act of recollecting past crises (p. 966-967). Crisis, as a modern concept, is understood as a “means of exercising the historical imagination...[or] a tool...[used] to give shape or figure to history” (Samman, 2015, p. 967). He positions “modes of history-production” amid historical representation which demand interpretive procedure that include: “analogical reasoning” (p. 981), “narrativization” and “lesson drawing” (Samman, 2015, p. 982).

Analogical reasoning means “drawing analogies or counter-analogies between crises” where the “simplest analogies provide comparisons between ‘point-like’ aspects of crises, or otherwise seemingly self-evident processes of development” (Samman, 2015, p. 981). Resemblance is “forged between elements or dimensions of crisis episodes, rather than their episodic character”,

---

<sup>61</sup> This is comparable to the perceived impossibility of imitating the model of one’s masculine predecessors and potentially suggests a source of frustration, which compels those who find themselves in-crisis, because they simply want to ‘make sense’ according to their privileged mythos (Brooks, 2010; Solomon, 2013; Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> Similar to when there are no words to explain phenomena in a given language.

whereas “analogies that deal in the episodic character of crises work instead through comparisons between causal-chains of events” (*Ibid*).<sup>63</sup> Narrativization imposes a “story order on history through the selection, sequencing, and configuration of more than one of its events” (Samman, 2015, p. 982). It does not “conform to the logic of comparison” as it affiliates (rather than resembles) through the process of narrativization and enables “past crises to be apperceived as belonging to a process that culminates in a later, crisis-ridden present” (*Ibid*). Lesson drawing combines analogical reasoning (crisis-resemblance) and narrativization (serialization/causal-chain) so historical re-presentation can ‘reveal’ what *should be* learned by transposing the past into the present; history becomes ‘useful’ through the act of being produced (*Ibid*).

Samman (2015) describes how crisis “acquires an eschatological meaning” in ‘theological circles’ in the context of “decisions that *will have been made* – rather than a mere ongoing or punctuated process of decision-making, which provides crisis with its temporal dimension” (Koselleck, 2002, p. 245 in Samman, 2015, p. 969). The coming “Apocalypse operates through a ‘cosmic foreshortening of time’ (Koselleck: 2002: 245), wherein one’s faith [one] both anticipates and enacts the Last Judgement before its arrival” (*Ibid*). This usage entails a “non-linear and entangled temporality, for it designates an ongoing experience in the present of an event that has yet to actually occur” (Samman, 2015, p. 969).

The Bush Doctrine of pre-emption works in the same way as an ‘operative logic’ in the context of “objective uncertainty” (p. 11), where it is possessed of a “proprietary epistemology” and “unique ontology”, functioning as a “mode of being based upon certainty for future...cause” granting “epistemological immediacy to deal with imminent threat that translates into clear and

---

<sup>63</sup> Samman (2015) describes how this is a “more complex form of analogical reasoning, but at its root it too rests on an identification of similarities and differences between crises” (p. 981).

present danger” (Massumi, 2015, p. 6-7). It also resembles how modernity constitutes a ‘risk culture’ – where the “future is continually drawn into the present” (p. 3), through anticipatory risk assessment, despite the culture not being more prone to risk (Giddens, 1991, p. 3-4).<sup>64</sup>

This fusion of two states into one that demands interpretation resembles what has already been observed with the operative value of myth. Analogical reasoning corresponds to ‘reversible’ or ‘Messianic’ time (orthodoxy), in the way that it is dealing with ‘self-evident’, prefigured, antecedent crisis-events, which have a forged connection that could be perceived as an everlasting pattern (Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006). Narrativization serializes ‘non-reversible’ ‘homogenous, empty time’ (progressivism); the ones interpreting the crisis-event combine the two aspects to create a third time referent to transpose the past into the present to be utilized (Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006; Hunter, 1991).<sup>65</sup>

Stuart Croft (2006) describes how in the context of the state, a “crisis is discursively constituted, [where it] represents a point of rupture, and is subject to a variety of narratives that constitute the decisive intervention, of which one is successful in constituting a new strategic trajectory” (p. 79). He suggests that “crisis is the moment in which the unity of the state is discursively renegotiated and, potentially, re-achieved...[while] a new strategic trajectory is imposed upon the institutions that now (re)comprise it” (Hay, ‘Crisis and the structural transformation’, p. 337 in Croft, 2006, p. 79). Narratives are selectively shaped in the crisis-process on the basis of

---

<sup>64</sup> This corresponds to how ‘krisis’ [Greek] permeates the rational ‘logics’ of modernity i.e. politics, law and medicine, and concerns judgment based on a variety of models for temporal perception of what might constitute a ‘danger’ (Samman, 2015, p. 969-970). This is accomplished through the analytical frames of ‘objective’/‘subjective’ conditions, and a simultaneous ‘objective/subjective’ condition requiring interpretation (*Ibid*).

<sup>65</sup> The previous definition of crisis situates the articulation of threat and imagining the group’s identity ideals being at risk of apocalyptic potential thereby demanding social action – this can be combined with this new assertion where historical-imagining is a tool to shape history for prospective use when faced with crisis (De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Samman, 2015).

adaptivity, and once one “strategic trajectory is established, it leads to a period of stability, during which time, contradictions emerge and develop, which will come to [discursively] constitute...the next crisis” (Croft, 2006, p. 79). During the period of stability or “political settlement”, the “unity of the state resides primarily in the fact that the legacy of its former crises set the parameters within which the agencies and institutions that give effect to state power must operate” (Hay, p. 332 in Croft, 2006, p. 79). This ideational ‘package’ or “policy paradigm” necessarily “limits legitimate responses to a particular issue” (Croft, 2006, p. 79).<sup>66</sup>

This brings us back to how the Executive branch of the United States insisted that “September 11<sup>th</sup> was a break in the flow of history, discontinuous with the past” (Meyers, 2008, p. 55). Despite promoting “popular belief in discontinuity”, they were in fact exploiting the “general continuity of [American] beliefs...[,] institutions and the specific continuity of [their]...people, methods and aspirations” (Meyers, 2008, p. 55). Reason, like modern ironic consciousness via subsequent vision, serves as the “great faculty of history” for it “puts distance between us and our past, [and] permits us to extricate ourselves tentatively from the tangle of memory and dream”, and in creating this distance we get to “*choose our past*, [and] how we [will] take possession of it” (Meyers, 2008, p. 54; Fussell, 2000). Now that the operative value of myth and historical imagination have been adjoined, I will demonstrate how they also resemble Narrative Identity, thereby setting up the parallel processes of individual and state identification.

### **Narrative Identity: the function of ‘emplotment’ & mimesis (poetical imitation)**

Paul Ricœur’s theory of narrative identity derives its core concepts from Aristotle: “*mythos* which he translates as ‘emplotment’ (1991a, p. 20) and...*mimesis*” (p. 452) or the “poetical

---

<sup>66</sup> This corresponds to how sensible events are supposed to resemble their predecessors, which aligns with how an inability to do so would force someone to attempt something different or try and make sense of what they understand to be characteristic of their *mythos* (Brooks, 2010; Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012).

imitation of action” (in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454).<sup>67</sup> *Muthos* is described by modern theorists as “that which is represented” and not “representation” or “exposition”, despite how these aspects “can [appear] identical” (Downing, 1984, p. 165). It has five levels of definition, and the “need for the qualifying adjective *reconstituted* becomes clear” upon expansion, initially defining it as 1) “the totality of related events as reconstructed by the reader out of the poem...[that is] projected on a chronological line” (*Ibid*). Amending this definition at each level:

2) subjectivity requires the ‘totality of related events’ to be ‘reconstructed’ on the basis of personal relevance to one’s “cultural history...organized and aligned around a central character, family, or event and projected in the chronological line...[as] time sequence” (p. 168);

3) “functions of...[the] *dramatis personae*” so this ‘totality’ can be “understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action” (p. 169);

4) *muthos fabula* i.e. recognizing the “synthetic superiority” to the “underlying principle for...ordered succession...and connection...[that informs] principles of causality [and] probability” (p. 173);

5) involves the description of the “play as primarily an imitation of real life, real events, and real characters, who themselves shape and determine the course of events” (Downing, 1984, p. 175).

68

---

<sup>67</sup> Anderson (2006) discusses historical emplotment and its clear connection to the ‘birth’ of national imagining in the context of writing self-consciously *on “behalf of the dead”*, which will be relevant to the discussion of ‘revolutionary ruptures’ (p. 197).

<sup>68</sup> In the fifth version the “character is important as [a] morally active and psychologically distinct *character*” (p. 175), and this “character is seen to determine the causal progress of the action through its aims...and purpose”, and must make ‘choices’ and ‘do’ things within the “ethical framework for the...plot”, and it is from this shift in perspective that we may understand how an ‘action’ is transformed into an ‘event’ (Downing, 1984, p. 176). The fifth version also involves a “triadic structure, whose moments are an initial situation, a moment of change, and then the changed situation” (p. 176); finally, it also involves how the “play undertakes to represent and to clarify as its...action”, which leads one to understand the “unavoidable interplay and interdependence of the various elements of *muthos*” (Downing, 1984, p. 177).

The five levels of *muthos* demonstrates how individual ‘event’ components are rendered ‘meaningful’ within the larger imaginative order, and one may observe how this mediating function is operationalized in conjunction with mimesis (Downing, 1984; Verhesschen, 2003). Ricœur developed a three-step mimetic process of mediation, which takes place between ‘life’ and ‘narrative’; <sup>69</sup> this relationship is ‘cyclic’, thereby presenting repeated opportunities to transcend opposing views regarding the “origin of the narrative structure” (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 452). Ricœur situates compositional ‘emplotment’ in the “intermediate position” (*Mimesis II*), between life’s discursive-conceptual network (*Mimesis I*), and the “horizon of possible experience” (*Mimesis III*) (in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454).

### ***Mimesis I***

Narrative becomes embedded via “emplotment in the world of action”, so in one’s living-experience through familiar “semantics of action”, or that which enables an immediate understanding of what an action ‘is’ (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453). <sup>70</sup> There are a variety of terms that are assumed to be shared between an audience and the one telling the narrative i.e. familiarity with: ‘actor’, ‘means’, ‘purpose’, ‘circumstance’, ‘conflict’ – and notions of what ‘success’ and ‘failure’ looks like in this network of concepts (*Ibid*). However, a narrative’s appeal moves beyond this understanding due to the addition of “discursive characteristics” that create the narrative from “sentences of action” (*Ibid*). The narrative’s “diachronical order”, <sup>71</sup> is

---

<sup>69</sup> Despite acknowledging this correlation, he believes that it would be a mistake to equate one’s life to a story (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 452).

<sup>70</sup> As distinguished between “action and mere physical movement and psychophysiological behaviour” (1991a, p. 28, in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453).

<sup>71</sup> This diachronic order i.e. historical-time as it deals with successive change between points in time versus synchronic dealing with one point or moment without historical sequence (synchronic also meaning simultaneous) mirrors Anderson’s (2006) understanding of a simultaneous/anonymous social cohesion via (serialized) homogenous-empty/(prefigured-analogical) Messianic time (Samman, 2015; Verhesschen, 2003).

informed by one's understanding of the rules that allow for comprehension of the composition (*Ibid*). The next point of narrative 'anchorage' is comprised of the "symbolic resources of the practical field" where actions are "symbolically mediated" through narration if they are "already articulated in signs, rules and norms" (*Ibid*). The final point of this section's process of anchoring narrative involves the "pre-narrative quality of human experience" which requires one to recognize the "temporal structures of action" beyond this familiar "conceptual network of action and...symbolic resources" – such "temporal features call for narration" (*Ibid*).<sup>72</sup>

### ***Mimesis II***

Emplotment becomes operationalized (as it functions through mediation) in the configuration and arrangement of facts (*Ibid*). The 'story' in its entirety requires mediation between distinct events in sequence, where emplotment transforms these separate events within this sequence set into a 'configuration', so the event is not just meaningful in its singular occurrence, but gains meaning through the narrative's progress (*Ibid*). As these events are being synthesized into a cohesive narrative, the emplotment also serves to synthesize "heterogeneous components like actors, means, purposes, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results" etc. as it contemporaneously "mediates between *two kinds of time*" (*Emphasis Added. Ibid*). While succession is discrete, a "particular configuration" emerges as the "episodical dimension pulls the narrative towards a linear representation whereas the configurational dimension transforms a sequence of events into a meaningful totality" (*Ibid*). An 'episodical dimension' corresponds to the serialization of a causal-chain and the 'configurational dimension' resembles the prefigured-

---

<sup>72</sup> If not for these 'structures of action' we would not be able to speak of 'life' as a "story in the nascent state", and subsequently of 'life' as an "activity and a passion in search of a narrative" (Ricœur, 1991, p. 29 in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453).

analogical reasoning that gives shape to the pattern of meaning through equivalence rather than sequential affiliation (Verhesschen, 2003; Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006).

Ricœur emphasizes how there is no singular comprehensive narrative at play as a variety of stories can be applied to the same sequence of events; this mirrors what is described in the context of discursively reconstituting the state where a “variety of narratives...constitute the decisive intervention, of which one is successful in constituting a new strategic trajectory” (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454; Croft, 2006, p. 79). Mimesis involves the “imitation of action”, but it is not copying per se, so much as a transformative (‘poetical’ i.e. creative/productive) imitation, resembling the historical-imagination and the production of history by transposing crises into the present to be transformed for prospective use (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454; Samman, 2015).

### ***Mimesis III***

Experience relates to narrative via the process of configuration (or composition), which is completed within in the reader and not the text, for the “act of reading” creates an ‘intersection’ between the two worlds: of ‘text’ and that of the ‘reader’, generating “a horizon of possible experience”, where interactions with the readable world presents the possibility of an alternative world in which one could live” (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454). The text therefore becomes a “projection of a new universe” that unfolds one’s horizon of perception through an act of reading, and this is where meaning emerges (*Ibid*). Verhesschen (2003) describes how this “fusion of horizons” results from the “narrative’s capacity to transfigure the experience of the reader”, and how it is ‘application’ that relates narratives of reality and fiction (p. 454). This is comparable to how the ‘war-as-rupture’ debate taps into the ironic appreciation of past action and the *application* of that which has been ‘memorialized’ (McLoughlin, 2014, p. 444).

Ricœur distinguishes between two types of narratives: fictional and historical – and while these

narratives differ in what they are about they also mutually influence and depend upon one another (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454). The past is ‘re-presented’,<sup>73</sup> in the historical narrative; the connection between one’s life and the fictional narrative exists in the capacity for ‘transformation’ and ‘revelation’, and narrative identity arises out of the fusion of the historical/fictional narrative (*Ibid*).<sup>74</sup> Fiction has the capacity for revelation if it “calls our attention to aspects of everyday experience that we did not notice before” and so it functions as an “invitation to see the world differently”, and these “transformed actions and experiences will call for narration and this will lead to different narratives” (*Ibid*).

One’s personal identity may be regarded as narrative, since subjectivity is “neither an incoherent series of events nor an immutable substantiality, impervious to evolution” (*Ibid*). This notion of a continuous process of narrative identity “allows us to understand how someone can remain the same person despite changes in the course of his [or her] life without...needing to have recourse to an underlying and unvarying substantial self” (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 455). If asked the question of ‘who you are’ the answer would be approximate to the ‘unity’ or amalgamation of your narrative; Ricoeur suggests that it is only through ‘ethical engagement’ that selfhood can become ‘valuable’ (*Ibid*).<sup>75</sup> This corresponds to the suggestion that a narrative’s presentation is “never ethically neutral [and thus] it can contain an invitation to act in a different way”, which speaks to the “transformative power of narrative, [in] the refiguration” taking place in this

---

<sup>73</sup> Referred to by Ricoeur (1985) as “respre’sentance (ou lieutenance)” (p. 228), to English lieutenancy meaning placeholder in absence of a superior that is the ‘real’ i.e. in ‘lieu’ of a ‘tenant’ to occupy the moment.

<sup>74</sup> The resemblance of historical re-presentation being fused with revelatory information as events are being pulled into a synthetic/linear/serialized configuration to ‘make sense’ of analogous patterns gives the impression of the former theories, but now involves probability to what is rhetorically persuasive to encourage someone to change their mind/act differently (Verhesschen, 2003; Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> Verhesschen (2003) suggests this provides the basis for considering the “ongoing dialectic between ‘idem’ and ‘ipse’, that is between ‘identity as sameness’ and ‘identity as selfhood’, for stability and change ... [as well as] for ethical engagement” (p. 455).

section (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454). However, this logic conforms to how the post-traditional moral 'self' is cultivated reflexively through programmes of 'authentic' actualization/mastery under the rhetorical fiction of unifying emancipatory (life) politics (Giddens, 1991).

Claims to authenticity will always be confounded in this context, because it is all rhetorical fiction for the past is being reconstituted by individuals interpreting information to render it useful for a current purpose. If they believe what they are evoking is real, then they will enact present realities in service to the productive repetition of the transposed/poetically transformed history based on their understanding of how 'reality' works, which is limited by the legacy of their myths. By treating this 'valuable identity' as if it were real, one can explore how identity is understood as arising out of "[acts] of imagination but also...[through acts] of the will", connecting imagination to motivation (Ricœur, 1988, 1992, in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 455).

### **Mimetic (triangulated) Desire & the Mobilization of National Self-Understanding**

René Girard (1965) describes how motivation functions (via mimetic desire) within possible spheres of mediation (whether external/internal), and the process of mediated desire is triangulated between subject-model-object. The 'protagonist' is motivated based on the desire to 'be' someone who acts in a way that is characteristic of that 'type' of person and the impulse is self-regulating according to a model (*Ibid*).<sup>76</sup> Internal/external spheres of mediation were established in the discussion pertaining to the subject in crisis and how one could temporarily quell internal anxiety through the projection of an external apocalyptic fantasy-object (Kelly, 2016). This corresponds to Ty Solomon's (2013) description of the mobilization of national identity via the 'resonance' of neoconservative discourse in the time-frame leading up to 9/11,

---

<sup>76</sup>Girard (1965) uses the novel as a backdrop to consider these ideas, but it is relevant to modern consciousness and the fulfillment of desire because 'reading'/storytelling is what allows one to conceptualize 'reality'.

and how subjective motivation is “driven by the desire for [a] stable sense of self” (p. 104).<sup>77</sup> Absence “evokes *desire* for identification”, for “individuals need to identify with something because there is an originary and insurmountable lack of identity”; subjects can only “gain the recognition they desire to locate a sense of stability and security” through “identification with social resources of the Symbolic order” (Lacan, 2006 in Solomon, 2013, p. 105).

The locus of desire for a subject within the Symbolic order exists in seeking out “representation through a signifier” as subjects adopt them in order to “make sense of themselves” in intersubjective communication; masking the impossibility of attaining full-identity becomes the object of those faced with constant frustration, and this can be accomplished by deploying fantasies which support ongoing desire (Lacan, 1981, p. 77 in Solomon, 2013, p. 105-106). Fantasy here refers to an orientation “toward an elusive object” which represents the very thing that would bring about being ‘whole’; however, to attain such a thing would necessarily extinguish desire, so the “goal of fantasy is never attained” but instead is always postponed, making it an effective means to stabilize the subjective discourse (Solomon, 2013, p. 106).<sup>78</sup>

Solomon (2013) uses Kristol and Kagan’s ideological operationalization of Charles Krauthammer’s vision,<sup>79</sup> of ‘Weapons States’ as an obstacle to attainment of full-identity, in the implementation of the Bush Doctrine, to demonstrate how neoconservative discourse manifested a threat to unipolar power that relied upon the “movements of desire that give rise to the self-other” relationship (p. 108-110). The Bush Doctrine prioritizes a policy of ‘pre-emption’ to stave

---

<sup>77</sup> Difference is “necessary [for] meaningful interactions”, and the “productive power of discourse” (p. 104) – discourses are, in effect, “systems of meaning that construct social realities” (Milliken, 1999, p. 229 in Solomon, 2013, p. 103).

<sup>78</sup> Becoming ‘whole’/‘full’ hints at the totalizing tendency compelling ‘authentic-mastery’ (Anderson, 2006; Giddens, 1991).

<sup>79</sup> i.e. imagination given animus via discursive-construction.

off the unknowable future ‘terrorist threat’; Brian Massumi (2015) describes this principle of action as an ‘operative logic’ with potential to generate indeterminately through giving objective existence to uncertainty due to the discursively-manifested imbalance (p. 10-11).<sup>80</sup>

Essentially, the bloated American military establishment required an unimaginably large threat to make its advantage over every other nation seem reasonable, especially after 9/11 exposed a lapse in the assumed state of supremacy and military superiority. Solomon (2013) describes how the existence of the Other-as-threat (which has been given a ‘body’ through discursive construction) frustrates the subject of an “impossible project” of becoming ‘whole’ – where being ‘complete’ means a US dominated “global stability” lest there be chaos (p. 110). The sense of chaos is believable to Americans in this arrangement because the articulated threat following 9/11 “[blended] in with the chaotic background” of its incipient point of amplification in the 24/7 news cycle where one can imagine the now palpable apocalyptic potential to the ‘American’ community (Massumi, 2011, p. 154; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Anderson, 2006).

Solomon (2013) describes how the ideological shift toward ‘pre-emption’ had “more to do with domestic politics than with other states” (p. 114). The neoconservatives behind the Bush Doctrine, Kristol and Kagan (1996) confirm this when they describe how there has been the temptation for Americans to “absentmindedly dismantle the material and spiritual foundations on which their national well-being has been based” without a “visible threat to US vital interests” (in Solomon, 2013, p. 114). By situating threats “on the horizon that will undermine the United States if it does not act”, Kristol and Kagan are attempting to provoke identification with the discursive-subject ‘America’ to recapture and reenergize desire through its orientation with the

---

<sup>80</sup> This takes place in the context “asymmetrical warfare” i.e. the American military is operating with modern, high-tech weaponry against surprise attacks from small, simply armed groups (*Ibid.*)

elusive object/Other and via the loss of some crucial aspect of its subjectivity (Solomon, 2013, p.114). Deploying apocalyptic fantasies,<sup>81</sup> as obstacles to regaining the nation's full-identity,<sup>82</sup> serves to mobilize desire/belief and create the demand for social-action while accelerating the crisis of masculinity by generating the 'plausible' circumstances to perform idealized masculinity (Solomon, 2013; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Faludi, 1999 in Brooks, 2010; Kelly, 2016).

### **Breaking with Continuous Time, Revolutionary Ruptures & Apocalyptic Rhetoric**

Americans were "affectively held in a state of emergency" (p. 15), by those driving disequilibrium on what Massumi (2015) refers to as an "axis of evil", thereby dehumanizing the Other in a way that is reminiscent of the apocalyptic rhetoric attributed to an articulation of a 'durable' threat (p. 10; De Goede & Randalls, 2009). The American "propensity to define itself by growth" was reflected in the "global moral absolutism" expressed in the speech of President George W. Bush directly following 9/11, in which he insists that the perpetrators 'hate' American 'freedoms' related with the American way of life that is being defended (Bacevich, 2005, p. 103; Johnson, 2002, p. 216 in De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 862; Le Billon, 2006 in De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 862). These 'freedoms' include those associated with democracy, but implicitly include: "the citizen's ability to shop, spend, and invest" – this is stated more explicitly in the preamble to the National Security Strategy of the Bush Administration following the one-year anniversary of 9/11 (*See Note*. De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p. 862).<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Whether Solomon's (2013) example of Weapons of Mass Destruction, or potentially 'terrorists' as the objectified unknowable Other as articulated 'threat' to mobilize belief/demand social action (De Goede & Randalls, 2009).

<sup>82</sup> This could translate to a perceived 'total' security/stability of character (Anderson, 2006; Solomon, 2013).

<sup>83</sup>The preamble: "The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity" Accessed: December 18, 2018: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nssintro.html>

The War on Terror is amenable to the third trial for American self-understanding i.e. the “attainment of some kind of viable and coherent world order”,<sup>84</sup> – denying this “outcome would be to deny the meaning of America itself” – because it allows ‘America’ to shape (or potentially eliminate) any ‘threat’ to American self-understanding (Bellah, 2005, p. 54; Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012; De Goede & Randalls, 2009). This brings us back to the Wilsonian paradigm, which is meant to represent the attainment of an optimum stage of development; Wilson wanted to remake the world in America’s image to eliminate the ‘cause’ of war based on American principles, ‘mastery’ being central to the American project (Bacevich, 2005). This model provides ideological grounds for the imperial project, but if America cannot ‘master’/control its ‘coherent world order’ then it must answer to the myth of capacity (Meyers, 2008).

