Discursive Constructions of the Israel-Hezbollah War: The Struggle for Representation

by

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Abstract

The media play a contributing influence in exacerbating hostilities between war protagonists. Through particular representations, specific groups are either hailed or vilified; thereby resulting in a "spill-over effect" of negative stereotyping, prejudice, and hostilities among people beyond the physically-designated zones of conflict. The 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War, fueled by Israel's history of military aggression in the region and ignited by Hezbollah's cross-border raid into Israel and the associated capture and killing of Israeli soldiers, received extensive coverage in the South African press and had the effect of polarizing groups in support of a particular side. In this article, we examine a section of the local South African print media—capturing the conflict to reveal the main discourse themes, their hidden ideological positions and their legitimation through specific textual devices. The findings reveal a "discursive war" between news texts representing a favorable stance on Israel and Hezbollah respectively. Through characterizations and intertextual practices,

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texts in support of either side drew upon conflicting ideologies ("right of existence" and "defense against terror" versus "religious resistance" and "Israel as the apartheid state" respectively) that provided legitimation for violence. The ideological effects of such media representations on the ordinary lives of South Africans physically removed from the conflict are considered. In light of the findings, considerations for discursive interventions are proposed in order to promote discourses of peace in the media.

Introduction

Our article is based on a key premise: war journalism[1] in both Western and other-than-Western media as sites of ideological struggle for representation,[2] represents significant areas for scrutiny when aiming to uncover media depictions of the Arab world and Muslims, as well as dubious justifications for military interventions framed as democratization and liberatory exercises.[3] We draw upon this view of the media and war journalism in particular to examine a section of the South African print media's reportage of the sixty-day Israel-Hezbollah war, which was sparked by Hezbollah's cross-border raid into Israel and the associated capture and killing of Israeli soldiers and also driven by Israeli militarism and regional hegemonic ambitions. This war was also referred to as the 2006 Lebanon War. We use critical discourse analysis as a method and interpretive framework to examine how the Israel-Hezbollah conflict was portrayed in South African media and show how different discourses are organized to achieve specific ideological effects, for example, through characterizations and emotive technologies to influence the readership to be responsive.[4]

The analysis is underpinned by two aims. First, we identify the discourse themes underlying the Israeli-Hezbollah struggle for representation.

Second, we attempt to reveal the underlying ideologies hidden within these themes and the ways in which they are legitimated. We do so by examining the textual devices employed by newspapers and key social actors on either side of the conflict to effect a response in readers, mobilize support, and gain favorable representation. Here we explore the connotations, insinuations, and implications evoked by the selected newspaper articles on the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War.

Our study is motivated by a number of considerations. First, in South Africa, little attention has been drawn to the role of local media representa-

tions in political struggles, specifically as a site of struggle between religious groups and between religions and state.[5] While media coverage may be on wars fought in distant lands, they nevertheless exert a powerful influence in evoking allegiances to opposing sides of the conflict, particularly as they elicit sympathies based on one's ethnic, religious, cultural, political, or other affiliation. The Israel-Hezbollah War[6] received extensive coverage in the South African news media and played an influential role in portraying the conflict as a reality impacting our everyday lives by emphasizing the urgency for active participation by the South African government and its citizens. Second, the longstanding conflict between Israel and Palestine continues to generate much interest among the South African news media, scholars, and general public, given the frequent parallels drawn between the struggle of Palestine against Israeli occupation and South Africa's collective history of racial division and conflict (e.g., the "apartheid wall" in Palestine, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the African National Congress).[7] The subject, however, appears to evoke disparate and conflicting ideological views within the local context. Those supporting the Palestinian cause (including high-profile South African politicians and civic leaders) affirm the contemporary connections between the South African apartheid state and Israeli occupation of Palestine. A comprehensive review of Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) by the Human Sciences Research Council, for instance, concluded that Israeli's actions exhibit the three pillars of apartheid: (1) legalizing of privileges and benefits to a particular group; (2) restricted passage of movements; and (3) suppression of opposition to a racist regime.[8] Others opposing such an association suggest that the "Apartheid-Israel" campaigns are a masquerade for anti-Semitism, prejudice against the Jewish people, and anti-Israel propaganda.[9]