Meyers (2008) describes how the myth of capacity is evidenced by America’s inability to remake the entire world in its image i.e. via its military ‘Baseworld’, cultural products and corporations, and this sense of incompleteness undermines how America imagines itself (p. 67; Johnson, 2004). When America is forced to “prove its omnipotence” (p. 68), it teeters on the precipice claiming it will do ‘whatever it takes’ (p. 57) to do away with “an unstable, nomadic, and deterritorialized enemy ready to strike anyone from anywhere” and thus the state becomes indispensable as it is the “only institution that seems fit to respond to terrorism” (Meyers, 2008, p. 73). It provisionally secures the role of the state as being “instrumental to collective survival” while temporarily quelling the insecurity/subjective-crisis of ‘America’ by “restaging the plausible real world conditions” to demonstrate its “capacity to perform great deeds” (Kelly, 2016, p.96; Bacevich, 2005, p. 107). If this sounds familiar, it is because it echoes what has been described in the literature regarding the crisis of masculinity/the case of the doomsday prepper, so allows one to

---

<sup>84</sup> As the “eschatological hope of [the] American civil religion” (*Ibid*).

demonstrate how ‘crisis’: 1) serves as a pretense to conceal one’s fears about being ‘revealed as a fraud’ and 2) offers the means to strategically perform ‘victimhood’ or unjust injury in the pursuit of one’s heritage/legacy i.e. a ‘totalized’ world civil-religion (Kimmel in Kelly, 2016, p. 97).

Before demonstrating how the War on Terror was a disproportionate response to the events of 9/11, it should be noted that the 9/11 crisis-event was a tragedy that was exploited in the political realm. The event itself involved 2,977 American deaths by 19 hijackers—1,305 first responders have subsequently died from illnesses related to the event, and those remaining were only awarded a permanent victims compensation fund as of 2019 (CNN, 2019; Katersky & Parekh, 2019; Kim, 2019) <sup>85</sup> Compare this to the 2003 military invasion involving 177,194 troops, <sup>86</sup> which resulted in over 14 years of military interference with Iraq, 206, 273 civilian deaths, and “all told, between 480,000 and 507,000 people have been killed in the United States’ post-9/11 wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan” (Iraq Body Count, 2016; Crawford, 2018, p. 1). <sup>87</sup>

At the time of writing this thesis, the global health crisis has claimed the lives of at least 150,000 Americans, and yet no war has been waged against ‘illness’, unlike ‘terror’ and ‘drugs’ (Statista, 2020). Instead, the current U.S. administration has turned its militarized police force supported by the national guard against its anti-racist demonstrators framed as ‘thugs’, thereby

---

<sup>85</sup> CNN Editorial Research (2019/11/13) ‘September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts’ Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.cnn.com/2013/07/27/us/september-11-anniversary-fast-facts/index.html>

Aaron Katersky & Dr. Sejal Parekh (2019/09/09) ‘241 NYPD officers have died from 9/11 illnesses, 10 times the number killed in World Trade Center attack’ Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://abcnews.go.com/US/241-nypd-officers-died-911-illnesses-10-times/story?id=65430201>

Catherine Kim (2019/07/29) ‘The battle over extending the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, explained’ Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.vox.com/2019/6/20/18691670/jon-stewart-9-11-september-11th-victim-compensation-fund-explained>

<sup>86</sup> Katy Gillett (2020/03/20) ‘On this day: When the US first invaded Iraq in 2003’ Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/on-this-day-when-the-us-first-invaded-iraq-in-2003-1.994728>

<sup>87</sup> Neta C. Crawford (2018a) describes how this “tally of the counts and estimates of direct deaths caused by war violence does not include the more than 500,000 deaths from the war in Syria, raging since 2011, which the US joined in August 2014” (p. 1). Concurrently, the United States was estimated to spend \$5.9 trillion on post-911 ‘War on Terror’ related expenses into the 2018 Fiscal Year (Crawford, 2017, p.1).

discursively-constructing the Other as a threat to make the use of excessive militarized force seem 'reasonable' and the state appear indispensable (Solomon, 2013; Meyers, 2008).<sup>88</sup>

Demonstrating how this relates to apocalyptic rhetoric involves unpacking Bellah's (2005) assertion that a 'coherent world order' has been the 'eschatological hope' of America since its inception. I would amend this description to consider 1) how Bernard McGinn describes the shift from eschatology to apocalypticism (in O'Leary, 1994, p. 61), and 2) Anderson's (2006) account of the revolutionary significance of the nation-state. McGinn (1979) states: "eschatology becomes apocalyptic when it announces details of the future course of history and the imminence of its divinely appointed end; for eschatologies offer the doctrine...that history will end at some point in the future, while apocalypticism claims that this End and the manner of its accomplishment are imminent and discernable" (p. 5) (in O'Leary, 1998, p. 61).

Anderson (2006) refers to a "radical break with the past" and a "blasting open of the continuum of history", that came with the 'revolutionary ruptures' (p. 194) of the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and describes how it is "difficult today to recreate in the imagination a condition of the life in which the nation was felt to be something utterly new" (p. 193). Even second-generation nationalist movements were unable to "recapture the first fine careless rapture of their revolutionary predecessors", but a "new form of consciousness...arose when it was no longer possible to experience the nation as new, at the wave-top moment of rupture" (Anderson, 2006, p. 194-195). He posits "all profound changes in consciousness...bring with them characteristic

---

<sup>88</sup> This is while tear gas and rubber bullets are being used against anti-racist protesters responding to the extrajudicial murder of a citizen by Minneapolis police (Frances Murlaney (2020/05/31) 'President Trump praises the National Guard for 'doing the job the Democrat Minneapolis Mayor couldn't do' as they patrol the streets and crack down on protesters with tear gas' Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8373353/Police-use-tear-gas-rubber-bullets-clear-protests-streets-Minneapolis.html>).

amnesias” (203-204), ‘ruptures’ of forgetting “[engender] the need for narrative” (p. 205), and that the simultaneous-anonymous deaths of the imagined community are accumulated into the national biography to “serve narrative purposes” (Anderson, 2006, p. 206).<sup>89</sup>

The ‘eschatological hope’ of total conversion becomes apocalyptic with the doctrine of pre-emption as it resembles the ‘cosmic foreshortening of time’ encountered in the description of historical-imagining in the context of crisis (Massumi, 2015; Samman, 2015). The impossibility of total conversion runs parallel with gross dichotomizing on the ‘axis of evil’ as an ‘imaginative habit’/mode of perception/expression to justify ‘total submission’ of one extreme pole to another because of the perceived impossibility of negotiating peace (Fussell, 2000). It also corresponds to future-organizing, and how taking ‘action’ results in the clarification of ‘situations’ because it reduces equivocality - from late Latin equi-vox meaning ‘equal’ - ‘voices’ (Bacevich, 2005, p. 11; Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012, p. 6-7; Massumi, 2015). War culminates in the destruction of what constitutes a lack of clarity, but also in the case of America’s deeply established war story, enacts a ‘Last Judgment’ within the apocalyptic spectre of its spiritual force (Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012). Remembering that, inaugurating an American president means electing a presiding authority to edify God’s will that happens to coincide with an imperial presidency no matter the tenor of its emotional crusade (Bellah, 2005; Samman, 2015).

Finally, apocalyptic discourse (or rhetoric) is an “*epochal discourse*” or a “systematic symbolic division of historical time that accords weight to actions and events in history by mediating the

---

<sup>89</sup> A disturbing example of these new forms of consciousness, is described in relation to the “reassurance of fratricide” (p. 202); Bellah (2005) suggests that one of the times of trial for the American civil religion took place following the American civil war, or what Anderson (2006) describes as a time involving “imaginings of fraternity, emerging ‘naturally’ in a society fractured by the most violent racial, class and regional antagonisms” (Anderson, 2006, p. 203).

relationship of past, present and future” (O’Leary, 1993, p. 385).<sup>90</sup> Apocalyptic rhetoric operates through linguistic absence or an “empty metaphor” where the “use of language...intentionally lacks external referents and therefore lacks one absolute...meaning” (Thatcher, 1998, p. 550).<sup>91</sup> Using ‘empty’ metaphors,<sup>92</sup> it creates a ‘vacuum’ that requires a ‘reader’ to fill the void and stabilize the “empty language” through an “act of kenosis” (Thatcher, 1998, p. 550).<sup>93</sup>

Emptying ‘oneself’ of ‘oneself’ translates to textualizing and placing “oneself within the rhetorical structure”,<sup>94</sup> enabling one to participate “in an ongoing salvation history” (p. 550),<sup>95</sup> while luring the “reader into such self-textualization through...a sequence of real or metaphorical events whose plot lacks a critical element” (Thatcher, 1998, p. 554). Like the process of *muthos*,<sup>96</sup> the representationally *reconstituted* course of action is synthetically projected chronologically to inform probability, during which ‘actions’ become ‘events’, actors are mobilized and representational situations are clarified (Downing, 1984, p. 175-176). Temporal “structures of

---

<sup>90</sup> Mediating a relationship of past-present-future brings to mind 1) the operative value of myth i.e. the fusion between revertible-Messianic (orthodoxy)/non-revertible ‘homogeneous, empty’ time (progressivism) and 2) historical-imagining via crisis (prefigured-analogical models/serialized narrative, of which ‘gaps’ in meaning demand) (Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006; Hunter, 1991; Samman, 2015).

<sup>91</sup> Absence compels identification practices, and crisis (as a point-of-rupture) demands narration to fill gaps in meaning to stabilize the character of the individual/state; obstacles to ‘full-identity’ can be purposefully placed to mobilize desire (Solomon, 2013; Croft, 2006; Lévi-Strauss, 1955).

<sup>92</sup> i.e. void analogues/narrativization.

<sup>93</sup> The term ‘kenosis’ is described as being “coined by the Greek Fathers of the Church from the verb *kénoō* ...to empty... (hence, used reflexively...to empty oneself of oneself” – it derives from “an expression in the hymn of Philippians 2:7. The naming of Jesus as Lord (2:9) is preceded by a sequence describing the humbling of the man who was of ...divine condition” (Lacoste, 2005, p. 853). Furthermore, it explains how the “entire event of Jesus is the outcome of the free initiative of the man...who was not considered as a victim, but as equal to God...(2:6), who chose the ...condition of servitude” (Lacoste, 2005, p. 853).

<sup>94</sup> Emptying ‘oneself’ of ‘oneself’ suggests that someone is inherently possessed of an identity to empty, but by self-textualizing into a structure one forfeits a multitude of possible iterations of ‘self’ to serve ideals of the rhetorical unified fiction supporting the imitation of real life. Also, people tend to believe that they are ‘themselves’ existing in historical-time, rather than a series of experiences being narrated over after the fact, corresponding to models.

<sup>95</sup> Victory/salvation are connected in Scripture, and while they are distinct terms in ancient Greek literature, “salvation and victory are so closely related that they are used interchangeably in some contexts (p. 315); the New Testament “frequently uses the same verb...and its derivatives to depict Jesus’ work” (p. 317) and because of this it is assumed to possess this ‘double aspect’ of meaning (Dembele, 2002, p. 318).

<sup>96</sup> i.e. narrative ‘emplotment’/the ‘imitation of real life’ (Downing, 1984, p. 175-176).

action” demand narration, and symbolically mediate action so long as norms/signs/rules exist to qualify it; in America, these aspects correspond to its civil religion, revolutionary significance, and eschatological purpose (Ricœur, in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453; Bellah, 2005).

While the ‘intertextual tracks’ of narratives associated with apocalyptic rhetoric are “clear at the beginning [they] begin to dissolve as the plot moves toward an eschatological climax somewhere just beyond the audience’s present moment” and this process usually “requires specific forms of social action to make the present world...fit the story” (Thatcher, 1998, p. 554). This corresponds to De Goede & Randalls’ (2009) understanding of crisis via the articulation of threat, and how it creates the demand for “particular forms of social action” (p. 861). The dissolution of a clear narrative as one approaches the ‘eschatological climax’ also resembles how Solomon (2013) describes the subject’s engagement with ‘desire’, i.e. when closer to ‘enjoyment’, desire fades and anxiety takes its place; subjectivity itself can only exist through desire, identification and recognition with the symbolic resources at one’s disposal (p. 106).

This rhetorical process is meant to “[relieve] social tension” by “[creating] an alternate view of reality that allows the reader to experience relief and hope in the face of social chaos”; it mirrors *Mimesis III* along the ‘horizon of possible experience’ where interactions with the readable world presents the possibility of an alternative world in which one could live (Thatcher, 1998, p. 549; Ricœur, 1991, p. 26 in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454). The conservative reflex to 9/11 may have provided temporary relief, but failed to address the nation’s grief/anxiety, while amplifying the crisis to compel traditional identification in a bid to control its domestic apocalypse.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> It resembles the identities-in-crisis premise, for personal crisis cannot be solved with externalized doom-laden projections of conflict on to dehumanized Others, it only provisionally delays the onset of another crisis since the late modern (‘masculine’) subject is characterized by instability (Kelly, 2016, p. 97, 110-111).

#### Chapter 4: Methods – Rhetorical Criticism as a ‘Synecdoche for Agency’

This thesis situates how identity is negotiated during crisis as a decisive point of rupture, which demands narration in historical-time; <sup>98</sup> this process informs social organization and the productive-potential of giving ‘reality’ to ‘objects’ for ‘use’ (Verhesschen, 2003; Ricœur, 1991; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Samman, 2015; Croft, 2006). Exploring this in the context of the 9/11 crisis-event allows one to model how ‘moral’ identity can be mapped in the afterimage of a new narrative trajectory (De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Croft, 2006). <sup>99</sup> It connects desire/motivation to apocalyptic rhetoric by compelling self-textualization into the rhetorical structure via void metaphors and narrativization (Thatcher, 1998; O’Leary, 1993).<sup>100</sup>

These processes of identity-formation resemble institutional practices of *entextualization* by which “circulable texts are produced by extracting discourse from its original context” (Sung-Yulpark & Bucholtz, 2009, p. 487). <sup>101</sup> An ‘entextualized situation’ is a rhetorical-effective response to the ‘historical’ situation and involves an exploration of the “fictional narrative through which the author navigates his or her presentation [of] the past in an effort to shape the present” (Tite, 2012, p. 12). <sup>102</sup> Recalling how the War Imaginary “does not simply seek to shape

---

<sup>98</sup> Crisis has been defined in relation to how: 1) ‘threat’ manifests through practices of articulation/identity; 2) ‘rupture’ via war/crisis-as-rupture and the ironic appreciation of past events, or a discursively constituted ‘point’ to narratively (subjectively) intervene and structurally transform the state; or a 3) ‘tool’ to shape history (De Goede & Randalls, 2009; McLoughlin, 2014; Fussell, 2000; Croft, 2006; Samman, 2015).

<sup>99</sup> Based on morally absolutist claims concerning the most ‘durable’ threat to the idealized American way of life (De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Croft, 2006).

<sup>100</sup> This mirrors: 1) historical-imagining in the context of crisis; 2) narrative identity with its fusion of historical representation/fictional revelation; and how 3) the operative value of myth functions in fusing prefigured-analogical/episodic-serialized time (Samman, 2015; Verhesschen, 2003; Ricœur, 1991; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Anderson, 2006).

<sup>101</sup> Latour (2007) positions collective instrumentality (and material pathways) associated with the establishment of the scientific organization that permits the objectification of knowledge-production to be circulated and seized upon by coextensive entities who then maintain linear ‘objective-making trajectories’, which generates a ‘contingent history’ (p. 30).

<sup>102</sup> The ‘entextualized situation’ is “not the historical situation which generates the text” but rather the “situation embedded in the text and created by the text, which contributes to the rhetorical effect of the text”; the rhetorical

the present or heal the past, but simultaneously offers us the resources to imagine who we *should be* and how we *should act* as moral subjects”, ‘moral’ identity acquires its mythic (idealized) quality through resonant/rhetorically-effective re-presentation (*Emphasis Added*. Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 319). Language revitalization is a reason to engage in a process of *entextualization*, where the goal is to “produce more speakers of the language” via the “socialization of younger generations and novices through (and into) these texts” (Meek & Carr, 2013, p.192-193).

Kristol and Kagan, the neoconservatives behind the Bush doctrine of pre-emption, sought to revitalize/re-energize ‘language’ as they provoked identification with the discursive-subject ‘America’,<sup>103</sup> to mobilize desire with morally absolutist claims (Solomon, 2013; Massumi, 2015; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Susan Faludi, 1999; Brooks, 2010; Kelly, 2016). Again, remembering Fussell’s (2000) description of how the formal literature surrounding war is supposed to ‘make sense’ of ‘events’ that would otherwise “seem merely accidental or calamitous” (p. 121), it does this by offering a narrative to streamline expectations. Rumours come to resemble institutional models and launch into living-narrative fictions “bred by anxiety as well as by the need to find a simple cause for...[failures]” (*Ibid*). Applying reductive logic corresponds to gross dichotomizing/a morally absolutist emotional crusade or a rhetorical pattern to justify the total submission of one extreme pole to another based on the unimaginable (*Ibid*).

Anxiety and desire are connected in Lacanian processes of identification because subjectivity is characterized by instability, so individuals/groups/nations are compelled to find meaning from models assumed to be ‘singular’/‘total’/‘absolute’ (Solomon, 2013; Croft, 2006; Latour, 2007;

---

situation, as described by Lloyd F. Blizter, involves an exploration of the “fictional narrative through which the author navigates his or her presentation [of] the past in an effort to shape the present” (Tite, 2012, p. 12).

<sup>103</sup> They did this on the axis of evil thereby accelerating the crisis of masculinity (Solomon, 2013; Massumi, 2015; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Susan Faludi, 1999; Brooks, 2010; Kelly, 2016).

Anderson, 2006).<sup>104</sup> However, because identity, like knowledge, is provisional and contextual one may develop an absurd/frustrated relationship with perceived failure as one approaches a monolith of expectation (*Ibid*). Cracks in mythic (idealized) discourse lead to the next crisis/point of subjective intervention, but imagine if someone were to attempt to take all the pieces of something shattered by countless contradictions and reassemble them into a meaningful totality (Croft, 2006; Schwartz, 2004).<sup>105</sup> The crisis of masculinity speaks to this possibility because of how it externalizes/projects subjective-crisis onto Others, rather than reflect on the contradictions; transforming the Other into an apocalyptic threat that needs to be shaped/eliminated means that the individual/group/nation in-crisis does not need to change (Kelly, 2016; Hunter, 1991; Colville, Brown & Pye, 2012). The War on Terror temporarily turned internal ‘culture war’ tensions outward because the state abused its claim to authority; claims to objectivity need to be scrutinized because of this clear example of how trust/faith can be manipulated to serve certain ends (Giddens, 1991; Massumi, 2015; Hunter, 1991).<sup>106</sup>

### **Interpretation, Scope & Validity**

A researcher may be ‘uniquely situated’ but is not separate from the ‘world’ that produces the

---

<sup>104</sup> Remembering Anderson’s (2006) characterization of the impetus behind serialization i.e. *homogenous, empty time* as the totalizing mindset of colonial knowledge-production and the “concretization of...possibilities” while imagining the world to be made-up of replicable-plurals and circulating models to be acted upon due to the shaping-capacity of print-memory through the “provisional representation of a series”, based on the “colonial state’s peculiar imagining of history and power” (Anderson, 2006, p. 184-185).

<sup>105</sup> Schwartz (2004) describes how a skeptical mistake can occur, in the case of disowning mutual identity, resulting from the tendency to break things into ‘almost meaningless entities...that cannot be adequately glued back together’ (p. 74). This ties into what Giddens (1991) talks about regarding modern identity and the ‘principle of radical doubt’ permeating the philosophical consciousness of everyday life and how the post-traditional order extracts tradition from its original context. Hunter (1991) states: “what all progressivist worldviews share in common is *the tendency to resymbolize historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life*” (p. 44-45). It seems that tradition is extracted and then transformed and reintroduced into society to (ironically) contradict tradition.

<sup>106</sup> The informants are grappling with ‘objective-uncertainty’, possessed of a “proprietary epistemology” and “unique ontology”, functioning as a “*mode of being* based upon certainty for future...cause” granting “epistemological immediacy to deal with imminent threat that translates into clear and present danger” (*Emphasis Added*. Massumi, 2015, p. 6-7). It seems probable that the perception of facts being absolute is at least partially responsible for producing the absurdity or irrationality one is attempting to avoid.

data; epistemology becomes less tangible under a pragmatic-reflexive interpretivist social ontological paradigm, or ‘participatory consciousness’, because neither the ‘world’/‘knowledge’ are understood as absolute (Heshusius, 2014 in Blair, 2015. p. 15).<sup>107</sup> It helps address the problem of the historically-contingent situation described by Anderson (2006), and Latour (2007) regarding the maintenance of linear ‘objective-making trajectories’ (p. 30), while discovering fully formed ‘facts’ that must correspond to an ‘absolute concept’ (*Ibid*). This reflexive *mode* involves a continuous audit of what constitutes the “identity of the data”; using rhetorical analysis made the most sense because it does not deal in absolutes, but functions as a form of explanatory contemplation of what one observes (Peshkin, 1988 in Blair, 2015, p.15).<sup>108</sup> It also aligns with a central tenet to narrative identity, that: no text/work/rhetorical ‘act’ is ethically neutral and can “contain an invitation to act in a different way” (Zarefsky, 2008; Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454-455). If there is no ‘neutral’ then everything expressed can be understood as representing one’s ‘moral’ disposition (and has the potential to be persuasive) (*Ibid*). This is not an argument for objective-morality,<sup>109</sup> but that people express what they would like others to believe is their moral belief; verification becomes a matter of consensus between readers because one cannot verify intention, but one can analyze how something is received, especially between a group that identifies similarly, like the informants or scholars.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Latour (2007) suggests the expression *mode of existence* in response to the ontological problem of the object/subject, which displaces the ontological weight of the subject into an object, rather than acknowledge how knowledge-production serves to poetically “transform the chains of reference” (Latour, 2007, p. 26-27).

<sup>108</sup> Rhetorical criticism serves as a “synecdoche for agency”; *agency* serves as the “capacity to exert...some degree of control over the social relations in which one is enmeshed” or exert “influence through symbolic action” (p. 375); *agency* exists in the interplay between the agent/structure (p. 376), but as an agent one has the responsibility to act “carefully and imaginatively” in respectful interaction with/interpretation of texts/artifacts (p. 378) as one chooses what “constitutes the building blocks of [one’s] world”( Sonja K. Foss, 2006, p. 376).

<sup>109</sup> Also, the objective is not replicability but testing a model that was generalized from the available literature to advance what seems probable based on evidence which corresponds to established theory.

<sup>110</sup> The use of rhetorical analysis also addresses the problem of viewing the internet as a ‘neutral’ observation-space, for people engage with media because they want to “recognize, practice, multiply and control [their] emotional

While demonstrating how the Wilsonian paradigm and subsequent revivals replicate the conditions to reinvigorate identification with an idealized identity via emotional crusade on a self-other basis, the thesis has not gone into detail over what being 'othered' looks like, apart from: pathologized, emotionally driven, and simplified distinction (through gross dichotomizing, crisis, and the mobilization of belief). Part of this decision is informed by Sjoberg's (2015) description of 'the understood subject of counterterrorism policy' (p. 387). She explains how "the counterterrorist, is a spectre" as the presumed "constitutive other of the terrorist, [and] the assumed good guy, whose identity is rarely if ever explicitly discussed" (Ibid).

Discussing how the informants have a frustrated relationship with a monolithic idealized identity offers a parallel to what is described regarding the dangers involved in the "mass process of social construction" of the 'monolith' of national identity that justifies how the "erosion of civil liberties was a necessity for self-preservation" (Ahmed, 2019, p.583). Ahmed (2019) demonstrates the shift from multiculturalism to 'community cohesion' or monoculturalism, i.e. a shared vision/values/common sense of identity as a framework for citizenship following the Cantle report on the events of September 11th (p.582; Fekete, 2004).

Disturbing the normative centre by considering privilege via its relationship to 'white immunity',<sup>111</sup> using paradoxes to outline cognitive dissonance, and reframing the problem as it relates to organizational identity formation offers an alternative method of contributing to antiracist praxis (Phruksachart, 2020; Deggans, 2020; Saad, 2020; Cabrera, 2017). This thesis does not represent

---

states" (p. 25); users are not passive even if they are seeking out means for communication that ultimately pacifies their emotional response (Murthy & Hughes, 2008, p. 840; Wesling, 2008, p. 25).

<sup>111</sup> This term resonates with how the informants describe the potential to 'inoculate' against fear or how 'strength' is viewed as an 'antidote' to the perceived ('foreign') weakness in the world. Feminization, in this thesis, is not meant to be taken literally, but as subtractive to a totalized ideal identity of (white) male primacy as a promised legacy. An inability to live up to the ideal due to 'insufficient desire' to be 'authentic' men has led to a veteran suicide crisis, because many would rather die strong/intact than admit 'weakness'.

a plurality of experience as it relates to war imagining, but instead demonstrates how fear is used to generate conformity with an idealized i.e. 'immune'/'authentic'/exempt identity via the 'rallying cry of freedom'.<sup>112</sup> Besides positioning men/the state as instrumental to collective survival to generate the conditions for sustained relevance and dominance, it has also instrumentalized feminism in "neoliberal imperialist projects throughout the world" via gendered racialization (Rashid, 2014, p. 593; Bhattacharyya, 2008; Razack, 2008).<sup>113</sup>

### **Methods – Rhetorical Analysis & Time**

Rhetorical analysis relies upon internal proofs or resources that require skill/artistry to be created as opposed to external (non-artistic) proofs which merely need to be recognized i.e. academic literature, data, etc.; traditionally, an artistic proof depends on logos, pathos and ethos, but what seems more relevant is how it relies on analogical reasoning (from history/fiction) and ordering/arranging or sequencing text (Burke, 2017, p. 21-22). Modernity is understood to have “one conception of time, namely, the idea that it moves forward in a linear or fixed fashion”, but the ancient Greeks had two: *Kronos* i.e. chronological time,<sup>114</sup> and *Kairos* a locative/contextual time which is reliant upon the mode of its expression (Burke, 2017, p. 23).<sup>115</sup>

Roberts (2003) considers these two types of time in relation to *chaos*, which is often understood as an “empty/formless void” or the “randomly generated disorder” or ‘mess’ between “*order* and

---

<sup>112</sup> *Divide et impera* (*divide and rule/conquer*) is one of three political maxims in Immanuel Kant's (1795) Perpetual Peace; he articulates how political elites cause mischief backed by promises of greater freedom both among those they govern and foreign states. There is irony in using Kant as a source to bolster this point as his, Hume and Hegel's writings on race "played a strong role in articulating Europe's sense not only of its cultural but also racial superiority"; it seems fitting to turn the tools of oppression against the machine that required them (Sefa Dei, 1999, p.21; Eke, 1997, p.5).

<sup>113</sup> Rashid (2014) explains how "within this process, western sexual freedoms are strategically deployed to support notions of civilization and superiority, displacing possible solidarities (McRobbie, 2009, p. 27)" (p. 593).

<sup>114</sup> *Chronos* represents a “*progression of linear time*” (Roberts, 2003, p. 203).

<sup>115</sup> The Romans called *Kairos* ‘*occasio*’ or what we would come to know as ‘*occasion*’, and *Kairos* has been described as the “moment or occasion of making meaning...in an arrested...infinite point in time” (*Ibid*).

*disorder*” (p. 212).<sup>116</sup> Massumi (2015) characterizes the neoconservative response to the 9/11 crisis-event as operating on ‘disequilibrium’, i.e. the absence/destruction of balance that logic/reason demands; the ‘imbalance of terror’ with its ‘unspecified threat’ invites a doctrine of pre-emption to contain potential disorder/chaos (p. 11). As such, it seems appropriate to use this rhetorical case study to (ironically-poetically) imitate and give reconstituted re-presentation to the discourse surrounding the events in question to produce an interpretation.

It is appropriate because of how Fussell (1975) describes the process that enables one to “locate, draw forth, and finally shape into significance an event or a moment which otherwise would merge without meaning into the general undifferentiated stream” (p.31 in McLoughlin, 2014, p. 446). Application relates narratives of reality i.e. historical re-presentation/fiction, just like the war-as-rupture debate taps into the ironic appreciation of past action and the *application* of what has been ‘memorialized’ (Verhesschen, 2003; McLoughlin, 2014, p. 444). Preserving the memory of these events by resequencing text based on perceived similarities of meaning permits one to scaffold (frame) possibility ironically amid the contradictions presented by the informants. This process demands the amplification of what is discordant/paradoxical, but also contingent upon the history being given presence; this means drawing together analogous texts and giving sequence to a set of related truth-events or patterns discovered during the listening process.

### **From Selection to the Listening Process**

I selected twelve episodes of *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience* podcast from a JRE companion site, and the episodes took place between 2014/04/07 and 2019/02/18. There is an additional episode referenced within one of these initial twelve that I refer to in an ancillary way

---

<sup>116</sup> However, chaos “[requires] iteration of a process” and “[shows] a remarkable resemblance to the patterns and rhythms of life” (*Ibid*).

that is described below; there are more episodes sorted into this category on the site, but they fall outside the scope of veterans discussing their relationships with the War on Terror.

Tim Kennedy #497 (2:59:14) 2014/04/07	Dr. Gordon & Andrew Marr #700 (1:47:09) 2015/09/25	Andy Stumpf & Tait Fletcher #720 (2:57:33) 2015/11/11
Jocko Willink #729 (2:51:30) 2015/12/01	Jesse Ventura #858 (2:11:21) 2016/10/13	Jocko Willink #962 (2:11:21) 2017/04/19
Andy Stumpf #1047 (2:53:57) 2017/12/04	Dr. Gordon & Andrew Marr #1056 (1:30:43) 2017/12/27	David Goggins #1080 (1:54:22) 2018/02/19
Tim Kennedy #1117 (2:52:51) 2018/04/17	David Goggins #1212 (2:17:57) 2018/12/05	Andy Stumpf #1247 (2:51:00) 2019/02/18

The six primary informants are predominantly veterans to this war, with one outlier Vietnam era veteran who has a significant connection to a veteran of this war; the majority of the informants appeared more than once, starting in 2014, the year the Obama Administration signed a bilateral security deal with Afghanistan (Ackerman, 2014). Secondary informants include the civilians i.e. the host Joe Rogan, and Dr. Gordon who appears with Andrew Marr on two occasions.<sup>117</sup>

The informants appear on the program for a variety of reasons: Tim Kennedy,<sup>118</sup> is a retired mixed-martial arts/ultimate fighting (MMA/UFC) champion; although, during his first appearance he was still fighting professionally and was a retired veteran,<sup>119</sup> and between his two episodes he re-enlisted; in the second appearance he is promoting television shows he hosts.

Andrew Marr,<sup>120</sup> describes reaching out to Dr. Gordon because of his appearance on an earlier JRE episode;<sup>121</sup> Gordon was promoting treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

<sup>117</sup> Tait Fletcher appears with Andy Stumpf on his first appearance, but his comments were not inside the scope.

<sup>118</sup> United States Army, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group, Green Beret, Sergeant First Class **Years of Service:** 2004-present, Iraq War, War in Afghanistan, Operation Juniper Shield; Mixed Martial Arts UFC Middleweight Division; Strikeforce, WEC, ShoMMA, HDNet Fights; **JRE:** #497, #1117 **Television:** Hunting Hitler, Hard to Kill **Blog:** Letters from a Foreign Land **Website:** <http://timkennedymma.com/>

<sup>119</sup> He discusses a crossover between professional fighting and the military in his first appearance when describing the Fight for the Troops UFC event (TK497 7:24-8:21), which is referenced in the first Dr. Gordon and Andrew Marr episode in relation to distrust of the government surrounding taking care of veterans (AM700 12:00-12:44).

<sup>120</sup> United States Army, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Forces Group, Green Beret, Combat Engineer **Years of Service:** 2006-2015, War in Afghanistan; CEO Warrior Angels Foundation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; **JRE:** #700 (with Dr. Mark Gordon), #1056 (with Dr. Mark Gordon) **Book:** Tales from the Blast Factory: A Brain Injured Special Forces Green Beret's Journey Back from the Brink **Website:** <https://www.waftbi.org/>

<sup>121</sup> #574 Dr. Gordon, Matthew Gosney and Jason Hall (2014/11/12 – 2:19:56).

alongside a young man, Matthew Gosney, who claims to be a Navy SEAL, and the screenwriter for American Sniper, Jason Hall.<sup>122</sup> Marr takes the place of Gosney promoting this treatment and a book he authored about the topic; Gordon also promoted anti-aging medicine in episode #438. Andy Stumpf,<sup>123</sup> first appears with Tait Fletcher, another MMA fighter; Stumpf, while not involved in professional fighting, participates in extreme sports like skydiving, and base jumping up until his final appearance – he appeared in one television show, but he was promoting his podcast in the relevant episodes. John Gretten ‘Jocko’ Willink,<sup>124</sup> also has a podcast because Joe Rogan suggested that he start one, but primarily he appears to promote two books he has authored; Willink and Rogan share a love of Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Jesse Ventura a.k.a James George Janos,<sup>125</sup> is probably the most well-known guest, for he had a career in professional wrestling, was the governor of Minnesota, hosted television shows, and has authored books; he was not promoting any product, but largely discussed his defamation suit against Chris Kyle, the American Sniper. David Goggins,<sup>126</sup> is currently known for participating in the extreme sport of ultra-marathon running/distance-cycling and authored a book which he promotes on the podcast.

---

<sup>122</sup> Gosney fabricated his story about being a Navy SEAL, despite being a Marine Corps lab technician – he had also planned to release a book called ‘Hidden Wounds’ (with an unsuccessful kicktraq crowdfunding campaign).

<sup>123</sup> United States Navy SEALs (SEAL team 6, 5, 3), Lieutenant Naval Special Warfare Centre, Leading Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase BUD/S training **Years of Service:** 1996-2013, Iraq War, War in Afghanistan; Professional Skydiver and Base Jumper, Motivational Speaker **JRE:** #720 (with civilian Tait Fletcher), #1047, #1247 **Television:** Hunted **Website:** <https://www.andystumpf.com> **Podcast:** Cleared Hot

<sup>124</sup> United States Navy SEALs (SEAL team 3), Lieutenant Commander **Years of Service:** 1990-2010, Iraq War; Co-founder of Management Consulting Firm Echelon Front LLC; **JRE:** #729, #962 **Book(s):** Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win, Way of the Warrior Kid: From Wimpy to Warrior the Navy SEAL Way **Podcast:** jockopodcast.com

<sup>125</sup> United States Navy, Petty Officer (third class) **Years of Service:** 1969-1975, Vietnam War; Media Personality, Retired Professional Wrestler (WWF), Former Governor of Minnesota **JRE:** #858 **Television (highlights):** Record Breakers, Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura, Off the Grid **Book(s) (highlights):** American Conspiracies, They Killed Our President, 63 Documents the Government Doesn’t Want You to Read.

<sup>126</sup> United States Air Force, Navy SEALs, (SEAL team 5), SDV Team 1, Chief Petty Officer **Years of Service:** Graduated BUD/S with class 235 (2001), Iraq War, War in Afghanistan; Ultra-marathon runner, Ultra-distance cyclist, Motivational Speaker, Special Operations Warrior Foundation 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; **JRE:** #1080, #1212 **Book:** Can’t Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds **Website:** <https://davidgoggins.com/>

The listening process changed in response to the practical conditions of dealing with so much data; the long and unstructured style of conversations might deter someone from choosing this medium over conventional interviews. However, it appears that the informants were only as candid as they were because of the format of the program, and might not participate in, or volunteer as much information in conventional interviews because of their distrust of civilian institutions. The most efficient way of dealing with the narrative stream of consciousness was increasing the play-time for note-taking purposes, and decreasing the play-time to use voice-to-text software,<sup>127</sup> to create a template for speech-patterns and then review to correct mistakes.

### **Charting the Course of Themes**

The primary data source is text transcribed from the podcast interviews, and secondary data has been collected from a variety of relevant sources to help contextualize the interviews i.e. websites, referenced media, newspaper articles, public records, and social media – as multiple data sources may be triangulated to help generate insight that may not have been possible using one source (Maimbo & Pervan, 2005; Mouton, 2001; Myers, 1997; Yin, 2009 in Ponelis, 2015). I alternated between *a priori* coding and ‘open-coding’ because I had a set of theoretically relevant concepts in mind when approaching the data, but the repetitive nature of the work led to the emergence of connections replete with complexity that assisted in understanding how these concepts interact with one another axially (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2005; Patton, 1987 in Ponelis, 2015). Blair (2015) describes how ‘open coding’ situates “participant-generated ‘theory’ from the data and template [*a priori*] coding...is a tool for framing data into a coherent construct through the application of an established [language]” (p. 17).

For example, *authenticity* is prized by the informants personally/collectively – this is

---

<sup>127</sup> Example: Google Docs voice-typing.

demonstrated in the context of military ‘brotherhood’ and the contested space of stolen valour, but more broadly in the perception of collective masculinity as a group of (real) men whose strength may be compromised by the feminization of society if weakness is allowed to prevail. Anything that falls outside of the idealized conception of manhood is understood as ‘inauthentic’ where perceived weakness can be dismissed as an indication of moral failure. Bercovitch (1978) describes ‘revelatory’ searches for meaning in the way they resemble the ‘resolution of opposites’ and the contrast between the sacred/profane; the “sacred characteristically defines itself through antithesis”, as in, what is ‘holy’ cannot exist without that which is deemed ‘unholy’ (p. 178). The desire for authenticity corresponds to modern-reflexive ‘authentic’ actualization/mastery, extending from modern risk-perception based reflexive organization (Giddens, 1991). Claiming someone is ‘inauthentic’ serves to disqualify relevance/applicability, so suggests 1) a mechanism to dismiss anything that threatens the idealized ‘moral-truth’, and 2) mirrors how one might dehumanize/erase the Other (Hunter, 1991; Fussell 2000).

*Authenticity* and *crisis* overlap in the context of faith (belief/lack of belief), and an example which demonstrates this is how the veteran suicide crisis appears to be the result of a loss of brotherhood/identity i.e. perceived ‘sameness’/purpose. This mirrors the crisis of masculinity in the way that men are seeking out the means to provisionally secure their historically instrumental role with respect to the collective/quell subjective-crisis by externalizing it (Kelly, 2016; Meyers, 2008). *Religion* tends to involve respect for what is sacred via modes of worship directed at what is revered, in this case the brotherhood because of the revolutionary significance of the nation-state. Defending ‘honour’ makes more sense in this context because ‘revealing’ inauthentic belief is perceived to be a means of maintaining what is authentic/sacred. Masculinity by proxy, is assumed to be the natural state if it is perceived to be under threat of feminization. This

constitutes a crisis of authentic faith if men feel they can no longer participate ‘authentically’ in society, but for modes of replicable/acceptable worship that recuperate collective masculinity.

This allows one to unpack assumptions about *human nature* as they correspond to the fundamental cultural crisis (divide) which reflects Enlightenment, and Scriptural (biblical) themes (Hunter, 1991). It is appropriate to examine claims of rationality, individualism and skepticism, and how America’s revolutionary significance corresponds to these mythic structures and an eschatological purpose i.e. concerning death, judgment, destiny, and the ‘end of’ the world in the context of endless war. *Crisis* overlaps with *human nature*, whether anxiety or judgment, in the context of *authenticity* if one accepts the premise that under the post-traditional order what is ‘authentic’ is the new sacred via mastery (Giddens, 1991). The culture wars are fought over America’s meaning from positions of ‘authentic’ moral-truth, but externalizing conflict would provisionally redirect the internal tensions outward while providing the context to seize an idealized heroic identity (the loss of which leads to crisis) (Hunter, 1991).

### **Podcasts & Identity**

Dominiguez and Dornaletche’s (2013) *The Joe Rogan Experience: la revolución podcast* considers how new information and communications technologies (ICTs) i.e. the changing models for producing/consuming information, are undermining the perceived hegemony of mass media by setting new criteria for credibility (Dominiguez and Dornaletche, 2013, p. 270, 285).

Michael Shermer (2017) writes about his own appearance on the podcast in the context of a debate surrounding conventional archaeological belief. The former aligns with recent literature on podcasts which will be detailed below, the latter is almost irrelevant, except that it taps into a recurring theme regarding the need to challenge institutional convention, which could be understood in relation to the new criteria for credibility i.e. ‘authenticity’.

Podcasts are a destabilizing ‘revelatory’ mode of expression/knowledge production, and a ‘liminal praxis’, which is mediatory as a practice but simultaneously questions the inbuilt logics/effects of mediating “knowledge and identity” as a “self reflexive discourse” (Llinares & Fox, 2018, p. 124-125).<sup>128</sup> Serialization helps shape ‘social causality’ and contributes to this sense of ‘identity’ because podcasts form an iterative reflexive network (Anderson, 2006; McGarr, 2009; Nielsen, Andersen & Dau, 2018; Palenque, 2015).<sup>129</sup>

The motivation behind this form of syndication is accessibility to users via link building which is comparable to how Search Engine Optimization increases visibility by exploiting ‘natural’ internet behaviour and patterns to dominate the marketplace (David, 2015).<sup>130</sup> The JRE is available on YouTube, in which videos are regularly suggested for its 1.5 Billion users based on one of the “largest scale and most sophisticated industrial recommendation systems in existence”; the algorithm is described as a “deep neural [network], crunching a vast pool of data about videos and the people who watch them” (Lewis, 2018; Covington, Adams & Sargin, 2016). Podcasts came of age in 2005 but reached their peak in 2014,<sup>131</sup> when media critics reflected on the “unexpected popularity of *Serial*—the program spurring nearly 77 million downloads within its first seven months” (Bottomley, 2015, p. 164-165).<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Deviating from ‘sanctioned’ institutional norms enables a sense of “agency within the highly fractured subjectivity of the internet” (*Ibid*).

<sup>129</sup> Anderson (2006) refers to how serialization as a form of ‘cosmic clocking’ contributed to the imagining of national identity, especially after the establishment of History as a discipline (with the support of ‘professional journals’), in which ‘events’ such as the “revolutionary ruptures of 1776 and 1789 came to be figured and embedded in the historical series and *thus as historical precedents and models*”( p. 194).

<sup>130</sup> Bottomley (2015) suggests that Web syndication is not necessary for asynchronous time/space ‘shifting’ i.e. the emphasis on the ability to listen anytime/anywhere as compared to the conventional broadcast model for streaming is not strictly connected to the syndication format which supports podcasting.

<sup>131</sup> Rogan launched his podcast December 24, 2009, and now ranks consistently in the “top-five of Apple’s charts” next to “industry stalwarts like *Serial*, [and] *Lore*” (Campbell, 2018).

<sup>132</sup> Podcasting emerged in 2004 due to the “RSS-to-iPod” release to ‘podcatcher’ client ‘iPodder’ and the “first breakout program, *Daily Source Code*”(Bottomley, 2015, p. 164). The “Web syndication format” dates back to the early 2000s where ‘audioblogging’ capabilities (or the ability to carry “audio files in RSS [Really Simple Syndication] feeds”) led to what became known as ‘podcasting’ (*Ibid*).

Podcasts derive benefit from the “symbolic cultural capital of public radio” so producers work to “retain the association of publicness with their franchise even as their textual extensions are made within a production culture that is economically hybrid” (Patterson, 2016, p. 451).<sup>133</sup>

Despite capitalizing on this impression, podcasters retain the sense of being ‘unmediated’; Joe Rogan aligns with this tendency in his March 28, 2007 appearance on [Tom Green Live](#):

this is the most exciting TV show that I have ever been on and I’m not bullshitting you, this is fucking bad-ass. I think this whole idea that you’re bypassing all the studios, you’re doing this on your own, you’re doing it live on the internet, I think it’s fucking awesome. I don’t even give a fuck about normal talk shows usually, it’s just an opportunity to sit down for 7 seconds, and it’s all filtered and censored, but I think this is fucking awesome....the internet itself is a fascinating experiment, you know the whole idea of connectivity, of like complete connectivity to everybody all over the world all at once, (you know) that’s really what it is, the difference between (you know) now and in the past is when someone in the past, the only way audiences got to know you is if they saw you on the Tonight Show or (you know) you got interviewed on something or you got to speak your opinions about something, but it’s always condensed and it’s always really weird, but to be on the internet, people can really get to know you.

The difference between podcasting/radio transcends the “technological and distributive shift from the broadcast signal to the digital dissemination of individual audio files”; the resulting transfer of accessibility from media professionals to amateurs, and then back to ‘professionals’, demonstrates a bid to decentralize knowledge-production with promises of ‘authenticity’ (Llinares, 2008, p. 125; Bottomley, 2015). Offline power dynamics have already pervaded the medium i.e. media professionals possessed of status, power and money have exploited their advantage in the emerging marketplace (Murthy, 2008; Menon, 2020).<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Successful podcasts are often commercially funded, whether by ‘native advertisements’ or less transparent agreements with parent companies (*Ibid*).

<sup>134</sup> During the global health crisis that has resulted in mass joblessness Joe Rogan signed a \$100 Million dollar deal with Spotify (Accessed 2020/06/15: <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/opinion/2020/05/20/joe-rogans-100-million-deal-with-spotify-has-valuable-lessons-for-all-podcasters.html>).

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis – Mapping the Crisis of Authentic Faith

### Prologue: Powerful JRE – The Joe Rogan Experience

Joe Rogan’s logo is a spinning illustration of himself with a third-eye surrounded by the title of the show; he occupies the left side of the studio,<sup>135</sup> and his guests occupy the right; there is a producer present, but he is not visible. Rogan’s background is brick and his guests’ have a curtain behind them; there is a large monitor that this always off but mounted to a curtain covered wall centered behind them. The art on the brick wall behind Rogan consists of Jimmy Hendrix/Elvis mugshots, but is subsequently replaced by an American flag mural. In later episodes, there is a grandfather clock behind-and-to-the-left of Rogan and a sarcophagus prop,<sup>136</sup> to the guests’ right-behind; props are scattered across a wooden table. Examples include: a cross-legged Buddha statue on a Behringer POWERPLAY HA8000 amplifier; a Himalayan salt lamp, a helmet on a post; a lava lamp; an old-fashioned pipe; antlers; and miniature action-figures.<sup>137</sup> There are also refreshments, tissue boxes, notepads, and essential oil diffusers.

The technical set-up: four Shure SM7B Vocal Dynamic microphones extend from Yellowtec m!ka Standard Mic Arms mounted to the table; they wear Sennheiser HD280PRO headphones.

<sup>138</sup> The guests are sitting in ergonomic chairs,<sup>139</sup> and appear in casual clothing, whether jeans and long-sleeve cotton/T-shirts, hoodies, baseball caps, etc., and generally look the same if they appear more than once, except Andrew Marr, who has a fully grown out beard in his first appearance but looks clean-cut/shaved in the second. When there are advertisements, they are

---

<sup>135</sup> From the audience’s perspective.

<sup>136</sup> By ‘prop’ I mean theatrical property i.e. objects used by performers that are distinct from the scenery.

<sup>137</sup> Action figures: UFC’s Conor McGregor and Joe Rogan; American rappers Notorious B.I.G and Tupac Shakur.

<sup>138</sup> The JRE library site describes the set-up in more detail: Behringer XENYX X1222USB Mixer, Universal Audio Apollo FireWire Audio Interface, NewTek TriCaster 460 (a four camera video production system), Canon VIXIA HF G40 Full HD Camcorders; the producer, Jamie, appears to be using a 27-inch Apple iMac desktop computer (Accessed 2020/02/20: <https://jrelibrary.com/articles/joe-rogan-experience-podcast-equipment-studio-setup/>).

<sup>139</sup> The JRE library: HAG Capisco Chair (*Ibid*).

delivered at the beginning/end of the program, no matter its length; examples include: 1800-Flowers/Onnit.com (a ‘total human optimization’ website for supplements/lifestyle products).<sup>140</sup>

The podcast is a professionally produced product, but at the same time, the curation of eccentric/mystical props lends itself to a subversive aesthetic.

### **The Problem with Authenticity: Representational Breakdown**

From early into the listening process it became apparent that the informants appreciate the idea of authenticity. Rogan views the podcast as a way for an audience to *really get to know* a person, and besides the decision to have unedited 2-3 hour conversations, the need for authentication persists throughout the conversations. Attempting to contain examples of this desire for verification to this section would be futile given how it informs their human nature assumptions and the subsequent crisis. As such, it made sense to establish the fundamental problem with claims to authenticity, especially as it relates to representational visibility, clarity, and omission.

Jocko Willink compares an instance in which transparency was encouraged to garner support for the war effort to the 1991 blanket ban on showing the coffins of fallen soldiers, implemented by President George H.W. Bush and renewed by President George W. Bush up until 2008, that chiefly affected post-9/11 soldiers, which was supposed to preserve public morale (JW962 31:26-32:52; Bumiller, 2009).<sup>141</sup> They omitted relevant information that could have undermined public support for the War on Terror through the selective interpretation/representation of events. Willink also recognizes how social media has been a boon for terrorist recruitment, claiming that the online presence of ISIS is “aiming [their message] at...*disenchanted* people all around the

---

<sup>140</sup> When Google AdSense commercials occur before the video they tend to be for content that would not be out of keeping with the interchangeable props.

<sup>141</sup> Elisabeth Bumiller. ‘U.S. lifts photo ban on military coffins’. The New York Times. (December 7, 2009). Accessed: <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/world/americas/27iht-photos.1.20479953.html> (July 18, 2019).

world that can *cling onto something that will give them some sort of identity*” (JW729 120:32-120:39). Giving representation to identities that the *disenchanted/frustrated* can *cling onto*, suggests that desire has been mobilized, at least for those who have not been ‘enchanted’ on the other side of the conflict, and this aligns with what is described by Willink in another context:

(20:05) when you’re not concerned about your *safety what is there left to be patriotic about when you don’t understand what it means to live in fear* (20:11) so yeah September 11<sup>th</sup> comes and *you get attacked and you feel that feeling of fear, guess what you rally around this ‘thing’ that’s called ‘America’ that’s protecting you and your family, but you weren’t thinking about it before, now you’re thinking about it, and you go you know I’m going to put a flag up on my vehicle, this vehicle I drive around in complete luxury which is what America’s like, America’s like unbelievably luxurious compared to the rest of the world* (20:34) (JW729).

The rallying cry of patriotism is described by Joe Rogan and Andy Stumpf:

Rogan: (2:08:42) I don't necessarily think we're fucked ‘cause I think there's enough people who are paying attention that think it's terrible, <sup>142</sup> there are a lot of us, but I think that when something like 9/11 happens, one of the things that I thought was really interesting right after 9/11 was this *rallying cry of patriotism* like everybody had an *American flag* on their car it was like, this is interesting to me (2:09:03) [Stumpf: they have them hanging over the overpasses] Rogan: up here in LA [Stumpf: and San Diego that week it was about a week after 9/11 I have never in my life felt that level of *solidarity* of just, not only that but people were] Rogan: *nicer* (2:09:19) [Stumpf: they were *nicer* they were more *accepting* they *weren't even worried* that you cut them off in traffic, you know take the parking spot, you know you can take your cart in front of me at the grocery store] (2:09:26) Rogan: *it's not you against me it's us against them* (2:09:29) [Stumpf: how fleeting was that though] Rogan: it was pretty fleeting [Stumpf: but it was *amazing* during that time period, overpasses in San Diego, *American flags* hanging, *not just an American flag, covered the entire thing it was unbelievable*] (2:09:41) Rogan: It lasted longer in New York, in New York it lasted for a long time you would [Stumpf: *they kind of had a daily reminder*] (2:09:46) Rogan: the feeling there was different they were just, it changed the way New York City was *New York City was almost like a village now, a friendly village that had been*

---

<sup>142</sup> What is ‘terrible’ is safe spaces, which will be relevant in the next section: (2:07:59) Andy Stumpf: I think the biggest *threat* to this is this country is political correctness and safe spaces I truly think that teaching people in that manner or getting them, not getting them, but *allowing them to think* that is how the world outside of that environment operates is *setting you up for a very long term failure* ‘cause you're just going to get crushed, because there are plenty of other entities throughout the world that will look at what you're doing and say oh that's awesome you're just teeing it up for me that's a *complete vulnerability* they're going to *leverage that against us and manipulate, not manipulate just attack the fact that the people feel that way* they'll take it as a *weakness and leverage that for their success* and then we're fucked (2:08:42) (AS1047).

*attacked and everybody was super thankful that they were alive and supportive of each other and also the solidarity (2:10:02) (AS1047 2:07:59-2:10:02).*

The mobilization of belief via fear and then relief in the face of social chaos is described alongside the distribution of a national religious-cultural product to mark the imagined community, who temporarily find *solidarity* in an *us against them* arrangement (Solomon, 2013; Thatcher, 1998; Helmers & Hill, 2004). Besides demonstrating how a unifying crisis-event or threat to the *'thing' that's called 'America'* binds those who had previously been in conflict thereby externalizing that conflict, it shows how patriotism is contingent upon reminding Americans how thankful they should feel for not only being alive but living in absolute luxury. This is reminiscent of how Kristol and Kagan suggest that without being reminded of threats on the horizon, Americans disregard the spiritual/material (national) foundation for their 'well-being' (in Solomon, 2013, p. 114). Willink also describes how generally civilians *don't understand what it means to live in fear* because of the luxurious lifestyle encasing them, so it makes sense to unpack what practical contact civilians have with the re-presentation of war. Stumpf describes how inaccurate war movies tend to be, whether from a technical perspective (2:25:35), i.e. basic maneuvering to improper use of equipment (2:15:55-2:24:40),<sup>143</sup> or with respect to what the job entails (AS1247). He makes a point to correct Rogan about his misunderstanding regarding how much time is actually spent in battle over the duration of a warrior's career, which he estimates is closer to five percent, and the rest is training/administrative (AS1247 2:25:56-2:27:53). Willink understands the civilian's 'sick fascination' (8:14) with war and why people would want to read books or watch movies about it because 'people try to understand what that emotional content [of combat] really means' (8:54-

---

<sup>143</sup> He also talks about the improper use of military equipment in the context of 'open-carry' civilian militias, (1:10:57) (AS1247).

8:58) since the consequences amount to ‘everything’ (JW729 8:10-8:58). It seems fair to ask if the perception of something being ‘genuine’ makes a difference in the experience of it, especially of events said to have taken place in history, if it is intended to evoke an emotional response.

Former Navy SEALs Marcus Luttrell a.k.a. the Lone Survivor,<sup>144</sup> and Chris Kyle a.k.a. the American Sniper,<sup>145</sup> are brought up together because both of their books have been translated to film and the question of authenticity becomes muddled. Stumpf describes the ‘anxiety’ he experiences watching films that ‘portray war so inaccurately’ (2:23:22-2:23:56), while recognizing how movies like the American Sniper are being ‘enhanced’ for the purpose of entertainment (AS1247 2:23:22-2:24:40). He also suggests that if he were in Luttrell’s position he ‘would tell them to just make the movie they want to make instead of recreating what happened’ (2:24:40), because he understands that they are ‘there to make money not portray history’ (2:23:56) (*Ibid*).<sup>146</sup> While it seems reasonable that someone would not want to relive a traumatic event, it does not occur to Stumpf that the film never had to be made, and that those producing it were relying on the perception of authenticity to spread ‘enhanced’ misinformation.

David Goggins refers to ‘Operation Red Wings’ (38:29) and the ‘Lone Survivor’ (38:16) by name, citing them as sources of inspiration for getting involved with the Special Operations Warrior Foundation (39:00) and ultra-marathon running (DG1080 38:02-39:00); this corresponds

---

<sup>144</sup> Luttrell wrote *The Lone Survivor* based on the events of Operation Red Wings i.e. a 2005 “battle on a mountain in Kunar Province in Afghanistan that claimed the lives of 19 U.S. service members” (Hixenbaugh, 2015).

<sup>145</sup> Chris Kyle may have known Luttrell because Luttrell appeared at his capital murder trial, as Kyle was shot/killed by former U.S. Marine Eddie Ray Routh (CBS News, 2015).

<sup>146</sup> Andy Stumpf (2:24:21): “having not been there, and I can only imagine how horrific that incident must be to deal with on a daily level, I would bet he wasn’t very involved, I would almost rather them, if that was me, I would almost rather say you know what, just make the movie you want to make, because I don’t want to sit here and explain what happened and recreate these scenes, talk about how this person died over here, just go to town” (2:24:47) (AS1247).

to a story that will appear later regarding how he was inspired to become a SEAL.<sup>147</sup> While a shorthand may merely act as a convenient way of forging a connection between known events and personal experience that is immediately understandable to an audience, in using one the speaker assumes that the audience is aware of the fictionalized characterization of ‘real’ events. As in, Luttrell was not known as the Lone Survivor to anyone who experienced the event, but this fictional designation shapes how the event is understood. This corresponds to how intertextuality rhetorically activates via reference between texts/images i.e. awareness of precursors modifies meaning, and frequency of communication has the potential to make something recognizable as the accepted authority (Hemmers & Hill, 2004, p. 5; Quine, 2013). Making the film about the impossible situation faced by the American military,<sup>148</sup> rather than what led to Luttrell’s survival i.e. being rescued by an Afghan man named Muhammad Gulab, after the other three members of SEAL team 10 were killed and he was severely wounded, suggests that imposing a frame upon events can drastically transform one’s perception (Shinkman, 2013). Comparably, Jesse Ventura’s podcast episode largely focuses on his defamation suit against the American Sniper; he describes how ‘34 major media conglomerates’ entered his trial during the appeal via [amici](#) i.e. as impartial voluntary advisors to the court – the

---

<sup>147</sup> Goggins claims to know Luttrell and his twin brother Morgan, who he attended freefall school with (38:27), and also knew ‘a lot of guys who died in the operation’ (DG1080 38:02-39:00).

<sup>148</sup> **IMDB:** Marcus Luttrell and his team set out on a mission to capture or kill notorious Taliban leader Ahmad Shah, in late June 2005. Marcus and his team are left to fight for their lives in one of the most valiant efforts of modern warfare. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1091191/>  
**Wikipedia:** *Lone Survivor* is a 2013 American biographical war drama film based on the eponymous 2007 non-fiction book by Marcus Luttrell with Patrick Robinson. Set during the war in Afghanistan, it dramatizes the unsuccessful United States Navy SEALs counter-insurgent mission Operation Red Wings, during which a four-man SEAL reconnaissance and surveillance team was tasked to track down the Taliban leader Ahmad Shah. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone\\_Survivor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone_Survivor) **Rotten Tomatoes:** LONE SURVIVOR, starring Mark Wahlberg, tells the story of four Navy SEALs on an ill-fated covert mission to neutralize a high-level Taliban operative who are ambushed by enemy forces in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan. Based on The New York Times bestseller, this story of heroism, courage and survival directed by Peter Berg (Friday Night Lights) also stars Taylor Kitsch, Emile Hirsch, Ben Foster and Eric Bana. [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/lone\\_survivor](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/lone_survivor) (Accessed online: 2020/08/06).

document shows it was ‘33 Media Companies and Organizations’ – in support of the appellant, Kyle’s estate by way of his wife Taya Kyle (JV858 31:40-32:20). Ventura describes how these companies got involved in overturning his unjust enrichment claim because they had vested interest in being able to profit from the misrepresentation of events (JV858 33:18-34:25).

Rogan describes how the case is ‘touchy’ (34:51) and ‘complicated’ (35:10) because Kyle is the ‘subject of this gigantic movie and this symbol of patriotism’ since he was ‘representative of the brave military’ (JV858 34:51-35:49). The portrayal of events and the characterization by Bradley Cooper of Kyle ‘was so simplistic’ (35:49) where the film was ‘like the perfect hero’s journey’ (Ibid). Ventura explains how if he had not issued a warning to Warner Brothers about the chapter subject to the defamation suit, that he would have been ‘portrayed... as a villain in that fricken’ movie’ (JV858 37:01-37:12), to which Rogan responds (37:15):

What's crazy to me and what's complicated about this is that there are thousands of thousands of brave men and women who risk their lives...*sacrifice their lives* and this guy becomes...this *figurehead* [Ventura: wait wait wait wait] where *he rises above* [Ventura: including me] including you yes very important, but he rises above all this and becomes this [Ventura: *icon figure*] yes this *iconic figure* that you can't tarnish and then *truth is irrelevant and they're willing to sacrifice people like you and the truth just for this overall image of patriotism* [Ventura: yep] (38:01) (JV858).

Sacrificing Ventura as a Vietnam era veteran for an intact patriotic model suggests an avenue by which contradictions can be discounted in the maintenance of an idealized/revered representation.<sup>149</sup> Another layer of intention is introduced when Tim Kennedy talks about Top Gun being ‘the best recruiting tool’ and wanting do the ‘Top Gun thing’(1:38:26) with his show [Hard to Kill](#) because the army special forces,<sup>150</sup> are not the ‘Navy SEALs writing books’ or ‘talking about [their] exploits, [because they] didn’t kill Bin Laden’. This is brought up in relation to the

---

<sup>149</sup> Especially considering how so many deaths have been obscured by not allowing images of coffins to be shown lest the public should become demoralized.

<sup>150</sup> Whose ‘community motto’ is the ‘quiet professionals’ (1:35:49).

conventional forces ‘recruiting problem’ (1:36:57) (TK1117 1:35:49-1:38:26).<sup>151</sup> Stumpf reflects on those who would use the Navy SEALs trident to sell books (40:03):

I would say 99.9% of books that have a trident on them should be purchased and then put next to your toilet paper rolls so when you run out of toilet paper you can just start ripping pages out of the books [to] wipe your ass with....people want to *romanticize* and *embellish the reality* of what actually happened and I don't know if it's the *desire* to make it seem like it's more than it was....if you start *embellishing the stories*, in my mind at least, it starts *tarnishing the reality* of what the occupation actually is (42:25) (AS1047).

Returning to *Hard to Kill*, its purpose is to re-present/re-enact, ‘dangerous jobs [that are] necessary to [the American] way of life’ (TK1117 140:00); Kennedy describes how he hopes to motivate the population to become healthy due to a decline in military eligibility (1:27:07):

[Rogan: how do you get the *freedom* to do all these things after you re-enlisted?] Kennedy: *the Army will always get what the Army wants* first of all [JR: but it's got to help them having you being so high-profile] that's a huge part...*if you're listening right now go to your local recruiter* (1:27:34...1:32:26) *the perception of the military is way less of an issue than us just having a qualified population* [Rogan: of viable candidates] for us to pick from it's really bad we're freaking, *we're borderline freaking out* about what we're going to do (1:32:39) (TK1117).<sup>152</sup>

The blending of fictional re-presentation of the ‘real’ for the purpose of motivating a response can also be observed in Willink’s decision to become a children’s book author. *The Way of the Warrior Kid* imports the value of hard work/discipline (2:05:05) as a means to ‘inoculate yourself against [fear]’ (202:06); the protagonist, a kid named ‘Mark’ with ‘typical issues that a

---

<sup>151</sup> In addition to Kyle and Luttrell’s books, Willink and Goggins are also Navy SEAL veterans with several books between them to date: *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win*, *Way of the Warrior Kid: From Wimpy to Warrior the Navy SEAL Way*; *Leadership Strategy and Tactics: Field Manual*; *The Dichotomy of Leadership*; *The Code. the Evaluation. the Protocols: Striving to Become an Eminently Qualified Human* (Willink); *Can’t Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds* (Goggins). Ventura is also a prolific author, but he does not appear to use his platform to promote military ideals; Andrew Marr is a retired special forces combat engineer who has also written a book: ‘*Tales From the Blast Factory...*’

<sup>152</sup> The concept of freedom is explored in the next section, but here it becomes subordinate to the demands of the army but doing ‘*all these things*’ implies freedom is connected to being high profile, or attracting publicity. The crisis being publicized here is men not being qualified to perform jobs essential to the American way of life.

fifth grader has', <sup>153</sup> must learn how to overcome obstacles from his uncle 'Jake' who just happens to be a Navy SEAL and practices Jiu-Jitsu (like Jocko) (JW962 1:59:13-2:05:05).

The choice to write a book for children corresponds with Willink's understanding of how he was destined to become a 'commando' (21:35) (JW729 21:18-23:27). He forges a continuity between being a kid growing up in the New England sticks (21:18) '*running around in the woods with BB guns*' (22:55) and an adult profession in which you never grow up, where 'being in a SEAL team [means] they pay you money to do what you always wanted to do with unlimited ammo, weapons, and explosives' (23:27) (*Ibid*). Both Willink and Kennedy describe training simulations involving paint/laser 'simu-nition' systems (by Saab) (JW729 38:24; TK1117 48:32-48:43).

Kennedy explains how he will be '*playing with the Dutch special forces at Reveille Peak ranch in Austin Texas, [setting up] booby traps when they come in to do their final culmination hit full mission profile...[where] they will spend the whole day planning and they're going to figure out how they're going to walk through the woods and not get caught*' (TK1117 48:04-48:25). <sup>154</sup>

Returning to uncle 'Jake/Jocko', Willink describes how the father is not present, but that the uncle teaches his nephew how self-discipline makes it so you do not need anyone to help you – this corresponds with Goggin's story about facing his insecurities in the next section (JW962 2:04:48-2:05:42). Imprinting a Navy SEAL approach on to a fifth-grader seems perplexing if one considers how children (and women) are often used to justify retaliation because evil gets defined in the perpetration of heinous acts against them. This will be relevant later in the

---

<sup>153</sup> Jocko Willink: He can't do any pull-ups...he doesn't know his times tables...he doesn't know how to swim...he's getting picked on by the big bully (JW962 1:59:13-1:59:37). Willink also describes how he drew inspiration for some of the problems faced by young people from his own life/experiences with his children.

<sup>154</sup> There was not enough room in this thesis to explore the idea of play by imitation, but here discipline via simulation of potential battlespace (or theatres of operation) refines *running around in the woods with BB guns* into a tactical planning (administrative) task to *walk through the woods and not get caught* but is still considered play. Play could be expanded into further discussion of how enjoyment corresponds to ideas of suffering yet to come.

analysis, but the problem with authenticity/re-presentation speaks to how one recalls past events to transpose them into the present/give reconstituted representation to/fictionalize events said to have taken place in history to generate models for distributed *application* of what has been ‘memorialized’ (Samman, 2015; Lévi-Strauss, 1955; Verhesschen, 2003; McLoughlin, 2014).

### **The Problem with Human Nature: Weakness as Moral Failure & Mastery**

The concept of human nature is flawed if one does not recognize the role of discursive-social construction in psychology, feelings, and behavioural traits; characterizing the ab/normal in opposition resonates with the theory at play. That is, 1) how the perception of discontinuity relies on a historically productive-contingent continuity and 2) how authentic-masculinity is ‘threatened’ by a negating feminization, which could appear as a pathologized Other,<sup>155</sup> or an ‘inauthentic’ counterpart. Giving serial reconstituted re-presentation of the imagined authentic-masculinity suggests a pathway to conformity because the ‘provisional representation of a series’ allows one to imagine identities before they exist (Anderson, 2006, p. 184).<sup>156</sup> Like ‘events’, identity not only gains meaning in its singular occurrence i.e. a past/prefigured-analogical-model, but through imagined progress i.e. a serialized narrative-movement toward a future-object, predicated on perceived success/failure (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453; Anderson, 2006).<sup>157</sup>

Suffering is something that is valued by the informants, at least as a component of self-discipline, because it has been conflated with the struggle of hard work.<sup>158</sup> Struggle creates

---

<sup>155</sup> De Goede & Randalls (2009): a durable threat is characterized as ‘alien, subversive, dirty or sick’ (p. 861).

<sup>156</sup> The irony of authentic-masculinity is that mastering one’s behaviour through repeated influence to conform to an accepted standard, or be deemed inauthentic/abnormal, means the ideal is to be dominated by what one ‘should be’.

<sup>157</sup> The purpose of the rhetorical intervention is to invite/inculcate the next generation to act differently than they would-have if not for engaging the discursively-constructed paradigm (Meek & Carr, 2013; Verhesschen, 2003).

<sup>158</sup> Rogan describes how he believes that our minds are set up for struggle (JW962 1:56:56-1:58:44); Goggins discusses struggling violently to find/define oneself (1:34:00) where suffering is described as a form of payment to appreciate happiness (1:36:58) and how ‘weak people’ do not understand his story (1:37:07), but that self-discipline made him ‘appreciate the hard work’ he put in to overcome his weakness (DG1080 1:34:00-1:41:01); in his second appearance Goggins talks about how God hooked him up with an advantage to become a ‘master’ of his mind where his “struggle is what made [him] who [he is]” (DG1212 7:44-8:28). Rogan describes how ‘weirdness’ results from a

mental toughness which is considered an admirable quality as it produces (moral) ‘character’;<sup>159</sup> a lack of (physical) suffering is equated to weakness as a form of (moral) failure.<sup>160</sup> It connects to the liberal paradox of war, under which suffering becomes a trade-off for moral principle and a specific vision of humanity;<sup>161</sup> the informants repeatedly reference how war is horrible,<sup>162</sup> but also necessary and/or inevitable, like suffering for an ideal in relation to mastery via discipline.

---

lack of struggle and Willink concurs and adds that people are inclined to latch onto causes to ‘lash out’ in the context of a discussion about controlling free speech (JW9622:47:11-2:49:44); Stumpf describes how ‘suffering’ is used to ‘ingrain the lesson’ in cold weather training (AS1247 1:26:58-1:29:53); Marr and Rogan discuss how most people want comfort with none of the hard work and compares people like this to spoiled children (AM700 1:03:511:04:35); Kennedy describes how people do not understand the value of hard work while justifying enhanced interrogation techniques and the selflessness of soldiers who prevent terrorists from replicating the events of 9/11 (TK1117 2:23:32-2:36:20).

<sup>159</sup> Goggins describes being on a panel to discuss mental toughness alongside an academic who had theories but no practical contact with the conditions that support hardening one’s mind (DG1080 1:23:03-1:24:51); Rogan describes how one learns mental toughness and Stumpf compares this to learning how to adapt to pain/suffering through military training (AS 1247 1:29:53-1:30:56); Marr discusses how testosterone helps with mental toughness (GM700 1:42:48-1:44:07); mental toughness is brought up in the context of not quitting/tapping out/hitting a gong, but perhaps a ‘smart person’ would have (TK497 2:19:01-2:21:11). Rogan uses a metaphor about a hammer/nail to explain how overcoming adversity gives a person character while discussing why ‘failure is important’ where failure is viewed as an obstacle to success (GM700 1:14:21-1:17:21); Rogan attributes character/discipline to Stumpf when he discusses having the ‘tools’ to deal with adversity, Stumpf corrects Rogan by acknowledging that while he may have had the ‘tools’ to overcome the need for retaliation, that what restricted him was physically not having access to those he wanted to harm (AS 1247 2:10:05-2:12:50); Willink describes how “only the strong get to play” while the weak are weeded out in the SEAL selection process based on fortitude of character (JW729 23:27-24:33).

<sup>160</sup> Stumpf describes how ‘if you’re weak enough to have your mind change like that and you can’t stand for the morals that you know to be true, it’s a problem’ in the context of a discussion about radicalization (ASTF 720 23:15-23:21); authenticity, weak people and insecurity come up when Rogan describes the ‘commitment [Goggins has] to authenticity [as] one of the reasons why people are connected to what your message is...you’re terrified of that thing just as we were talking about with weak people, you’re terrified of seeing that weakness in yourself...we all talk to people who are talking their words, their words are just a bunch of words they piece together because they sound like something that someone else someone who is enlightened on the subject would say...it doesn’t connect at all so your struggle now is to try and figure out how to stay you (DG1080 1:46:50-1:47:47), Marr speaks about panic attacks as something ‘foreign’ and something that a ‘weak person’ would have (GM700 14:46-15:39), Kennedy describes how ‘strength is the best antidote for all the weakness in society’ (TK297 2:07:29-2:08:50).

<sup>161</sup> It holds that war is mutually “denounced as a cause of extreme suffering”, while it is always “fought in the name of moral principle” and thus “simultaneously carries specific visions of humanity” that everyone is meant to ‘endorse’ (Michael Howard, 1978 in Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 316).

<sup>162</sup> Willink describes how “war is jacked up it’s not glorious, it’s not fun, it’s a horrible, horrible event, so yeah I think you should expose it at a high level so we know what we’re getting ourselves into” (34:56), but despite war being horrible there have been “times in history where it was absolutely the right choice” (JW962 34:40-35:09), in his first appearance he expresses how it is horrible but there is no avoiding it (JW729 6:12-7:32); Ventura describes how “war is stupid” (JV 858 23:39); Kennedy describes how he “hates war” and how he has been “anti-war [his] whole life” in the context of not wishing what he has ‘seen on [his] worst enemy’ (13:23-13:59), but also acknowledges how it is inevitable because of the existence of evil (TK497 14:25-15:18); later in the same episode Kennedy describes how “it’s horrible and disgusting that said it’s absolutely necessary” (1:24:26-1:24:29) and how he ‘can’t even imagine what this world be like had we not been involved to the degree that we have been’ (TK 497 1:24:26-1:24:49); Stumpf describes the ‘horrific environments’ guys were working in, in Afghanistan where they were ‘vaporized’ by IED’s (ASTF720 2:05:54-2:07:11).

The primary principle involved in justifying war as inevitable regards how it is fought in the name of freedom. Stumpf discusses freedom of speech as it relates to tolerance even when faced with ideas that one hates and being ‘grateful [to] have an environment [in which] that can exist’ (AS1047 2:06:45-2:06:55).<sup>163</sup> Having the ability to complain about one’s ‘rights...freedoms and oppressions’ is spoken about in the context of what the role of the military is, which is to ‘create space and a barrier, and a boundary’ or an ‘environment where these things can flourish’ (AS1047 2:31:34-2:32:05). This ideal is compromised when discussing the possibility that the ‘left’ is calling for violence (1:05:45);<sup>164</sup> Stumpf describes being prepared to come off the bench and harm Americans if need be,<sup>165</sup> stating: ‘I’ve sacrificed enough that I’m not going to let those people tear the country apart’ (AS1247 1:11:58-1:24:04).<sup>166</sup>

Willink describes military members as ‘free-thinking’ (25:20) to combat the perception of ‘everyone in the military being like a robot’ (25:16), stating, as a leader: ‘you’re going to have all these independent free-thinkers and you’re going to have to get them on board with the same plan to go out and execute’ (25:34) (JW962 25:10-25:34). Willink explains how reporters should

---

<sup>163</sup> He positions free-spaces as opposed to being beheaded in the public square (2:06:57); in this context Stumpf recognizes that America is on the verge of ‘falling flat on [its] face’ but that they ‘need to’ to ‘figure out who [they] are’ (AS1047 2:05:01-2:05:30).

<sup>164</sup> The informants talk about the left calling for violence in the context of a conversation where they have just considered Renée DiResta’s explanation regarding the ‘war on information’ and how it has resulted from Russian troll farms creating the conditions surrounding conflict between left-leaning/right-leaning ideological groups by orchestrating events through fake social media accounts (AS1247 1:01:00-1:08:00).

<sup>165</sup> He also brings this up in the context of describing how those attending open-carry rallies obviously do not practice with their military-grade equipment, which they are only wearing to be fashionable (AS1247 1:10:57), and in another conversation describes the ‘tyranny of or’ i.e. having to be right/left leaning (AS1047 1:13:52), which possibly means he would not only hurt the ‘left’, but anyone who threatens American unity.

<sup>166</sup> This theory has been tested during the 2020 civil rights demonstrations; Stumpf has spoken on Twitter about how “wearing a badge and possessing character or integrity are not the same thing. Transparency in [the George Floyd] investigation is the only thing that can begin to heal trust” (May 26, 2020). He also discusses the topic on his Podcast ‘Cleared Hot’, expressing empathy for the demonstrators after describing the obligation of police officers in maintaining trust, and the idea of organizational integrity, even if he has difficulty with the idea of defunding the police ([Full Auto Friday – Round 4, June 5, 2020, 2:00-16:05](#)). This demonstrates how he would not encroach on the democratic freedoms of Americans exercising these rights, even if he does not understand the destructive aspect of protest, he does not condemn it, but rather, calls for institutional accountability (*Ibid*).

‘show the lives...[soldiers] gave up...because they believe in freedom’ (JW962 33:26-33:42), but also describes how ‘too much civilian oversight’ in Vietnam did not allow military leaders to have the ‘free rein to go out and try and make things happen’ (JW962 28:07-28:16).

Kennedy responds to Rogan’s claim that: ‘there are real heroes in the world’(12:00), ‘people who have heroic intent’ (12:35) and ‘respect the idea of freedom’(12:41) who are then ‘thrust into situations where everything is out of control’(12:46), <sup>167</sup> by explaining how ‘war is horrible’ and how he is ‘anti-war’ (13:26), and that he ‘wouldn’t wish what he had seen on [his] worst enemy’ (13:57) (TK497 12:00-13:57). <sup>168</sup> He confuses the Patriot Act with the ‘Freedom Act’ (24:16), because he was reflecting on how it led to one of the ‘largest losses of privacy’ to Americans and this resulted from being so ‘fearful’ and ‘scared’ (24:28) (TK1117 24:10-24:28). <sup>169</sup> He also discusses how ‘providing protection for our country and freedoms’ (2:27:29) can be considered cliché (2:27:34) while questioning the morality of torture (and the action of warriors) (2:27:16), but that he thinks he is a ‘moral person and [he tries] to be a good person’ (TK1117 227:49).

In these explanations, free-spaces allow for ambiguity of meaning premised upon tolerance. If the role of the military is to create/protect free-spaces, then systemic control is required to keep the variable parameters constant i.e. enforcement/administration to sustain them. Civilians ‘should’ see what those who believe in freedom sacrificed but ‘should not’ restrict military free-rein. Fear leads individuals to sacrifice freedom in exchange for the (perception of) the re-establishment of order. Another reference to freedom set aside for comparison, regards how

---

<sup>167</sup> Rogan is bringing this up in the context of describing how it is fashionable to be anti-war (13:12).

<sup>168</sup> In spite of this he acknowledges that war is ‘a necessary evil’(14:29) where one becomes obligated to ‘fight fire with fire...[where] you fight evil with a more violent better version of evil’(14:34) (TK497 14:29-14:34). This appears to connect to the Wilsonian reluctant war-mongering model, in that it permits a superior version of evil to fight inevitable evil forces i.e. unamerican forces, because this statement recognizes that America can be evil.

<sup>169</sup> He introduces this point within a broader discussion about gun control (TK1117 24:10-24:28).

Rogan refers to Willink equating discipline to freedom,<sup>170</sup> (JW962 1:52:18-152:26) and this can be compared to how Goggins equates peace to suffering (DG1212 36:39-36:50).

If discipline is understood as training to exercise control over oneself in pursuit of mastery, then there is a kind of freedom that arises out of self-control. This is expressed in relation to how ‘discipline is a pathway to creativity’ (2:05:10) in combat/the battlefield; once someone has trained to the point where they do not need to think of the individual actions, they can experiment because the actions have been incorporated through repetition (or drills)(JW729 2:05:05-2:10:02).<sup>171</sup> Comparing this to how Goggins equates peace to suffering, if suffering has been conflated with the struggle of hard work and someone accepts that every hardship endured has sculpted a resilient character (where mental toughness is an admirable trait), then one might find ‘peace’ (or freedom from disturbance) in that habituated suffering.

Goggins grew up in poverty (and abused by his father), describing himself as basically illiterate because he worked for his parents instead of attending school regularly; prior to deciding to lose 106 lbs over a short period to physically qualify for the Navy SEALs (after taking the ASVAB test until he could pass), he was a 300 lbs exterminator making a thousand dollars a month (DG1080 4:28-11:27). His story is compelling because he broke a cycle, or a pattern of behaviour, despite being faced with repeated failure, and he redefined what is possible:

[Rogan (0:34)]: You are a guy that for a lot of people you sort of *embody the idea of hardening your mind and figuring out a way to do things that most people think are impossible...you sort of become that guy over your life* and you’ve become that guy for a

---

<sup>170</sup> Stating that everyone should tattoo his saying on one of their thighs, in response to discussing motivation under capitalism (JW962 1:52:18-152:26).

<sup>171</sup> Training, in this sense, is no different than any other repetitive means for ‘mastery’; it is *application* (or praxis) that relates narratives of reality (historical re-presentation) and (revelatory) fiction that fuse on the horizon of possibility, and how one appreciates past action and *applies* that which is ‘memorialized’ that will affect the configuration process of how one remembers/copos with experiences (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 454; McLoughlin, 2014, p. 446).

lot of people including me, online we've talked about you on the podcast a ton of times so having you here has been very exciting to me (DG1080 0:34-1:08).

Goggins has become a role model for hardening one's mind and figuring out the problem of the impossible; he describes how it was a Discovery Channel program about 'Class [224](#)', Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) Training, which led to his first major change:

I saw these guys going into water, I was *terrified* of it I can't even express, have you ever had a *big fear*, and I know a lot of fighters have *fears* and stuff like that, but they get over 'em, but a lot of us have these *fears* that you don't want to fucking face and I have a lot of them, had a lot of them, and that's what *created the person* that's in front of you today, and we'll get into that, but I'm just a *scared bitch*...but I was watching these guys going through hell week class 224, and these guys ringing the bell, quitting, dropping their helmet down, rolling out, a lot of the guys just leaving, and it made me *reflect on my fears, my insecurities, and I saw real men, what I thought were real men*, who were staying, who were *overcoming adversity*, who were overcoming all these different things...I had blamed so many fucking people in my life, my dad, my mom for not being there when I was 14 years old, my mom was going to get remarried to this great guy, he got murdered and then I moved back to a small town of Brazil...everybody was to blame, my learning disability, my skin color....I got to, *no one's going to come and fucking help me no one's going to come and fucking help me, it's just fucking me against me, and so I had to man up* and I said the first thing I got to do is face every fucking fear I have no matter what the fuck it is man, and these things would keep me up and *I know people hearing this shit, they will never really understand and grasp when you face these things so many things how they keep you up and haunt you at night* (DG1080 11:27-13:10).

Media representation assists in understanding one's emotions/identity, but mutually functions to motivate someone to change the course of their life based on a model of what 'kind-of-person' they could be if only they discovered the 'correct' frame for control/basis for discipline.<sup>172</sup>

Models inform a sense of purpose to overcome 'adversity' in which fear and insecurity compel social action – the structure i.e. the military organization situates a pattern of action in which one can perform/self-textualize identity into. This example connects back to Willink's children's book, if one recalls how an absent (in this case abusive) father can be replaced by a Navy SEALs approach under which you do not need anyone to help you. There is also this sense of incredulity

---

<sup>172</sup> There is room for commentary about how this sense of discovering discipline by 'choice' i.e. freedom, may very well be illusory, but this is not my primary concern.

apparent in the description, whether Goggins' reference to how *I saw real men, what I thought were real men, or I know people hearing this shit, they will never really understand and grasp when you face these things so many things how they keep you up and haunt you at night*. It demonstrates how what one believes is real or authentic can change with experience, and how others cannot understand one's suffering, potentially because of a tendency toward skepticism.

Motivation to overcome adversity/obstacles is built-into Willink's principle of leadership:

that part of it is what...transferred from Jiu-Jitsu to not only the battlefield but to life as well, because the big thing in Jiu-Jitsu...is that you don't go strength against strength...if I'm trying to choke you, I don't try to choke you overtly, I don't just grab your neck...I work on your arm, I put pressure over here, and I pass your guard and...while you're thinking about something else BOOM that's when I grab your neck...on the battlefield you don't just attack hardened positions of the enemy, and in life if you're trying to be a leader and you're trying to step up and lead somebody you don't just come down and bark orders at people, because that's not as *effective* as *maneuvering* and adjusting your position...and then *getting that person to give you what you want instead of just trying to take it from them...it applies to kids but it applies to adults as well...people need to understand why they're doing what they're doing*, and if I want you to go take down some building and capture some bad guy, I don't go: hey Joe I want you to take down this building, I want you to capture this bad guy, these are the guys I want you to take with you, here's the road I want you to take in...the methodology I want you to use for the clearance, because then when I send you to go do that mission, it's not your mission, it's my mission I came up with the plan, you didn't, so you might have thought there was a better way to do it, or you might have had a different idea of how to get it done, and now when you go out there you meet some kind of *resistance* whether it's an *obstacle* you didn't expect...it's *some scenario you didn't foresee* and *instead of you trying to overcome it you just blame me*, yeah Jocko came up with this stupid plan...forget it we're going back, we're not going to carry out the mission, whereas if I said: hey Joe here's what I want you to do, go figure out the best way to do it and now you come up with the plan, and now you make up all the methodology of how you're going to get it done, and you decide who you're going to take with you...*now you own that plan* and when you go out in the field and you meet a little resistance, guess what you do, you say I'm going to find a way around it, I'm going to *overcome* it, I'm going to *overcome that obstacle*, I'm going to *make it happen* and that's another piece of leadership (JW962 21:38-23:57).

This demonstrates how ‘reason’,<sup>173</sup> interacts with the self-textualization of an actor into an apocalyptic rhetorical structure to participate in the ‘ongoing salvation [i.e. victory] history’;<sup>174</sup> *maneuvering* the rhetorically mobilized actor means giving one ‘agency’ to overcome obstacles, but understanding one’s role as it relates to the cause means the actor is being guided to reaffirm the existing order (Thatcher, 1998, p. 550).<sup>175</sup> Mastering one’s ‘world’ demands a personal-sacrifice of freedom to discipline or directed-action. Freedom as a reason to go to war is paradoxical because those fighting for freedom are not free beyond creative liberties granted to bring the intolerant object of war to fruition; bringing freedom to another country through war is equally absurd, for reasons that will be made clear in the section regarding religion.

### **The Problem with Crisis: Not Wanted in the Brotherhood (In/security of Character)**

The military heroic fantasy offers a model to perform a revered form of masculinity; the concept of brotherhood in the military context should be unpacked to the extent that it speaks to insecurity of character, which can be better understood if framed within the contested space of heroic brotherhood/stolen valour. This framing device became apparent after discovering an informant through listening to Andrew Marr’s description of how he reached out to Dr. Gordon because of an earlier JRE podcast episode in which Gordon appeared with Matthew Gosney promoting the same course of alternative treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (AM700 14:39-14:41).<sup>176</sup> The idea of replacing one soldier with another to sell a pre-emptive

---

<sup>173</sup> *People need to understand why they're doing what they're doing.*

<sup>174</sup> By being drawn into “a sequence of real or metaphorical events whose plot lacks a critical element”; ‘victory’ sharing its Latin meaning with overcoming/conquering i.e. its past participle stem *vincere* (Thatcher, 1998, p. 550).

<sup>175</sup> Willink’s principle of leadership is called *Extreme Ownership* and it extends from the desire to master not only the self through discipline, but take responsibility for/ownership of your world of action.

<sup>176</sup> I found the majority of my informants via a JRE companion site, but Gosney was not sorted into the military category; the concept of ‘stolen valour’ appeared in the comments section of his episode and a simple search revealed 1) Gosney was not on the SEAL registry despite claiming this identity on his podcast episode, and 2) there are numerous websites devoted to exposing those trying to assume the identity of Navy SEALs.

treatment for PTSD felt like a strange bit of editing or ‘enhancing’ reality for the sake of an image,<sup>177</sup> but the notion of stolen valour also taps into what drives the crisis of masculinity.

The concept corresponds to the *Stolen Valour Act* of 2005,<sup>178</sup> which made it illegal to falsely represent oneself as having received military decoration.<sup>179</sup> Kasturi (2012) describes how military decoration holds ‘communicative value’ as a “social ordering mechanism” (p. 419), and how the *Act* resembles sumptuary laws “used to perpetuate a specific social hierarchy and order” (p. 420); it only differs in the way that it sought to restrict speech, but some argue that the law is “superfluous given existing anti-fraud laws” (p. 421). Ultimately, what the *Act* protects is the idea of stolen valour, in the way that it criminalizes those who seek to unjustly “capture these [honours]” (p. 421); it resembles medieval heraldry laws used to protect the ‘hereditary line’ (p. 421), and because of this, fraud is not the proper legal analogue, but rather defamation (Kasturi, 2012, p. 422). This aligns with Ventura’s defamation suit against the American Sniper and imports a genetic quality to military ‘brotherhood’ permitting one to inherit/defend honour.

Before unpacking the fundamental crisis, it makes sense to look at why the informants enlisted; Kennedy did so because of 9/11, retired, only to re-enlist between his two podcast appearances, and he responds to Rogan’s suggestion that the profession was ‘calling’ him (15:49) by stating:

(16:40) anyways, so making a lot of poor decisions and 9/11 happened and it was just one of those instances that’s god sent, divine intervention (16:48) maybe where you get this existential perspective of how much of an idiot you are, and that’s what I had, I’m like I’m really one of the worst people on the planet not being a productive contributing member to society in any way just being a succubus of life (17:06) uhm so I walked down after 9/11 to the recruiter’s office and I thought I could probably just knock on the door, but that was not the issue, the issue was that *there were a thousand other dudes in line*

---

<sup>177</sup> Especially when Marr’s predecessor had also intended to write a [book](#) like Marr.

<sup>178</sup> The earliest appearance of the term in academic literature appears in 2009, but it only seems to have been in response to the *Act* itself; the term appears in a book by B.G. Burkett and Glenna Whitley (1998) called: *Stolen Valor: How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of Its Heroes and Its History*.

<sup>179</sup> It was subsequently struck down as unconstitutional in 2012.

*ahead of me that wanted to do the same thing (17:17) just to give you a testament to how amazing the backbone of our country still is (17:20) (TK497 16:40-17:20).*

Kennedy situates this idea that God's calling makes you realize how terrible you are and compels social action while mutually reassuring the listener that the *backbone* i.e. strength of character/chief support of a system is *amazing*. Comparably, Rogan asks Stumpf if he pursues extreme activities like base jumping because of the intensity of his former profession and Stumpf describes something that connects to how one cultivates desire in one's youth, but mutually broaches the topic of motivation, and how this is connected to the idea of destiny/purpose:

I discovered my *appetite for the focus and clarity* while I was in the military and I think maybe it was something I *couldn't articulate that when I was young* that I knew I was searching for and for whatever reason that particular occupation *called for me* to do that but it definitely, that occupation definitely *refined* that in me (ASTF720 2:13:20-2:13:43)

Willink enlisted prior to 9/11, but he describes how the military gave him a *clean slate*, and how it transformed him from an *out of control kid* into someone capable of success:

(2:02:02) when I joined my dad said to me uh you're going to hate it because you hate authority (2:02:48) that's what my dad said to me and I went 'okay' uh but that gives you an indication to what kind of kid I was, *I was completely out of control* (2:02:56) and didn't listen to anybody, I was probably similar to what you were like I'm guessing, uhm *I was just an out of control kid* that did whatever (2:03:05) and so *joining the military it put the structure around me and all of the sudden I could take all this energy that I had, and what's really nice about it is that you get this clean slate* (2:03:13) they're like okay if you do this you'll be *successful* here all you got to do is check these boxes and I was like okay I'm ready to do those things (2:03:19) (JW729 2:02:02-2:03:19).<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> This conversation leads into how discipline is a 'pathway' or 'absolute exercise in creativity: (2:03:19) and you just do 'em, and you develop the discipline, you know with the discipline I talk about it all the time, the fact that discipline equals freedom and the more discipline you have as a human the more freedom you'll have, which is completely counterintuitive you know (2:03:34) people think if you're living a disciplined lifestyle that means you don't have any freedom and it's actually the exact opposite (2:03:40) I have freedom because I have discipline, I have you know financial freedom because I have financial discipline, I have more time, I have more time because I'm disciplined to get up in the morning before most normal people get up (2:03:54) those are the kind of disciplines you put in place and those certainly become instilled in the military (2:03:58)...(2:04:59) I would be interested in getting your perspective on this statement, so I also think that discipline is a pathway to creativity (2:05:09) and I'll tell you when I talk about creativity, this is another misconception about the military, when you're on the battlefield, it is an *absolute exercise in creativity* (2:05:18) I already talked about how you're going to lead these people what you're going to do, how you're going to *influence* them, how you're going to talk to them, how you're going to say the right things, that's creativity, now you throw on top of that what am I going to do to the enemy (2:05:32) how are

These descriptions, as well as Goggins' experience, confirm insecurity regarding self-control which compels action to self-textualize or put one's productive energy/focus into a *structure* to be *clarified/refined*. The *testament of a thousand other dudes* showing up brings us back to the brotherhood; apart from a few references to the 'camaraderie of brotherhood', there are mostly questionable to negative associations with it;<sup>181</sup> this seemed unusual given that losing said camaraderie is cited as a reason for transitional difficulty/failure. Stumpf describes how the loss of this bond/meaningful connection from his job meant that he 'lost a little bit of [his] identity and purpose' (4:54-5:05) and this caused him to struggle in the first '18 months' after he left the military when he was medically retired for a cumulative range of injuries (AS1247 6:14-6:45). He is not the only one who acknowledges the problem of transitioning back, where both he and Marr,<sup>182</sup> describe struggling with alcoholism and abusing prescription medication while trying to adapt (AS1247 9:55-10:02; ASTF720 1:31:31-1:32:35, 1:52:35-1:53:14; AM 1056 11:41-12:48).

---

we going to attack them *how are we going to disorganize them how are we going to get in their heads, that's all just massive creativity* (2:05:41) (JW729 2:02:02-2:05:41).

<sup>181</sup>Stumpf describes how he feels closer to the guys he served with than his biological family and his wife (AS1247 4:05-4:22), but shortly after he reminisces about serving with 'assholes who take all the best hiding spots when they set off charges' (AS1247 20:01-22:01). Willink describes the brotherhood as 'a big gang' (JW729 48:07), and the closest he gets to telling a fond anecdote of friends bonding is when he speaks about trying to prove to oneself to 'buddies' by doing 'doing pull ups off the side of a ship' (JW962 52:29-52:39). Ventura describes the rivalry between units and how when warriors got bored they would fight each other in bars if they did not have an enemy (JV858 23:08-23:36); but also explains how he joined the Mongols motorcycle gang, and how 'a lot of outlaw bikers were former military...because [they] wanted [their] camaraderie...[and] a brotherhood (JV858 49:00-49:10). Willink describes how a firefight broke out between members of U.S. forces during the 2006 Battle of Ramadi in his [TEDx Talk](#) (2017), which resulted in one death, while others were wounded or shaken up by the incident of 'fratricide' which he says took place because the 'fog of war' rolled in – and he uses this as an example for his principle of leadership (extreme ownership) (0:01-4:07). Despite Goggins describing how he 'wasn't a part of the brotherhood', for which he blames himself, he explains how he has 'love for a lot of them' (126:23) and how 'just because they don't have love for [him] doesn't mean [he has to] talk bad about them' (DG1212 1:126:19-126:29). Although, of all the stories about camaraderie (of which there were few), the one that stood out the most as what you would imagine military brotherhood to 'look like' was when Goggins describes how he motivated his group to yell: 'you can't hurt boat crew two' at instructors in BUD/s Hellweek (DG 1212 47:34-48:24). Goggins and Ventura have been challenged on their status over why they never saw combat, where Goggins describes how people started rumours when he could not deploy because of a heart condition (DG 1212 1:21:49-1:22:18). Most of the quibbles over Ventura's career regard how he was stationed in a military base in the Philippines and did not fight in Vietnam (JV858 4:34), and how you cannot use Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) 'frogman' and Navy SEAL interchangeably (JV 858 22:30).

<sup>182</sup> Marr was also medically retired for a cumulative range of injuries.

For Stumpf, the difficulty of transitioning back is explored in the context of a conversation about suicide rates for SEAL team members; Stumpf contests the number given by the Department of Veteran Affairs, despite knowing veterans who committed suicide that he never thought would (AS1247 14:20-15:13). A Veteran Health Administration (2016) report, describes how in “2014, an average of 20 Veterans died by suicide each day. Six of the 20 were recent users of VHA services in 2013 or 2014” (p. 4). This was brought up in the Gosney episode, as the screenwriter for American Sniper, Jason Hall, cited the statistic in response to Rogan suggesting that suicide is killing more Iraq veterans than battle (JHDGMG574 30:39-32:00).

PTSD is challenged by the informants in definition/diagnosis, and the primary example of this occurs in Andrew Marr’s two podcast episodes. Marr and Dr. Gordon describe their treatment to what has been mistaken as PTSD but is actually a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) (8:01-11:50), which can only be cured with testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) that the doctor refers to as ‘neuro-active-steroids’ (25:55-27:45) (AM700 8:01-11:50;19:15-27:45).<sup>183</sup> Rogan asks about why there is resistance to this treatment, and Gordon describes how conventional medicine has been corrupted by pharmaceutical representatives who prevent progress to protect financial interests (AM700 23:05-25:55).<sup>184</sup> Marr explains how there was ‘no objective measure’ and how

---

<sup>183</sup> The doctor makes a point to correct Marr when he refers to the condition as ‘hormone imbalance’ (*Ibid*).

<sup>184</sup> Marr also describes an incident where he went to see an army endocrinologist, who did not believe that the issues described by Marr were caused by blasts resulting in TBI, and subsequently wanted to test him for abusing anabolic steroids; Marr seems offended that the medical professional would accuse him of wanting to ‘score drugs’ (AM1056 30:50-31:52). It should be noted that the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has resources pertaining to TBI, so they recognize the condition as it relates to ‘blast [injuries] most often [resulting from] improvised explosive devices’ and numerous other combat-related injuries, but they also have an entire separate unit called the [Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center](#) (DVBIC). On this site, they recognize how this condition requires a multidisciplinary approach, and endocrinology is among several disciplines listed (including: psychiatry, psychology, physical therapy etc.) to support recovery. It seems a bit odd that an army endocrinologist would suspect drug abuse without cause, and if for whatever reason there was confusion over the nature of the condition, why the endocrinologist would not simply refer Marr to DVBIC. In Kennedy’s first podcast episode he describes how it was common practice for the Department of Defense to give members of the special forces ‘oral steroids’, and despite never taking them, they were ‘offered and available’ (TK497 133:36-134:47).

it was like ‘throwing darts’ when he was prescribed 13 medications for different issues ranging from chronic pain to PTSD (AM1056 15:55-17:44).<sup>185</sup> The manner in which being diagnosed with a psychological condition is described resonates with the crisis of masculinity:

(14:42) Marr: you’re *not the person that you used to be* (you know) I was an *elite, capable of performing at an elite level in situations of life and death consistently and reliably*, and then all of the sudden I have a *problem* (you know) handling things (14:58) that just don’t *add up* (you know) your *behaviour is not right*, I can’t remember things, driving home, I don’t know where I’m at, 5 years I’ve driven that route and suddenly you don’t know where you’re at, writing a sentence and in the middle of it I don’t know what I’m writing about (15:13) (you know what I mean) so those kind of things- it was easy for me to put my hand up and say hey this is, something’s going on here *something is not right*, (15:19) and I’m basically saying *I’m on fire someone put his fire out* (15:24),<sup>186</sup> and they just keep throwing medication and medication and medication (15:26), and then you start having *anxiety attacks* (15:28) which was completely *foreign to me*, right it was something that some other person, *a weak person’s problem* (15:33) as I perceived it, and now I’m having these anxiety attacks where *I’m breaking down emotionally and crying in public*, (15:38) and I have *no control over it* and its happening in front of my family, my wife, my kids (15:43) (AM700 14:42-15:43).

(16:53) Marr: and when I’m bringing this up for attention, it’s like well this is a psychological issue (16:58) and I’m like well I’ve been doing this for a long time, *is this what I want to be doing, that’s bullshit it’s not a psychological issue and here’s why: I wouldn’t be able to perform this and all of the sudden I can’t do it and that was very frustrating* in that regard (17:14) trying to come out and trying to find some *real answers* and only, it’s like what Mark says what it takes is an individualized approach that uses evidence based diagnostics to pinpoint and treat the underlying condition (17:29) *nobody was trying to figure out my whole story* (17:33) and when you don’t do that you just take, find out what the symptoms are and you treat those symptoms with medication then

---

<sup>185</sup> Marr describes being put on 13 different medications like Matthew Gosney (AM700 14:39-14:41).

<sup>186</sup> Marr describing being ‘on fire’ is reminiscent of how Willink describes how he was ‘fired up’ to go to Ramadi, and how the special forces does a very good job at attracting those ‘fired up to do that job’: (speaking about how he was excited to be deployed to Ramadi) so yes I was fired up to go there [Rogan: (laughs) – it’s just so crazy that, it’s just so counter-intuitive to how most people think] I guess so, and *I hung around with a bunch of guys who thought the same damn thing than me let’s go get these guys let’s get after them* [Rogan: well *that’s why you are who you are* I mean that’s why it’s important to have people like you in the world, and *there’s a spectrum of human beings*] there’s a spectrum of human beings [and *you’re on the extreme edge of exactly what you want when you have an army*, if you put together a military force you want a guy like you that has that attitude you don’t want a guy who’s going to the worst place in the world and saying why me, what the fuck, why didn’t I become a baker like my dad, I could be making cupcakes right now instead I’m shooting people] yeah, I know you uh, and the *SEAL teams and the rangers and the special forces does a very good job of attracting the type of people that you’re talking about the type of people that are fired up to do that job* [and *encouraging and growing it, it seems like the amount of camaraderie and intensity of the friendships and the bond of brotherhood that you develop* with people just intensifies it all] yeah it’s a big gang, it’s a big awesome gang that you’re a part of (JW729 46:41-48:10)

*you're not doing anything to fix it* (17:42) <sup>187</sup> ... (18:02) [Rogan: yeah that expression psychological issue is a real tricky one, isn't it? Because your psychological make up a lot of times is dependent upon your physical health, and what's going on in your body can greatly affect your mind but when someone says psychological issue especially for a guy like you, what *they are trying to say is that you're weak*] (18:23) Correct. (18:24) [Rogan: what they're trying to say is that you can't handle pressure] Absolutely (18:26) [Rogan *you're cracking and this is what it is*] (18:28) (AM 700 14:42-18:28).

(51:50) Rogan: there's such an issue in this country when it comes to mental health, that *mental health doesn't get looked at like the health of a bone* or the health of a muscle, you know if you have a torn muscle you have to get an emergency operation to reattach it [right] but *if you're brain is fucked it's like c'mon don't be a pussy* (52:05) [yep] *toughen up* or you know stop being so down on yourself (52:11) [Marr: we're the sum of our chemistry, that's the deal, when that's affected that's when you have these different things that manifest] (52:18) [Gordon: and that's why we're seeing so many of the vets coming back and committing suicide because they've been instilled with exactly what you've said (52:25) \*lowers voice\* 'don't be a pussy', *man up and do it*] [Marr: and that's why it was easy for me to say *I can speak to my credibility* that that is not the case (52:35) let's find some damn answers because I'm falling off the crazy train (52:39)] Rogan: yeah, right right for a guy like *you it's like so clear like you know you're not a pussy* so what the hell is going on [Marr: yeah, exactly] (52:45) (AM700 51:50-52:45).

It is like they recognize that the message being directed at men is the problem, while at the same time they are unable to escape their origin-myth, so instead of getting angry at the message, they are imagining an adversary in the institution telling Marr he is *weak* for having *no control* over his emotions in public. To fictionalize historical re-presentation they add commentary to the events of Marr's life without source material to substantiate his claims, so they are relying on his perception of events. Incredulity mixed with a sense of authority over his *credibility* brings us back to the idea of how representational clarity ties into claims of authenticity to discount other's perspectives. This alternative treatment functions as an attempt to assert control over an identity/narrative when faced with what is characteristic of a *weak person*, when something

---

<sup>187</sup> Marr: (17:42) but that's why it's kind of hard to, for the medical community to understand it right now because it, you have a problem and you can't necessarily attribute that to a major accident or a major injury or a major explosion, then it's like okay we don't know what it is, it is a psychological problem (17:58) we're going to put him on packet A and we'll see how he is in two weeks (18:02) (*Ibid*).

*foreign* like anxiety undermines one's self-perception. It could be argued that Marr's recovery can be attributed to finding purpose, for he describes how 'if you have a clear vision of the future it is like hey I'm going to get better' in the context of discussing how people can 'memorize...emotions' (48:34) and 'talk themselves out of life' (47:50), and Rogan compares the repetitive patterns of 'misery' to being addicted to drugs:

People become super comfortable *repeating* these really negative patterns because they *know those patterns* (48:53)...(49:08) the process of doing something that's fucked up and ruining your life somehow becomes more comfortable than the *process of the unknown*, which is improving your life (AM 1056 47:10-49:16).

Stumpf makes a comparable argument for why he contests the characterization of PTSD as a disorder and not a process. He believes people should have time to 'adapt and be able to heal from' what he understands to be a 'natural reaction of the human body to being in some of those environments' (2:06:00-2:06:08) that he calls 'horrific' (2:06:35) in the context of conventional forces being 'vaporized' (2:06:50) by IED's in Roller Route One in Afghanistan (ASTF720 2:05:14-2:07:11).<sup>188</sup> He elaborates how they were 'basically waiting to be victimized' (2:07:20), despite being reluctant to use this word, as compared to special ops who had more control over what they do (ASTF720 2:06:25-2:06:31). The 'guys in the tin can don't have any control' (2:07:39-2:07:42) whereas the SEALs 'have a much more structured, much more regimented target deck' (ASTF720 2:07:42-2:07:48). Finally, he describes how it was his 'control, [he] initiated the violence because [he's] going to come at you at the most advantageous time for

---

<sup>188</sup>This mirrors a metaphor Stumpf uses in another context to describe what motivates him to thrill-seek, as Stumpf took up base jumping as a means to 'deal with the white noise in [his] head' and to 'replicate the feeling of [his] old job' (AS1247 35:55-40:46). He uses the example of how someone gets used to listening to their music at one volume and it does not seem that loud, but that if you return to it without the gradual increase you can 'blow your ears out' - and he uses this to frame how he relies on extreme activities to detach from 'everyday' noise/stress (AS 1247 33:59-40:46). This seems appropriate to the discussion of how orthodoxy assuages stress related to progressive life because it is not gradual but rather one volume that blows away complexity.

[him] and the least advantageous time for you, it's going to be night time, [he's] going to exploit all of the advantages that [he has] and [he's] not going to fight fair' (ASTF 720 2:07:59-2:08:12).

Asserting control when faced with the prospect of disorder/potential of being 'victimized' ties back into what Stumpf contends is the problem of labeling post-traumatic stress as a 'disorder' because the sense of permanency of a label makes people 'shutdown' (ASTF720 2:05:14-2:05:54); this corresponds with Marr's description of the moment things turned around for him:

(13:05) I've had enough of people telling me that my *life is over* and at that time my *identity* was in special forces and that was *taken* away because of the medical injuries and I said I don't care anymore, I'm still a husband and I'm still a father and I'm going to get better [and] *start being defined by a vision of the future and my vision of the future* was just what I said...I didn't know that would lead me to where I am today but that was the *catalyst* (13:37) (AM1056 13:05-13:37).

Marr perceives the diagnosis as someone telling him that his *life is over* because his *identity* was *taken* from him,<sup>189</sup> but placing the department/conventional medicine as the obstacle to attaining his full-identity motivated him to generate his new identity as the founder of the Warrior Angels Foundation. Being medically retired meant he had to discursively negotiate a new trajectory at a point of rupture/gap in meaning that required narration to be able to adapt and shape the narrative to correspond with the historical-representational 'legacy'. Individual identity is approximate to the 'unity' or amalgamation of your narrative and this is comparable to how the 'unity of the state resides primarily in the fact that the legacy of its former crises set the [operational] parameters' (Hay, p. 332 in Croft, 2006, p. 79; Verhesschen, 2003, p. 455).

Marr offers a model of what recovery looks like when a man asserts control over his 'broken' body, and if anything contradicts this message it can be easily dismissed. The doctor describes how 'there are some guys who stopped their protocol because they didn't feel like anything was

---

<sup>189</sup> Even if no one from the Department of Veteran Affairs framed the disorder as such.

happening' (49:49-49:53); Marr follows this up with how you 'can't make anyone want to get better' (AM1056 50:36-50:42), thus placing responsibility squarely on the individual who cannot live up to the paragon of success. Their attitude toward those unwilling to comply to what amounts to an ineffective treatment mirrors the complaint about the establishment not trying to figure out what Marr's 'whole story' was (AM700 17:30). Applying the same standard between their treatment and the VHA's would mean recognizing that even if there are an abundance of resources for veterans coming home,<sup>190</sup> if someone does not feel how they expect to feel, then they may not comply with treatment and instead continue to struggle.

American Sniper screenwriter, Jason Hall, talks about how Chris Kyle dealt with his PTSD diagnosis, first with alcoholism (like Stumpf and Marr) before finding pro-social means of reintegrating into society;<sup>191</sup> one of the veterans he attempted to help by taking him to a gun range was Eddie Ray Routh whose PTSD diagnosis was debated in Kyle's murder trial (JHDGMG 574 27:13-28:20; Lamothe, 2015). Ventura addresses this point:

(39:47) well he had no training in post-traumatic stress he's not medical, and yet he's taking this Marine to a gun range who's suffering from post-traumatic stress, wouldn't common sense tell you not to put a weapon in the hands of someone suffering from post-traumatic stress [Rogan: well I think everyone suffers from post traumatic stress is different right?] *what do you tell him to do, man up?* What do they tell him to man up? Why would you put a weapon in someone's hands who's suffering from post traumatic stress when you have no medical training how is Kyle qualified to treat this guy (40:27) (JV858 39:47-40:27).

Telling someone to *man up* suggests that a man is lacking the very thing he needs to be whole.

The topic of 'insecure guys' comes up within the podcast in which 'strength' is described as the

---

<sup>190</sup> Kennedy, who also details his experience with PTSD - from nightmares to considering harming someone who reminded him of a terrorist on his way to Best Buy (1:28:00- 1:29:24) - describes how the U.S. has 'been at war for a long time [so they] have things in place' like the 'Family Readiness Group', and there are also groups started by veterans (like Brian Stann) to help get warriors back to work (1:33:11), so 'they're not overwhelming them with American life which is normal for someone...unless they're [going] from a plywood building to [being] surrounded by thousands of people' (1:32:39) (TK497 1:28:00-1:29:24; 1:33:11-1:32:39).

<sup>191</sup> i.e. attending church and 'helping vets' (*Ibid*).

‘best antidote to all the weakness in society’ where men have a ‘fear hanging over their head that they will be dominated by other men’ and Rogan explains how he went into martial arts for this reason (TK497 2:07:29-2:09:24). This idea of cultivating strength as an ‘antidote’ against weakness mirrors how Willink describes ‘inoculating’ yourself against fear in terminology and sentiment.<sup>192</sup> De Goede and Randalls (2009) describe how it is this form of articulation that creates the demand for ‘social action’, so it generates a rhetorical situation out of projecting a reason the imagined group is at risk, potentially to provide an answer (or product) to remedy the situation (p.861). Willink, Kennedy, Marr and Goggins all have products to endorse that pertain to these insecurities, Stumpf is also a motivational speaker, i.e. a role model, with a podcast. Pathologizing weakness through an articulation of threat also corresponds to what characterizes the crisis of masculinity i.e. the ‘threat’ of what has been associated with the feminization of society (Kelly, 2016). Rogan and Kennedy describe the cyclic destabilization/re-stabilization of masculinity in relation to the ‘easy solution’ of medication as a ‘quick fix’ to suffering:

(2:07:00) Kennedy: I think that’s what’s wrong with society right now is that everyone is just taking for granted everything about their lives they just want it easy they want it fast, they want it quick [intermittent ‘right’ from Rogan] people are getting fat and that’s why they’re going to the grocery store and getting the thing that’s on sale, that’s why they’re getting mad at guys like you that go and talk about hunting, ‘cause they just want the *easy solution*, and truth be it there isn’t an easy solution that’s the right solution (2:07:24) usually it’s the hard way, usually, there can be a smart way, and the smart way sometimes is the hard way (2:07:31) but everybody wants this *quick fix* everybody wants to take a pill and feel better, that’s not how it works (2:07:38) you know you can’t, you’re *suffering* from depression, and you’ve been having these thoughts, go take a pill and feel better, while that might be a portion of the solution, how about you lose 10% body fat, how about you get off the couch, how about you go make out with your wife (2:07:54)....(2:08:21) [Rogan: we’ve made a society where we’ve nerfed all the hard edges and we’re trying to make it safer and safer everyday and there’s some things that are just messy they’re not going to be safe] (2:08:30) Kennedy: *by us making everything safer it’s making us weaker*, (2:08:35) you know and *every time we’ve had a weak society we end up with tough times, and tough times make hard men, then hard men make good*

---

<sup>192</sup> Remembering that an ‘at risk’ community sequesters itself with its identity-ideals, and the Other (or the imagined threat) is characterized as “alien, subversive, dirty or sick” (De Goede & Randalls, 2009, p.861).

*times, then good times make weak men, then weak men make... [Rogan: yeahhhh] (2:08:48) the cycle just keeps going, and right now we have weak, are even allowed to say men? (2:08:55) (TK1117 2:07:00-2:08:55)*

Besides illustrating the point regarding how suffering has been conflated with the struggle of hard work and is viewed as a moral 'good' because it demonstrates strength of character, it should be noted that: "Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. And, weak men create hard times" is a quote from G. Michael Hopf's (2016) post-apocalyptic 'The New World' series book 7 *Those Who Remain*. The coincidence of this approximation is not surprising given that Hopf's writing has been praised for its 'authenticity' as he is a 'combat veteran of the U.S. Marines Corps; this is in spite of the fact that the series takes place in an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) devastated American 'wasteland' (Penguin Random House). Fusing the cyclic crisis of masculinity with the apocalyptic in the context of the 'threat' of safe-spaces brings us to the remaining theme of religion.

### **The Problem with Religion: Myth, Contradictions & Judgment**

Earlier freedom was positioned as one reason that war is inevitable, another reason that became apparent was the existence of evil (especially as it relates to violence perpetrated against women and children),<sup>193</sup> which speaks to the more explicit references to religion throughout the various

---

<sup>193</sup> Stumpf describes his disgust surrounding 'adults talking kids into becoming suicide bombers' (AS1047 2:40:01-2:41:09), and the 'lowest form of gnarly shit' radicals do including: chaining inbred kids to beds or floors, the general poor treatment of women, and teenaged sex slaves, as a reason 'you don't get a second chance from me' (22:04) (ASTF720 21:12-22:46). Kennedy provides examples of why he wouldn't wish what he had seen on his worse enemy because it would include seeing 'what a little girl looks like when she had acid thrown on her because she tried to go to school' and how people who would 'kidnap 300 girls' have to 'answer to someone' like him (TK497 13:59-14:26). Kennedy also describes finding and killing guys who 'hurt little kids' because he has a 'soft spot for people who can't take care of themselves, so [he] can protect them, [since he thinks] no real human is ever going to let something weaker than them get hurt' (TK1117 1:13:00-1:13:41). Willink refers to why he calls terrorists 'savages' in a broader discussion about how Ramadi is a city just like any other city in America: 'it's because they torture people, they skinned people alive, they beheaded people, they raped little girls and little boys, it was just disgusting, so we went in there and fought against them and beat them' (JW729 11:59-13:23). Willink describes in another context how he 'reserve the term savage for someone who commits atrocities against human beings, (you know) someone who rapes an 8 year old girl, like they're wholesale doing that in ISIS, ISIS is doing that now, that's part of their gig, yeah I reserve the term savage for them' (JW729 1:02:18-1:02:43)

episodes.<sup>194</sup> Individualism, rationality, and skepticism have been touched upon to the extent that one's perceived capacity to 'reason' is what is at stake when questions of authority over meaning (or moral truth-claims) arise. Individualism also informs the ideal of freedom, what compels one to adopt a Navy SEAL approach, as well as the tendency to reject what is deemed inauthentic if paired with skepticism, because it permits one to disown mutual identity that brings one's exceptional character into doubt. It is from here that one can examine how America's revolutionary significance corresponds to its mythic structures and an eschatological purpose i.e. concerning death, judgment, destiny, and the 'end of' the world in the context of endless war. To that end, it makes sense to now unpack the American revolutionary myth.

Joe Rogan refers to an iconic image of a [sailor kissing his girlfriend in the streets](#), which signified the end of WWII and the 'victory over' Japan (or Japan's surrender) to emphasize the lack of any sense of completion to modern wars and the frustration that comes with not having an 'obvious opponent' or being able to finish the war and how his generation has been denied that symbol (ASTF720 11:17-12:14). This reference comes up twice, first within a conversation regarding the 'ethical argument for being ruthless' (9:15) or what Andy Stumpf refers to as the

---

<sup>194</sup> Stumpf describes how 'any place that we allow evil to grow it's going to happen' (2:36:10-2:36:34), and he offers his opinion about how 'effective' the military was in Iraq where they 'cut the head off the snake, but it spawned two more' (AS1247 2:36:34-2:36:52); efficacy becomes intertwined with morality, but this reference hints at Christian millenarian lore i.e. a beast that can spawn more heads. One image of Revelation does not necessarily mean much despite Stumpf using the expression at least three times. Considering religious references more broadly, there are other references to emotionally/spiritually slaying dragons (AM1056 1:26:00-1:27:00), and facing demons (DG1080 57:15-57:23; ASTF720 1:27:53-1:27:57). There are over 50 references to Hell from Hell's Angels (JV858 49:00-49:23), to how WWII was 'Hell on Earth' (TK1117 52:00-52:46), the 'promise land of mental hardening' which follows BUD/s Hell-week where 'taking souls' is how Goggins refers to breaking someone's will (DG1212 45:56-49:07). Marr's not-for-profit group is named the Warrior Angels Foundation, and he describes how responding to the unknown aspects of improving your life amounts to dealing with 'the devils you know versus the devils you don't' (AM1056 48:37-49:16). This is not even including over 50 references to God: whether saying 'God bless' army engineers (JW729 1:04:30-1:05:00), Iraqi soldiers and 'good luck' fighting ISIS (JW729 1:11:30-1:11:43), or Tim Kennedy for re-enlisting (JW962 25:29-26:07), the repeated casual use of 'thank God', 'God damn' and 'Jesus Christ'; 9/11 as a 'godsend/divine intervention' (TK497 16:40-48), God as a voice in Goggin's head that leads him to victory (DG1212 14:07-14:44), God kissing the bullet of the American Sniper (JHDGMG 574 24:57-26:08).

argument for doing something once to avoid two more battles,<sup>195</sup> to demoralize the enemy, which transitions to the theory behind using the atomic bomb in WWII to ‘turn so many people into glass’ (9:30) even as the Japanese were prepared to negotiate peace (ASTF720 8:25-10:05). Second, with Jocko Willink regarding how the War on Terror serves as an ‘open-ended proposition’ (1:19:12) for there is no enemy, in a traditional sense, until the emergence of ISIS there were only ‘insurgents’,<sup>196</sup> so there cannot be a ‘definitive end’ (1:19:18), with terrorist attacks and threats appearing regularly on social media – there will likely never be another sailor (or soldier) kissing his girlfriend, nor a parade with confetti (JW729 118:45-120:26).

A comparable example, despite not referring to representations of ‘victory’, is when Rogan asks Tim Kennedy why the military decided not to show the body of Osama Bin Laden when the ‘whole world [wanted] to see the bad guy dead’; Kennedy responds that showing the body would only have resulted in riots and the possibility of turning him into a martyr (TK497 20:03-20:54).

<sup>197</sup> This takes place within the broader context of a conversation regarding belief and the

---

<sup>195</sup> Andy Stumpf 720 (9:03-9:13) “I’m not going to say that there’s an argument for doing that but what if you could do that once and not have to fight two more battles because the people you want to fight will see that and be like nope”- ‘that’ is catapulting flaming bodies to demoralize the enemy.

<sup>196</sup> Willink describes in another context how the term ‘insurgents’ did not exist in 2003 (JW729 41:48-42:40), and it is important to note how ‘terrorists’ transformed into ‘insurgents’ and then finally into ‘ISIS’ in the context of discursively constructing an enemy. This point is best demonstrated by the example of how Colin Powell “mentioned the name Abu Musab al-Zarqawi [21 times](#)” in his 2003 speech to the United Nations, to “establish Zarqawi as the link between Al Qaeda and Iraq” (Breslow, 2016). However, the intelligence community determined that while “Zarqawi once travelled to Afghanistan hoping to meet Osama bin Laden, he was considered a poor recruit for Al Qaeda” (*Ibid*). Powell’s speech “helped elevate Zarqawi’s status, and within months, he was rapidly gaining followers in Iraq, fomenting sectarian warfare and laying the groundwork for the organization that would become ISIS” (*Ibid*). The ‘enemy’ has changed from the inciting 9/11 crisis-event, there is no authentic connection between ISIS and 9/11 apart from the abstract notion of ‘terror’, ‘imminent’ threat, ‘otherness’ that ‘America’ claims obligation toward indefinitely, because ‘evil exists’ that needs to be ‘destroyed’ (JW729 2:41:19-2:49:17).

<sup>197</sup> Joe Rogan (20:03) that whole event was one of the biggest like what do you think really happened conspiracies online when they didn’t show the body and they threw it in the ocean, the whole idea that he was going to be a martyr that was so perplexing to me (20:14) the whole thing was so completely perplexing to me like why wouldn’t you just show his body, like can’t we take a look, the whole world wants to see the bad guy dead (20:24) Tim Kennedy ...historically through the course of this war when we’ve done it on numerous instances whether Saddam hanging or Zarqawi and his blown up body, some I was involved with some I wasn’t, it’s been very clear that the response by the fanatic side, they see the body, maybe that person becomes a martyr, he’s idolized for years, or maybe it incites an immediate riot (TK497 20:54).

impossibility of changing the course of ideology once someone is too far gone, in which Rogan contends that ‘we’re all going to live and we’re all going to die, sometimes you just have to pull weeds out of the garden’ (TK497 23:39-23:46). He immediately expresses regret for saying this, but then Kennedy responds ‘we’re not all flowers’ (23:55) and the situation is defused by jokes about what kind of plant they would be (TK497 22:23-23:55).<sup>198</sup> Reconstituted re-presentation serves as proof of concept, but the lack of it relates to insecurity of character/meaning and frustration; ‘ruthlessness’ can be characterized as moral so long as it is deemed efficient as means to demoralize the ‘enemy’ to bring about an end, because death is inevitable. Rogan’s belief surrounding what happens after death appears ambivalent when discussing it with Ventura:

Rogan: do you believe [Ventura: not ‘til there’s proof] in the possibility of something happening when you die [no] you don't you think, you die, you just go dark (1:15:42) [I don’t know] that’s a wrap [yep that’s a wrap] hmm [But there's no proof] right [that anything else happens it's just a belief] you definitely don’t have proof [Ventura: it's just a belief and to me I don't believe it because like I said I've been on the planet since 65 years now and God's never spoke to me now if I'm wrong people say what if you're wrong I'll say well God made me with a brain to think didn't he? he's going to condemn me because I used it] (JV858 1:15:35-1:16:12).

They go on to joke about how one might ‘hedge [their] bets’ and convert to Christianity on their deathbed, since ‘you can’t lose this bet’ (1:18:58-1:19:16), and they also discuss the ‘parallels throughout history’ between religious storytelling, and the absurdity of Old Testament biblical stories (JV858 1:15:22-1:17:31). Even in the assertion of atheism, there seems to be a fail-safe response: if God did exist ‘he’ would not condemn a person for using the brain ‘he’ made him with – this and hedging one’s bet seems to introduce temporization into the equation.<sup>199</sup> Goggins

---

<sup>198</sup> There are subtle religious connotations if one considers the perception of martyrdom/idolatry, and how the euphemism ‘weeding’ the ‘garden’ could resemble the expulsion from the Garden of Eden that forms a fundamental principle in Abrahamic religions.

<sup>199</sup> i.e. indecision to buy time/avail oneself to compromise.

describes his belief in the afterlife on two occasions, in a way that draws together how one can be motivated toward discipline with the understanding that judgment could await you:

(1:39:20) I'm trying to *find more of myself* and the only way I can find more is to *silence the world out* as much as I can because *it's getting busier everyday it's getting faster and the faster it gets the more you are missing who you who the fuck you are* (1:39:37) so I trap my own mind a lot and say look man I put my phone away and put my shit away and go dark (1:39:43) I go dark a lot because I have to find out, I'm on a *journey of life* and we all have a different journey and I want to be in a fucking pine box and *I believe your spirit lives forever it has to it's too fucking powerful, no way in hell that thing just dies when you die* (1:39:59) I want to be able to look back on my life when I'm all dead and be so fucking proud of myself forever this is all temporary shit to me (1:40:06) *I want to be forever proud of who I was as a man and change who I used to be the liar the insecure guy* the guy who can whatever I want to be proud if I died now if I died at 80, 90, 100...I want to look at myself and say I'm proud of myself (1:40:21) [Rogan: don't you think that also that like what you were saying that *because you've gone through so much struggle that you appreciate happiness true happiness do you think that you appreciate discipline because you weren't disciplined, do you appreciate the hard work you put in because you used to be weak*] yes (1:40:35) (DG1080 1:39:20-1:40:35).

This statement involves finding oneself and finally being capable of feeling proud of the man he was, which he claims is at odds with the *insecure liar* he transformed himself from, all while in the context of discussing silencing the increasingly entropic world. Goggins also reflects upon how he wants to impress whatever is judging him on the unfulfilled potential in his life-story:

(1:28:38) Rogan: I loved when you talked about when you ran the marathon you realized how much you were leaving on the table because that is uhm I mean *I think the unfulfilled potential is like the story of most people's lives* [Goggins: it is and *it could have been the story of mine*, and I tell a lot of people, people go, what's your biggest fear in life, and *my biggest fear* honestly was let's say this, let's say, I don't care if you believe in God or not I don't care, just play a game with me, just say you're God, and we have a big fucking long line of people and I made it to heaven 75 years old 300 lbs and I made it to him I worked for Eco Lab my entire life spraying for cockroaches that's what I did, but I'm dead I'm in Heaven now, and you're at, *you're judging us all now*, so we're in line and we're all sitting there in line, and you have Adam Brown, he has a big board up and you're talking to Adam Brown about his life, and you rip it down, and I'm next in line, David Goggins, I see my name and I see all the shit and God goes hey read this man, and I'm reading this list and I'm seeing 182lbs, Navy SEAL, Ranger School, Motivational Speaker, changing lives, okay pull up record all this shit, and I'm like *that's not me man, and God looks at me and says that's who you were supposed to be* and my biggest fear, I visualize some crazy shit, *my biggest fear is that someday I'm going to face a judgment in my life something, someone is going to judge me for what I was supposed to be in life* and

what I want now is *whoever is judging me whatever is judging me* up there I want them to have a board and they're up there right now getting their pen out *because this person who judges you is supposed to know everything*, supposed to know the time you're dead the time you're born, the time you're dead, I want the person up there to be like this: up there writing more about me saying fuck I didn't know you could do that (repeats: I didn't know you could do that) so *I want to impress whatever the fuck is up there*, whatever's going on in life, I want to go up there not having anything left on the table, *I want to drain my soul of every fucking bit of person I am* (DG1212 1:30:58).

The looming threat of missed potential paired with the desire to finally be valued for the hard work put into developing one's character, as a man that God would be impressed with, while equally being proud of one's accomplishments looking back at one's life as a spirit, demonstrates the connection between struggle (i.e. suffering) and being 'moral' in pursuit of good judgment. Understanding Rogan's belief surrounding death as agnostic, but sympathetic to this looming threat of missed potential, one can examine his description of civilian expectations surrounding war in a conversation with Willink about the vast differences between his two deployments:

Willink: (43:46)...we were ready for it, and the contrast comes when you go to my next deployment, the next deployment to Ramadi which was completely different [Rogan: so...] and on that deployment everything bad that can happen to a guy in a leadership position, or an element, happened to us, everything bad that could happen happened and so it was radically different from my first deployment, [Rogan: so your first deployment was in a sense a lot like what people expected the war to go like after we experienced Desert Storm, Desert Storm which was just this *overwhelming success*, just the only casualties was when that one scud missile hit a barracks and *that was what America thought war was*, well *this is how good we are at it right now we just go over there and we kill everybody and we lose a couple people and we're real sad about that but we wrapped it up tight* so your second deployment, what was that like and how did it begin] (45:08) (JW729).

Being *good* at war means losing a *couple people* and killing *everybody over there*, while wrapping it up *tight* (efficiently); only there were actually 298 U.S. military servicemen and women killed (not lost) between August 7, 1990 to January 15, 1991, or the timeframe leading up

to that incursion (DCAS, 1991).<sup>200</sup> Everybody ‘over there’ (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf) also included civilians, anywhere between a low estimate of 1000 and 3500 based on estimates given by Iraq, military experts, Human Rights Watch and Greenpeace, but this does not include uprising/post-war deaths due to health effects (Larson & Savyach, 2007, p.22).<sup>201</sup>

In their study of U.S. public opinion in response to reporting of the Gulf War between August 1990–June 1991, Larson and Savyach (2007) describe how respondents “were not very sensitive to casualties of any kind”, and how “support was high even among those who expected high U.S. military or civilian casualties”, but that the “respondents were slightly more sensitive to military than civilian deaths” (p.29). While Rogan cannot speak for ‘America’,<sup>202</sup> his feeling of being ‘real sad’ about the possibility of a couple of American casualties appears to reflect this level of sensitivity toward an *overwhelming success*. At the same time, Rogan is describing what he believes ‘success’ looks like within the contemporary American ‘semantics of action’ (Mimesis I) or shared structural understanding of what an action ‘is’ (Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453).

War without the weight of death (or an end) primes people to have an absurd relationship with it because it leads to the rationalization of death as an acceptable trade-off for ‘success’, which ties into how a national biography relies upon simultaneous-anonymous-deaths to “serve narrative purposes” (Anderson, 2006, p. 206). Willink acknowledges in his speech about ‘two wills’ that [civilians](#) and Americans alike are going to die if you choose to go to war, and he concludes that

---

<sup>200</sup> Defence Casualty Analysis System. U.S. Military Casualties - Persian Gulf War Casualty Summary Desert Storm: Inclusive dates are August 7, 1990 to January 15, 1991 Accessed 2020/02/22: [https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report\\_gulf\\_storm.xhtml](https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_gulf_storm.xhtml)

<sup>201</sup> Larson, Eric V. & Savyach, Bogdan (2007). *Misfortunes of War: Press and Public Reflections to Civilian Deaths in Wartime*. Chapter 2: Operation Desert Storm (Iraq, 1991). Rand Corporation. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg441af.10>

<sup>202</sup> Although, he purports to speak for everyone when suggesting the ‘world’ wanted to see a dead body.

you should only go to war if you have a ‘clear vision to win’ (JW729 1:15:03-1:15:34).<sup>203</sup>

Anderson (2006) discusses how ‘reassuring fratricide’ functioned during the Civil War, (or a time of trial) as new forms of consciousness follow ruptures of forgetting; Willink (2017) describes in a [TEDx Talk](#) how a firefight broke out between members of U.S. forces during the 2006 Battle of Ramadi (0:01-4:07; Anderson, 2006, p. 201; Bellah, 2005). Willink (2017) describes how an incident of ‘fratricide’ occurred,<sup>204</sup> because the ‘fog of war’ rolled in, and he uses this as an example for his principle of leadership (extreme ownership) i.e. mastery of self/world (*Ibid*).

Death serves narrative purposes in the way that it necessitates action to avoid more death. This mirrors the logic of pre-emption in the context of ‘imminent’ threat because it compels one to prepare for multiple contingencies, and become more disciplined, even if it is impossible to know if the ‘fog’ will roll in again. Fog is an apt metaphor because it refers to an instance of low visibility i.e. unpredictability, but also as a force of nature, could be dismissed as an act of God.

Stumpf’s description of why he felt justified to go to battle contains a comparable metaphor:

(2:31:00) Dad did I do anything that made my kids’ lives safer, did you do anything that made your daughter's life safer, and I would say in the moment. I feel like I had a difference in the moment but I think in the grand scale of things looking back at everything that I was involved with, I almost think that the *tide washed it away*, and it's very *frustrating* how, so because *I was only able to impact the battle space that I was physically in*, right but *imagine you weren't there* (AS1047 2:31:00-2:31:34).

---

<sup>203</sup>1:13:10 Joe Rogan: Do you think America should go back into Iraq? (pause) Jocko Willink: well first of all we’re already back in Iraq, we’re on the ground we’ve got 3500 troops there, this is a, and I hate to answer your blunt question with a philosophical answer, but war is very difficult, and very tragic and very evil in its own right, and so you should be very very cautious about pulling that trigger and initiating a war, because horrible things are going to happen, horrible things are going to happen, enemy are going to be killed, friendly are going to be killed, Americans are going to be killed, civilians are going to be killed, this idea that we’re going to go do a war in an urban environment and we’re not going to kill any civilians, no civilians are going to die and you have to understand that (14:15) and I talk about this, when people ask me this question, there is two types of will that you have to have if you’re going to go to war, two types of will, one is the will to kill people, and like I said it is going to be enemy, and you’re going to focus as much as you can on killing the enemy, and some civilians are going to die, that is what is going to happen, and you have to understand that is part of what you are getting into, so you have to have the will to kill, and you also have to have the will to die (1:15:03) because Americans are going to die, and young men are going to come home in coffins and that’s a horrible thing, and so if you’re going to go to war you should be going to war with the clear vision to win (1:15:34) (JW729 1:13:10-1:15:34).

<sup>204</sup> The firefight resulting in one death, while others were merely wounded or shaken up by the event (*Ibid*).

Frustration when faced with the *tide* washing away one's efforts while contemplating *the grand scale* or scheme suggests an objective-unified-totality/big picture i.e. complete overarching story, so speaks to a sense of the inevitable, in this case failure, without sustained military representation. This relates to the problem of military occupation,<sup>205</sup> but also provokes anxiety/doubt surrounding how one can only affect spaces one is in when he asks: did I do anything that made my kids' lives safer? What does it mean if everything he did was undone by the *tide*? Confronted by the possibility that there are forces he might not be capable of protecting his children from, he is frustrated i.e. compelled by anxiety to stabilize meaning when he states 'but imagine you weren't there', because he is inferring it would have been worse if they had not fought, which is impossible to confirm. Impossibility is what drives the mode of perception/expression to justify total submission based on what is unimaginable.<sup>206</sup>

It could also reflect fear surrounding death, because he exhibits anxiety over not being able to protect his children from the inevitable, while only being capable of affecting change if *physically* present, and perhaps intact if the point is to *impact* or have a strong effect on/in life's arena (or battlefield).<sup>207</sup> The frustration over being unable to protect your children from unknown dangers appears in Stumpf's description of how to convert a pacifist:

(1:34:25) yeah I'm open with it because I finally came to the conclusion that *I don't have any time in my life to be anything other than myself* and the one thing I do know about myself is that I know what I believe in and *I believe in it enough to fight for it and to die for it* and *I believe in it enough to end other people's lives for it* I don't care if people like that or not but that's me (1:35:45) [Rogan: I would love to see you have a conversation

---

<sup>205</sup> Willink and Stumpf both recognize how military occupation is difficult to sustain, if it is sustainable at all, given that even after all of their efforts, at that time the 'flag of ISIS [was] flying in Ramadi' (JW 729 13:21-14:59, ASTF720 48:01-48:48). Andy Stumpf: I think occupation was a bad idea I, you know, it's just it's not sustainable (ASTF720 2:14:34-2:14:40).

<sup>206</sup> It also reflects the 'impossible project' of full-identity that compels the frustrated toward fantasy in the first place (Solomon, 2013).

<sup>207</sup> Strangely, Stumpf refers to his kids' lives but only his dad's daughter, as though he did not need his father's protection, which connects to assumptions about human nature regarding how men are supposed to protect women.

because you're so intelligent and articulate, I'd love to see you have a conversation with a hardcore pacifist] (1:34:51) Stumpf: *I could turn a pacifist into a violent person very easily just put a gun to their kid's head* and they're not a pacifist anymore I've seen many pacifists who fight for their life (1:34:59) (ASTF720 1:34:25-1:34:59).

The authentic belief,<sup>208</sup> that allows Stumpf to accept death/killing as an adequate trade-off is immediately followed by a hypothetical challenge of belief. He threatens the life of the child and not the parent/pacifist, despite relating it to his experience in which pacifists fight for their lives. By threatening the child, or what represents the possibility that some small part of one's belief/legacy will continue, he is involving an irrelevant actor into the challenge,<sup>209</sup> while at the same time Stumpf is creating the conditions for revenge to generate the situation in which his way of thinking/acting may be relevant. It makes violence appear inevitable because pacifists are liars/inauthentic in an arrangement where Stumpf has the authority to dictate the terms.

There is a comparable reference that situates the threat of otherness as being inherent/inevitable:

Stumpf: (2:43:14) there are always going to be people who want to do something about that regardless of if you're a pacifist or a Catholic, fill in the blank, you will have your 'x' system...and they're coming for you, well it's also those parts of the world in particular are so ancient and people have been living there for so long, I believe that they have the *echoes* of the past in them so deeply *embedded* in their *culture* and *actions* that mean, you're talking about parts of the world that really they've had people there living there five-six thousand years, and the *ancient barbaric instincts* of those people have got to be...*reverberating* through [that] culture (2:43:57) (AS1047).

This resonates with something Stumpf describes in another context:

(26:18) you either have to find something or believe in something to the point that you're willing to fight for it because here's the deal we're X people and then there's Y people and regardless of what your X is your Christian, Catholic whatever you're an X person and there's somebody who's a Y person, and Y people are going to fight if you *believe in what you believe in* enough then to protect that at some point you're going to have to go beyond the educational aspect (ASTF 720 26:18-26:41).

---

<sup>208</sup> *don't have any time in my life to be anything other than myself*

<sup>209</sup> Much like a civilian becomes expendable because they belong to the locality being challenged in war.

A difference in belief necessitates violence, but it is reduced to absurdity by introducing the arbitrariness of X-people and Y-people; going *beyond the educational aspect* mirrors how

Willink describes the basis for an emotional crusade:

(2:47:46) it's interesting because that kind of attitude can cross borders into other things and I'm talking to people, you know through our company, people that are smart, you know I'll be in rooms where everyone went to an ivy league college (2:48:03) and they're super successful and they're worth millions of millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars, and I was giving one of these talks the other day and of course they end up asking me about ISIS (2:48:13) and all that, and as I'm sitting there looking, *I'm thinking to myself, like these people are all looking at me and thinking I'm just a savage, I'm just like I'm a knuckle-dragger we just need to go kill everyone* (2:48:30) and so I try to explain to them, I go listen, *I almost feel ashamed to say this to everyone here, because everyone here is an intellectual and is very very smart, but there are some problems in the world that there is not an academic solution to and sometimes violence is the solution*, (2:48:57) and again there can be a million arguments against that but the *reality* of it is, in the world, you were talking about it earlier, *in the world there are evil people that do evil things* (2:49:11) and *the only way to stop them is to confront them and destroy them* (2:49:17) (JW729 2:41:19-2:49:17).

The existence of evil as an objective claim in an morally absolutist framework is also reflected in how Rogan describes the 'unquestionable evil involved in flying planes into buildings and killing civilians' and how there is 'no grey area' because 'it was a pretty clear, it was about as clear as any event in human history' (JW 729 20:35-20:58). Kennedy also describes how it is 'a beautiful thing' to know the difference between 'right and wrong' and how '[terrorists] are not you, they are pieces of shit that throw acid at little girls and fly planes into buildings because it's capitalist' (TK1117 2:22:45-2:22:57). This reflects how Bush's global moral absolutism includes America's right to prosper (or succeed) and not just the ideal of freedom.

Finally, the most relevant reference to God comes up in Ventura's podcast episode, regarding how George Bush Jr. talked to God who told him to invade Iraq. Ventura describes how he poses the question on his 'internet show' about 'who's more powerful God or government' to expose how killing 'at the behest of government' contravenes God's law 'thou shall not kill', and how

the government can ‘make you a hero’ and ‘reward you’ for killing in the context of war, ‘when God doesn’t do anything about it’ (JV858 1:12:05-1:13:13). Rogan follows this up by describing how ‘God is a big part of the military’, and the conversation turns to 9/11:

Rogan: when the 9/11, the 9/11 attacks happened and George Bush on television said that *God is with the troops* I mean... [Ventura: you want to know the worst thing I ever heard him say when he was trumping up the Iraq War, I’ll never forget it ‘cuz I oppose the Iraq War even before it happened I said this is ridiculous Iraq didn’t have nothing to do with 9/11 why are we invading Iraq (1:13:45), well I’ll never forget Bush’s press conference where he walked out and announced that he was sending in our military, we’re going to attack Iraq and he was getting ready to leave the stage and a final reporter asked him: Mr. President did you consult your father, meaning Bush senior ‘cuz you know Bush senior had that Kuwait Iraq thing happen during his watch (1:14:10) and *I’ll never forget George Bush turning around to the press and the American people smiling and going no I consulted a higher father* (1:14:20) I was sitting in my chair at home and almost fell out of it I said *this guy wants me to believe that he talked to God and God told him to invade Iraq*] (1:14:33) Rogan: yeah saying you consulted a higher father [Ventura: (overlapping) higher father] It’s like going up to a rock and asking it what you should do with your life, *you’re not getting any answers back* [Ventura: well excuse me...and then I said *I’ve been on the earth as long as this guy and I’m twice the man George Bush is and God ain’t never said a word to me in my entire life existence yet this guy wants me to believe that God talks to him*] (1:14:57) Rogan: yeah they just let that go they just said [Ventura: (overlapping) yeah that was amazing] *God talks to you they just let that slide* [oh yeah], he consulted god (1:15:03) [he consulted a higher father] (1:15:05) We’ll be right back [so in other words *he wants us to believe that his invasion of Iraq had God’s blessing and all the people of this country accept that*] (1:15:16) (JV858 1:13:13-1:15:16).

Many Americans did not openly question the president asserting that God had blessed the War on Terror. Consulting a ‘higher father’ ties into how the ultimate significance/sovereignty in America ‘has been attributed to God’ within the American civil religion, and how the ‘higher criterion’ of judgment/will belongs to the president to speak on behalf of God (Bellah, 2005). Deferring to a higher father in the context of situating authority over meaning while asserting one’s masculinity as being twice as valid, positions the crisis of masculinity as a fear that one man could be dominated by another, which can only be mitigated by incredulity.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> That is, through the maintenance of what makes a man ‘real’ or ‘authentic’.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion – The Problem with Dis/belief

What the thesis uncovered was a *crisis of authentic faith or religion* based on *human nature* assumptions that prioritize (‘masculine’) American values in the context of a war imaginary because of what is at the centre of the culture wars i.e. hostility arising over claims of moral-truth contrived out of the substance of its civil-religion.<sup>211</sup> Gross dichotomizing can be understood in relation to how a defence mechanism operates because the discursive-construction of threat to shape/eliminate a lack of clarity based on what is unknown/‘impossible’,<sup>212</sup> is meant to ameliorate conflict/anxiety.<sup>213</sup> It is why Americans cannot have sustained patriotism in its rhetorical unified fiction without threats to what is ‘vital’ on the horizon of possibility. As well as, why those perpetuating the crisis of masculinity do so in the context of an imagined threat depriving them of status – the most durable being the Other, although, it was demonstrated how one’s own ‘weakness’ can be characterized as Other. The tendency to defame as reflex makes the problem of dis/belief its own persecutory emotional crusade, which resonates with how warriors strategically perform victimhood in pursuit of their masculine heritage (Kelly, 2016, p. 97).

The ‘threat’ is a social/discursive-construction to that which is idealized/privileged in one’s origin myth and its apocalyptic potential is believed to culminate in the absolute destruction of one’s way of life unless one acts. This character of ultimacy is what connects the culture wars to the civil religion;<sup>214</sup> the way of life, or pattern of behaviour, which serves as a basis for social cohesion can no longer be replicated if destroyed; the ultimate significance in America belongs

---

<sup>211</sup> Remembering that temporal “structures of action” demand narration, and symbolically mediate action so long as norms/signs/rules exist to qualify it; in America, these aspects correspond to its civil religion, revolutionary significance, and eschatological purpose (Ricœur, in Verhesschen, 2003, p. 453; Bellah, 2005).

<sup>212</sup> Impossibility serves as a negativism comparable to how the doctrine of pre-emption operated off of something that could not be proved so offered indeterminate productive potential, which is again comparable to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory regarding sustaining a fantasy through absence (Massumi, 2015; Solomon, 2013).

<sup>213</sup> Uniformity of belief is sought individually/collectively and potentially globally to prevent cognitive dissonance.

<sup>214</sup> Ultimacy characterizes the decisive ending of a series/a fundamental limit to progress, so renders it impossible.

to God (or His president) and the ‘threat’ may be ‘sacrificed’ in the maintenance of ‘moral’ and ‘economic’ ideals.<sup>215</sup> This rhetorical formulation points to the problem with the Wilsonian paradigm, as a model to remake the ‘world’ in America's image to eliminate the ‘cause’ of war i.e. difference.<sup>216</sup> It is bizarre because of the American obsession with freedom (liberalism), until you come to understand how (utilitarian) mastery transforms freedom into discipline. It is something that warrants further exploration in relation to the *Spirit of Capitalism* because it reads like an investment of time into future-freedom/productive-potential.<sup>217</sup> For now, it speaks to the anxiety surrounding good judgment and the fear of missed potential to be what one *should be*.

This framework for understanding organizational identity formation provides an access point through which to critically assess the war imaginary. Its applicability can be extended further to examine the context surrounding other times of trial in the civil religion such as the Antebellum Period as it is imagined up-time, since 'before the [civil] war' only exists as Historical edifice, like a monument to a time that never was because nobody existing then referred to it as the Antebellum South. It speaks to this tendency to ironically transform the past for current use because someone already knows the outcome; actors perform a role to enact a predetermined/inevitable end, and this end becomes myth that people celebrate and re-enact to give an idea/identity reconstituted re-presentation.

Examining the causes of the civil war, especially as they reflect diverging interests of industry/production and ‘spiritual’ beliefs surrounding individual rights and wage labour, will be

---

<sup>215</sup> Recalling that sacrificing Ventura as a Vietnam era veteran for an intact patriotic model suggests an avenue by which contradictions can be discounted in the maintenance of an idealized/iconic re-presentation. It also brings to mind how Kristol and Kagan suggest that Americans “dismantle the *material* and *spiritual* foundations...[of their] national well-being” without a “visible threat to US vital interests” (*Emphasis Added*, in Solomon, 2013, p. 114).

<sup>216</sup> This paradigm cannot produce 'freedom', at least with respect to self-determination, because it does not assume all people are created equal due to American Exceptionalism and its treatment of non-white citizens of the colonized world, hence the tendency to want to shape/eliminate difference.

<sup>217</sup> The ‘spirit of capitalism’ is in reference to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by Max Weber.

a first important step in modelling how a war imaginary functions ‘before the war’. Despite modern warriors blaming the rise of the historically subjugated for a loss of status/relevance, based on my limited reading about the time-period, it seems more likely that it was broader material/spiritual changes that upended their assumed state of superiority/supremacy. Framing it with respect to material (industrialization) and ‘spiritual’ (awakening) would permit a researcher to examine the revolutionary significance of the nation-state in the context of anomie or the conflict of belief systems that arise with major societal transformations/wars surrounding change. Being ‘outmoded’ could compel the ‘antiquated’ subject to become defensive especially if one feels entitled to behave according to a blueprint of identity that permits the objectification of anyone who has not been given historic privilege. The ‘warrior’ identity could be a last bastion of the revered masculine/brotherhood identity believed to be under threat of being transformed. Demonstrating how Black veterans were targeted during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for trying to achieve racial equality through military service and how many civil rights activists rose from the ranks of military service following WWII would help fortify this narrative trajectory (Baker, 2016; O’Donnell, 2009). It also creates an interesting paradox, because an inability to access full-identity is precisely what is happening in the description of Lacanian motivation.

It is reminiscent of the challenge of belief detailed in the data analysis in which the person with authority to dictate the terms is creating the conditions for revenge to generate the situation in which his way of thinking/acting may be relevant; this connects back to apocalyptic rhetoric if one considers how crisis functions in theological circles. The faithful anticipating/enacting a pre-emptive ‘Last Judgment’ before it arrives means they are engaging in anticipatory mapping of reality to model how they might respond to the unknown, thereby tapping into the anxiety which

might compel wars against abstract and yet ‘durable’ threats to one’s way of life (Samman, 2015; De Goede & Randalls, 2009; Fussell, 2000; Anderson, 2006).

Using war to forestall major societal transformation whether to prevent the end of the American long-century, to revitalize an idealized masculine identity to control its domestic apocalypse, or historically to upset an emergent trend toward industrialization, as examining the Antebellum Period seems likely to reveal,<sup>218</sup> could present a way forward with this kind of research. It also holds potential to bring sociological study back to its origins as it concerns anomie and suicide; one can re-examine the transcendent social facts that compel participation in the rhetorical unified fiction of collective/shared identity and imagined community as it is intensified by war.

Future research could survey the past but give emphasis to how it is regarded now and challenge the perception of the national mythology by highlighting the ironic/paradoxical features to pave the way for counter-narratives and demonstrate how it is possible for multiple narratives to exist at once and not contradict one another in the ways that matter. It was something that was important to establish in this study, where the point was not to disqualify relevance of the informants, but understand their collective point of view and demonstrate how it can corroborate existing theory even if it is at odds with their understanding of how the world ‘works’.

---

<sup>218</sup> Remembering Roosevelt’s call to recuperate pre-industrial masculinity (Kelly 2016, p.101).

## Bibliography

- Abousnoug, Gill and Machin, David. 2011. "Visual Discourses of the Role of Women in War Commemoration." *Journal of Language and Politics* 10(3): 322-346.
- Ackerman, Spencer. "New Afghanistan pact means America's longest war will last until at least 2024". *The Guardian*. (2014/09/30) Accessed Online (2020/07/30):  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/30/us-troops-afghanistan-2024-obama-bilateral-security-agreement>.
- Ahmed, Shamila. 2019. British Muslims perceptions of social cohesion: from multiculturalism to community cohesion and the 'war on terror'. *Crime, Law and Social Change* (2019) 71:581–595.
- Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities* (revised ed.). New York: Verso.
- Arrighi, G. 1994. *The Long Twentieth Century; Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*. London: Verso.
- Bacevich, Andrew. 2005. *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baker, Peter C. 2016. "The Tragic, Forgotten History of Black Military Veterans" (*The New Yorker* 2016/11/27). Accessed Online (2020/10/26):  
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-tragic-forgotten-history-of-black-military-veterans>.
- Basham, Victoria. 2016. "Gender, Race, Militarism and Remembrance: The Everyday Geopolitics of the Poppy." *Gender, Place & Culture* 23(6): 883-896.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1988. *Selected Writings*. ed Mark Poster. Stanford: Stanford University Press.  
pp. 166-184.

Bellah, Robert. 2005. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus*, Fall (2005, orig. 1967): 40-55.

Bellmont, Laura, A. 1999. "The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the  
Disillusioning of a Generation". *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 58(1) pp. 136-137.

Benjamin, Walter. 1940. *On the Concept of History*. Gesammelte Schriften I:2. Suhrkamp  
Verlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1974.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. 1978. *The American Jeremiad*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin  
Press.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi. 2008. *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and  
Feminism in the War on Terror*, London: Zed Books.

Bishop, Sarah. 2016. "United We Stand? Negotiating Space and National Memory in the 9/11  
Arizona Memorial." *Space and Culture* 19(4): 502-511.

Blair, Erik. 2015. "A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques". *Journal of  
Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences* 6(1) pp. 14-29.

Bottomley, Andrew J. 2015. "Podcasting: A Decade in the Life of a "New" Audio Medium:  
Introduction". *Journal of Radio & Audio Media: Golden Years of Audio* 22(2).

Breslow, Jason M. 2016. "Colin Powell: U.N. Speech 'was a great intelligence failure'". *PBS  
Frontline*. (2016/05/17). Accessed online (2020/08/12):

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/colin-powell-u-n-speech-was-a-great-intelligence-failure/>.

Brock, Gerald, W. 2003. *The Second Information Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard Press.

Brooks, G. R. 2010. *Beyond the crisis of masculinity: A transtheoretical model for male-friendly therapy*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

Bumiller, Elisabeth. 2019. 'U.S. lifts photo ban on military coffins'. The New York Times. (December 7, 2009). Accessed online (July 18, 2019):

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/27/world/americas/27iht-photos.1.20479953.html>

Burke, Michael (ed). 2017 *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*. New York: Routledge.

Cabrera, Nolan. 2017. White Immunity: Working through some of the pedagogical pitfalls of "privilege". *Journal Committed to Social Change on Race and Ethnicity* Volume 3, Issue 1.

Campbell, Mikey. 2018. "Apple seemingly aware of alleged 'Top Podcasts' manipulation".

*Apple Insider*. (2018/10/10). Accessed online (2020/08/05):

<https://appleinsider.com/articles/18/10/10/apple-seemingly-aware-of-alleged-top-podcasts-chart-manipulation>.

CBS News. 2015. "Lone Survivor Navy SEAL warns Chris Kyle killer" *CBS News*.

(2015/02/25). Accessed online (2020/08/05): <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/marcus-luttrell-lone-survivor-navy-seal-warning-chris-kyle-eddie-ray-routh/>.

- CNN Editorial Research (2019/11/13) ‘September 11 Terror Attacks Fast Facts’ Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.cnn.com/2013/07/27/us/september-11-anniversary-fast-facts/index.html>
- Colville, Ian, Brown, Andrew D. and Pye, Annie. 2012. “Simplicity: Sensemaking, organization and storytelling for our time”. *Human Relations*. 65(1).
- Covington, Paul, Jay Adams and Emre Sargin. 2016. “Deep Neural Networks for YouTube Recommendations”. Proceedings of the 10th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems, ACM, New York, NY, USA (2016).
- Crawford, Neta C. 2018. “Human Costs of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency”. Costs of War: Watson Institute, Brown University.
- Crawford, Neta C. 2017. "United States Budgetary Costs of Post-9/11 Wars Through FY2018." Costs of War: Watson Institute, Brown University.
- Croft, Stuart. 2006. *Culture. Crisis and America’s War on Terror*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2013. “The Humanity of War: Iconic Photjournalism of the Battlefield, 1914-2012.” *Visual Communication* 12(3): 315-340.
- David, Michael. 2015. *WordPress Search Engine Optimization*. Birmingham: Packt Publishing.
- Davidson, Tonya. 2016. “Imperial Nostalgia, Social Ghosts, and Canada’s National War Memorial.” *Space and Culture* 19(2): 177-191.
- Deggans, Eric. 2020. ‘Me and White Supremacy’ Helps you do the work of dismantling

racism. *NPR*. Accessed online: <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/06/887646740/me-and-white-supremacy-helps-you-do-the-work-of-dismantling-racism>.

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. Accessed online (2020/08/06):

<https://dvbic.dcoe.mil/>.

Defence Casualty Analysis System. U.S. Military Casualties - Persian Gulf War Casualty

Summary Desert Storm: Inclusive dates are August 7, 1990 to January 15, 1991 Accessed 2020/02/22: [https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report\\_gulf\\_storm.xhtml](https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_gulf_storm.xhtml).

De Goede, Marieke & Randalls, Samuel. 2009. Precaution, Preemption: Arts and Technologies of the Actionable Future. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 27.

10.1068/d2608.

Dembele, Youssouf. 2002. *Salvation as Victory: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Salvation in the Light of Jesus Christ's Life and Work Viewed as a Triumph Over the Personal Powers of Evil*. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Domínguez, A., & Dornaletche, J. 2013. The Joe Rogan Experience: la revolución podcast.

*Revista ICONO14 Revista Científica De Comunicación Y Tecnologías Emergentes*, 11(2), 269-293.

Downing, Eric. 1984. Οἶον Ψυχῆ: An Essay on Aristotle's "Muthos". *Classical Antiquity*. 3(2)

pp. 164-178.

Eke, E.C. (Ed.) .1997. *Race and the Enlightenment: a reader* (London, Blackwell).

Engelhardt, Tom. 1995. *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*. New York: Basic Books.

- Ewald, F. 2002. "The return of Descartes' malicious demon: an outline of a philosophy of precaution". *Embracing Risk: The Changing Culture of Insurance and Responsibility*. Eds. Baker T., Simon, J. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 273-302.
- Faludi, Susan. 1999. *Stiffed: The betrayal of the American man*. New York: W. Morrow and Co.
- Fekete, L. 2004. Anti-Muslim racism and the European security state. *Race and Class*, 46(1), 3–29.
- Foss, Sonja K. 2006. "Rhetorical Criticism as Synecdoche for Agency". *Rhetoric Review* 25(4) pp. 375-379.
- Freidel, Frank and Sidey, Hugh. 2006. *The Presidents of the United States of America*. London: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd.
- Fussell, Paul. 2000. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gillett, Katy (2020/03/20) 'On this day: When the US first invaded Iraq in 2003' Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/on-this-day-when-the-us-first-invaded-iraq-in-2003-1.994728>
- Girard, R. 1965. *Deceit, desire, and the novel: Self and other in literary structure*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Gunn, Joshua, and David E. Beard. 2000. "On the Apocalyptic Sublime." *Southern Journal of Communication* 65(4) pp. 269–86.

Hariman, Robert and John Louis Lucaites. 2002. "Performing civic identity: The iconic photograph of the flag raising on Iwo Jima". *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 88(4) pp. 363-392.

Hay, Colin. 1999. "Crisis and the Structural Transformation of the State: Interrogating the Process of Change". *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 1(3) pp. 317-344.

Hearn J. 1999. "A Crisis in Masculinity, or New Agendas for Men?". In: Walby S. (eds) *New Agendas for Women*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Helmets, Marguerite H. and Charles A. Hill. 2004. *Defining Visual Rhetoric*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated (Routledge).

Heshusius, L.1994. "Freeing ourselves from objectivity: Managing subjectivity or turning toward a participatory mode of consciousness" *Educational Researcher* (23), pp.15-22.

Hixenbaugh, Mike. 2015. "Former SEAL Marcus Luttrell tells 'Lone Survivor' story that wasn't in the movie". *The Virginian-Pilot*. (2015/09/30). Accessed online (2020/08/05): [https://www.pilotonline.com/military/article\\_59f822c9-5156-5c51-a245-f8e04e1758fe.html](https://www.pilotonline.com/military/article_59f822c9-5156-5c51-a245-f8e04e1758fe.html).

- Hopf, Michael G. 2014-2015. *The New World Series Books 1-4*. Penguin Random House.  
Accessed online (2020/08/12): <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/316426/the-line-of-departure-by-g-michael-hopf/9780142181522>.
- Hopf, Michael G. 2016. *Those Who Remain: A Postapocalyptic Novel Book 7 of The New World Series*. Scotts Valley, California: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. Quote  
Accessed online (2020/08/12): <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/53173998-those-who-remain>.
- Howard, Michael. 1978. *War and the Liberal Conscience*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Hunter, James Davison. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hynes, Samuel. 1990. *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*. London: Bodley Head.
- IMDB. Lone Survivor (plot description). *IMDB*. Accessed online (2020/08/06):  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1091191/>.
- Johnson, Chalmers. 2004. *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Johnson, Chalmers. 2007. "737 U.S. Military Bases = Global Empire". *The Asia-Pacific Journal*. 5 (2). Excerpt from: *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

- JRE Library. 2020. "Joe Rogan Experience Podcast Equipment & Studio Setup" (2020/01/19). Accessed online (2020/08/05): <https://jrelibrary.com/articles/joe-rogan-experience-podcast-equipment-studio-setup/>.
- Kant, Immanuel. 1795. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*. Trans. Mary Campbell Smith. London: George Allen & Unwin LTD. New York: The MacMillan Co. Accessed online: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/50922/50922-h/50922-h.htm>
- Kasturi, Ramya. 2012. "Stolen Valor: a historical perspective on the regulation of military uniform and decorations". *Yale Journal on Regulation*. 29(2) p. 419.
- Katersky, Aaron and Dr. Sejal Parekh (2019/09/09) '241 NYPD officers have died from 9/11 illnesses, 10 times the number killed in World Trade Center attack' Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://abcnews.go.com/US/241-nypd-officers-died-911-illnesses-10-times/story?id=65430201>.
- Kelly, Casey. 2016. "The Man-pocalypse: *Doomsday Preppers* and the Rituals of Apocalyptic Manhood." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 36(2-3): 95-114.
- Kennedy, Ross, A. 2009. *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America's Strategy for Peace and Security*. Kent: Kent State University Press.
- Kim, Catherine (2019/07/29) 'The battle over extending the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, explained' Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.vox.com/2019/6/20/18691670/jon-stewart-9-11-september-11th-victim-compensation-fund-explained>

- Kimmel, Michael. 1994. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." *Theorizing Masculinities*. Eds. Harry Brod, and Michael Kaufman. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 119–41.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. 2002. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kristol W. and Kagan R. 1996. "Toward a neo-Reaganite foreign policy". *Foreign Affairs* 75(4): 18–32.
- Kuniholm, Bruce R. 1986. "The Carter Doctrine, the Reagan Corollary, and Prospects for United States Policy in Southwest Asia". *International Journal*. 41(2) pp. 342-361.
- Lacan J. 1981. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (trans. A Sheridan). New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lacan J. 2006. *Ecrits* (trans. B Fink). New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Lacoste, Jean-Yves. 2005. *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology (Vol. 1 A-F)*. New York: Routledge.
- Lamothe, Dan. 2015. "American Sniper trial: Dissecting the PTSD claim of Eddie Ray Routh". *The Washington Post* (2015/02/10). Accessed online (2020/08/12): <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/02/10/american-sniper-trial-dissecting-the-ptsd-claim-of-eddie-ray-routh/>.

Larson, Eric V. & Savyach, Bogdan. 2007. *Misfortunes of War: Press and Public Reflections to Civilian Deaths in Wartime*. Chapter 2: Operation Desert Storm (Iraq, 1991). Rand Corporation.

Latour, Bruno. 1987. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2007. "A Textbook Case Revisited. Knowledge as mode of existence". Hackett, Edward J., Lynch Michael, Wajcman, Judy, Amsterdamska, Olga. *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies - Third Edition*, MIT Press, pp.83-112

Le Billon, Philippe. 2006. "Fatal transactions: Conflict diamonds and the (anti) terrorist consumer. *Antipode*. 38 (4) pp. 778-801.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1955. "The Structural Study of Myth". *The Journal of American Folklore*. 68(270). Myth: A Symposium (Oct-Dec 1955). pp 428-444.

Lewis, Paul. 2018. "Fiction is outperforming reality: how YouTube's algorithm distorts truth". *The Guardian*. (2018/02/02). Accessed online (2020/08/05):  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/feb/02/how-youtubes-algorithm-distorts-truth>.

Llinares, Dario and Neil Fox. 2018. *Podcasting New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*. Ipswich: EBSCO Publishing (Firm).

- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. 2004. "The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge." *The Postmodernist Reader: Foundational Texts*. Ed. Michael Drolet. London; New York: Routledge. pp.123-146.
- Maimbo, H., & Pervan, G. 2005. Designing a case study protocol for application in IS research. *Proceed-ings of the Ninth Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS 2005)*, Bangkok, Thailand, July 7-10, 2005, pp. 1281-1292.
- Marling, Karal Ann and John Wetenhall. 1991. *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Massumi, Brian. 2015. "The Primacy of Preemption," in *Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 3-19.
- Massumi, Brian. 2011. *Semblance of an Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. Cambridge, London: The MIT Press.
- McGarr, Oliver. 2009. "A review of podcasting in higher education: Its influence on the traditional lecture". *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*. 25(3).
- McGinn, Bernard. 1979. *Apocalyptic Spirituality (Classics of Western Spirituality)*. Mahwah: Paulist Press.
- McLoughlin, Kate. 2014. "The Great War and Modern Memory". *Essays in Criticism*. 64(4). pp. 436-458.

- McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, London: SAGE.
- Meek, Barbara and Gerald L. Carr. 2013. "The Poetics of Language Revitalization: Text, Performance, and Change". *Journal of folklore research* 50(1-3), pp. 191-216.
- Menon, Vinay. 2020. "Joe Rogan's \$100-million deal with Spotify has valuable lessons for all podcasters". *The Star* (2020/05/20). Accessed online (2020/08/05): <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/opinion/2020/05/20/joe-rogans-100-million-deal-with-spotify-has-valuable-lessons-for-all-podcasters.html>.
- Merriam, S. B. 2009. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francis-co, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyers, Peter Alexander. 2008. "From Terror to War," in *Civic War and the Corruption of the Citizen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 53-79.
- Milliken J (1999) The study of discourse in international relations. *European Journal of International Relations* 5(2): 225–254.
- Miller G.A. 2012. "The Eversion of the Virtual: Postmodernity and Control Societies in William Gibson's Science Fictions of the Present". In: *Exploring the Limits of the Human through Science Fiction. American Literature Readings in the 21st Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Modleski, Tania. 1991. *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*. New York: Routledge.

- Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies: A South African guide and re-source book*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Publishers.
- Murlaney, Frances (2020/05/31) 'President Trump praises the National Guard for 'doing the job the Democrat Minneapolis Mayor couldn't do' as they patrol the streets and crack down on protesters with tear gas' Accessed (2020/06/10) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8373353/Police-use-tear-gas-rubber-bullets-clear-protests-streets-Minneapolis.html>).
- Murthy, Dhiraj and Jason Hughes. 2008. "Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research". *Sociology (Oxford)* 42(5) pp. 837-855.
- Myers, M. 1997. Interpretive research in IS. In J. Mingers & F. Stowell (Eds.), *Information systems: An emerging discipline* (pp. 239-266). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Nielsen, Stine Nørkjær, René Holm Andersen and Susanne Dau. 2018. "Podcast as a Learning Media in Higher Education". *European Conference on e-Learning (ECEL 2018)*.
- O'Donnell, Catherine. 2009. "Black veterans were vital in the civil rights movement, says book by UW prof" (University of Washington News 2009/11/05). Accessed online (2020/10/26): <https://www.washington.edu/news/2009/11/05/black-veterans-were-vital-in-the-civil-rights-movement-says-book-by-uw-prof/>.
- Office of Suicide Prevention. 2016. "Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans 2001-2014". *U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs*. (2016/08/03). Accessed online (2020/08/06): <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/2016suicidedatareport.pdf>.

- O, Leary, Stephen D. 1993. A Dramatistic Theory of Apocalyptic Rhetoric. *The Quarterly journal of speech*. (79)4. pp. 385-426.
- O'Leary, Stephen D. 1998. *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Palenque, Stephanie Maher. 2016. "The Power of Podcasting: Perspectives on Pedagogy". *Journal of Instructional Research*. 5 (2016) pp. 4-6.
- Patterson, Eleanor. 2016. "This American Franchise: This American Life, public radio franchising and the cultural work of legitimating economic hybridity". *Media, Culture & Society*. 38(3) pp. 450-461.
- Patton, M. Q. 1987. *How to use qualitative methods in evaluative research*. London: Sage.
- Peshkin, A.1988. "In search of subjectivity,One's own". *Educational Researcher* (17) pp. 17-21.
- Phruksachart, Melissa. 2020. 'The Literature of white Liberalism'. *Boston Review*. Accessed online: <http://bostonreview.net/race/melissa-phruksachart-literature-white-liberalism>.
- Ponelis, S. R. 2015. "Using interpretive qualitative case studies for exploratory research in doctoral studies: A case of Information Systems research in small and medium enterprises". *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 10, 535-550
- Quine, Willard V. O. 2013. "Chapter 1: Language and Truth: Beginning with Ordinary Things". *Word and Object*. (New Edition). Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Rashid, Naaz. 2014. Giving the silent majority a stronger voice? Initiatives to empower Muslim women as part of the UK's 'War on Terror'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 4.

Razack, Sherene. 2008. *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*, Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1985. *Temps et récit*. Tome III. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Ricoeur, P. 1988. *Time and Narrative*. vol. 3. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. 1991. Life in quest of narrative, in. D. Wood (ed.). *On Paul Ricoeur. Narrative and interpretation*. London: Routledge.

Ricoeur, P. 1992. *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Roberts, Jeff. 2003. "Kairos, Chronos, and Chaos". *Group Analysis*. 26(2), pp. 202-217.

Robinson, Sally. 2000. *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Robinson, William I. 2010. "Giovanni Arrighi: Systemic Cycles of Accumulation, Hegemonic Transitions, and the Rise of China". *New Political Economy*.

Rogan, Joe. 2007. "...but to be on the internet, people can really get to know you (quote excerpt)". *Tom Green Live*. (2007/03/28). Accessed online (2020/08/05):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdc-ucb7kZc>

Rogan, Joe. 2014. Episode #497 Tim Kennedy (2014/04/07 – 2:59:14). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2014. Episode #574 Dr. Gordon, Matthew Gosney and Jason Hall (2014/11/12 – 2:19:56). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2015. Episode #700 Dr. Gordon and Andrew Marr (2015/09/25 – 1:47:09). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2015. Episode #720 Andy Stumpf and Tait Fletcher (2015/11/11 – 2:57:33). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2015. Episode #729 Jocko Willink (2015/12/01 – 2:51:30). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2016. Episode #858 Jesse Ventura (2016/10/13 – 2:11:21). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2017. Episode #962 Jocko Willink (2017/04/19 – 2:11:21). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2017. Episode #1047 Andy Stumpf (2017/12/04 – 2:53:57). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

Rogan, Joe. 2017. Episode #1056 Dr. Gordon and Andrew Marr (2017/12/27 – 1:30:43). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.

- Rogan, Joe. 2018. Episode #1080 David Goggins (2018/02/19 – 1:54:22). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.
- Rogan, Joe. 2018. Episode #1117 Tim Kennedy (2018/04/17 – 2:52:51). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.
- Rogan, Joe. 2018. Episode #1212 David Goggins (2018/12/05 – 2:17:57). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.
- Rogan, Joe. 2019. Episode #1247 Andy Stumpf (2019/02/18 – 2:51:00). *Powerful JRE: The Joe Rogan Experience*.
- Rotten Tomatoes. Lone Survivor (plot description). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Accessed online (2020/08/06): [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/lone\\_survivor](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/lone_survivor).
- Rutherford, R.B. 2012. “Chapter 8: The irony of Greek tragedy”. *Greek Tragic Style: Form Language and Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 323-364.
- Saad, L. 2020. *Me and white supremacy: how to recognise your privilege, combat racism and change the world*. Quercus.
- Safire, William. (1981). “The Reagan Corollary”. *New York Times* (1981/10/04). Accessed (2020/09/21): <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/10/04/opinion/essay-the-reagan-corollary.html>.
- Samman, Amin. 2015. Crisis theory and the historical imagination, *Review of International Political Economy*, 22(5), pp. 966-995.

- Schwartz, Steven J. 2004. "Disowning Mutual Identity: The Case of Spirit-Murdering the Other in Law and Society". *Aporia* 14(1) pp. 73-86.
- Sefa Dei, George J. 1999. The Denial of Difference: refraining anti-racist praxis. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Volume 2, Issue 1.
- Seib, Philip. 2004. "Prelude to Iraq: The Changing Nature of War and War Coverage," in, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 19-41.
- Shermer, Michael. 2017. "Debating science and lost civilizations: my experience on the Joe Rogan Experience". *Skeptic* (Altadena, CA). 22(3) p. 26.
- Shinkman, Paul D. 2013. "Afghan Who Saved 'Operation Red Wings' Navy SEAL Comes to Washington" *U.S. News*. (2013/10/11). Accessed online (2020/08/05): <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/10/11/afghan-who-saved-operation-red-wings-navy-seal-comes-to-washington>.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2015. 'The terror of everyday counterterrorism'. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Volume 8 Issue 3, 383-400.
- Simons, Herbert, W. 2007. "From Post-9/11 Melodrama to Quagmire in Iraq: A Rhetorical History". *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. 10(2), pp. 183-193.
- Solomon, Ty. 2013. "Resonances of Neoconservatism." *Cooperation and Conflict* 48(1): 100-121.

- Stake, R. E. 2005. Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Statista. (2020/07/30) “Total number of U.S. coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and deaths as of July 30, 2020” Published by John Elfein (2020/07/31) Accessed (2020/07/31): <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1101932/coronavirus-covid19-cases-and-deaths-number-us-americans/>
- Stumpf, Andy. 2020. Full Auto Friday – Round 4. *Cleared Hot* (podcast). June 5, 2020, 2:00-16:05. Accessed online (2020/08/06): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/cleared-hot/id1247300054?i=1000476893163>.
- Stumpf, Andy. 2020. @AndyStumpf77 (personal Twitter account). (2020/05/26). Accessed online (2020/08/06): <https://twitter.com/andystumpf77/status/1265424777931395072?lang=en>.
- Sung-Yul Park, Joseph and Mary Bucholtz. 2009. “Introduction Public Transcripts: entexualization and linguistic representation in institutional contexts”. *Text & Talk* 29(5) pp. 435-502.
- Taylor, Charles. 2002. “Modern *Social Imaginaries*”. *Public Culture*, 14 (1) pp. 91-124.
- Thatcher, Tom. 1998. Empty Metaphors and Apocalyptic Rhetoric. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 66 (3), pp. 549-570.
- Tite, Philip L. 2012. *The apocryphal epistle to the Laodiceans: an epistolary and rhetorical analysis*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

- Verhesschen, Piet. 2003. "The Poem's Invitation: Ricoeur's Concept of Mimesis and its Consequences for Narrative Educational Research". *The Journal of Philosophy and Education*. 37(3).
- Vermeulen, Timotheus & Robin van den Akker. 2010. "Notes on Metamodernism". *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 2(1).
- Ventura v. Kyle. 2016. Amici on Behalf of Appellant. *United States Court of Appeal for the Eighth Circuit*. No. 14-3876.
- Wesling, Donald. 2008. *Joys and Sorrows of Imaginary Persons: On Literary Emotions*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- White House, The. 2002. National Security Council Strategy (Preamble). Accessed: December 18, 2018: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nssintro.html>
- Wikipedia. Lone Survivor (plot description). *Wikipedia*. Accessed online (2020/08/06): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone\\_Survivor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone_Survivor).
- Willink, 'Jocko'. 2017. "Extreme Ownership: Jocko Willink" *TEDx University of Nevada*. Accessed online (2020/08/12): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jqra3BcqWM&t=282s>.
- Wilson, Woodrow. 1920. 8th Annual Message Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/207615>.
- Winichakul, Thongchai. 1997. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Winter, Jay. 1995. *Sites of Memory: Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Zagora, Nermina. 2014. "Sarajevo lost in translation?: Ideologies and Their Representational Spaces". *Archnet-IJAR*, 8:1 (March 2014) pp. 159-170.

Zarefsky, David. 2008. "Knowledge Claims in Rhetorical Criticism". *Journal of Communication* 58(4), pp. 629-640.