By way of creating context and criticality for our analysis below, we describe the background and nature of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict and the drivers and dynamics of Islamaphobia in the media. We then examine the intersection between discourse, war journalism, and the struggle for representation. Through a critical review of media as producers of discourse and ideology, we also attempt to elucidate a theoretical-cum-interpretive framework for our analysis. Thereafter, we detail our methodology and draw on our specific theoretical framework to discuss the outcome of our discourse analysis. Next to the last, we propose that discursive interventions be considered as a way of encouraging discourses of peace and dislodging war discourses in the media. In conclusion, we summarize our key

findings to reiterate the polarizing influences of war journalism and the peace-promoting potential of discursive interventions proposed by Anita Wenden.[10]

Background to the Israel-Hezbollah Conflict

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict may be contextually located within the broader, ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict since Israel's establishment in 1948. Lebanon's involvement in this conflict had its roots in the Palestinian movement, seen as the "standard bearer of Arab resistance," which was formed in Southern Lebanon in 1964.[11] As the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its military wing, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) gained ground, Lebanon was faced with conflicting roles and demands—disowning responsibility for Palestinian actions and protecting itself from Israeli retaliation—while establishing its sovereignty over the country's civil and military affairs and showing itself as advocating the Palestinian cause.[12] However, as the Palestinian movement grew more influential in Lebanon, so did Israeli retaliations across Lebanese borders. Internally, the social and political rift between the Christian Lebanese and Muslims intensified. The former regarded Lebanese sovereignty as being usurped by the Palestinian presence, and the latter looked toward the PLA as a voice against social inequality and a Christian-dominated political system; these brewing tensions culminated in the Lebanese civil war. Eventually, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978 led to the creation of the security zone to prevent Palestinian attacks into Northern Israel.[13] With time, the Palestinians created a Palestinian-state-within-a-state in Lebanon (1969–1982), exercising military and civil power in Southern Lebanon through social services.[14] Israel's second invasion into Lebanon (1982) led to the eventual withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon. The PLO withdrawal was replaced with fierce resistance as the dominant Shiite population attempted to free themselves from Israeli occupation. The 1982 Israeli invasion gave rise to Hezbollah, a powerful resistance movement, founded to overthrow Israeli occupation of South Lebanon.[15] With its extensive network of social services and its grassroots appeal, alongside its effective military organization, Hezbollah became well respected among the local Arab citizenry, who grew disillusioned with the ineffectiveness of secular governments.[16] In Lebanon, Hezbollah was defined as "America's and Israel's deadliest enemy"; for the West. it was viewed as the "synonym for terror."[17] Despite its recent participation in the country's parliamentary system through which it has obtained major political power, since its inception, Hezbollah has evolved

into an influential social actor functioning independently of the Lebanese state and government.

The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War

The 2006 War was initiated on July 12, 2006 after Hezbollah's cross-border raid on Israel, which led to the capture of two Israeli soldiers and the killing of three. Hezbollah's attack was dubbed "Operation Truthful Promise," after a promise by its leader Hassan Nasrallah to capture Israeli soldiers and swap them for Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.[18] According to Hezbollah, the kidnapping represented not only an act to liberate the Lebanese prisoners of war, but also a gesture of defiance in support of the Intifada following Israeli's raid into Gaza on June 25, 2006.[19] The then Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert declared the attack by Hezbollah as "an act of war without any provocation on the sovereign territory of the State of Israel."[20] The result was an exchange of massive air strikes and rocket launches across Lebanese and Israeli territory respectively. In an effort to end the fighting, on August 11, 2006, a month after the conflict had begun, the United Nations Security Council collectively approved the UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Whereas the Lebanese government and Hezbollah, representing two distinctly different groups of social actors in Lebanon, accepted the UN resolution on the August 12th, Israel accepted the resolution a day later on August 13th. The ceasefire took effect on August 14, 2006.[21] Following the UN-brokered ceasefire, there were mixed opinions on who had achieved most in the war. The vast majority of Middle East governments (e.g., Iran, Syria, and Lebanon) declared a victory for Hezbollah, while the Israeli and United States governments proclaimed that Hezbollah lost the war.[22]

Western Media, Orientalism, and Islamaphobia

Western media have generally held power to assert particular worldviews and value systems that promote Western ideals and influence.[23] Other-than-Western cultures have generally been portrayed negatively, and relegated to an inferior status, thereby enabling a climate of mistrust, antagonism, and hostility toward those typified as the Other.[24] Islamic culture is one example of a myriad of cultures subject to the process of Othering. Filtered through the Western media gaze, perceptions of Muslims tend to be tainted with stereotypes of religious fundamentalism, terrorism, and violence, often fuelling much distrust and cynicism.[25] In his writings, Edward Said

referred to this process as Orientalism, a "kind of intellectual power" advanced by the British and European powers (i.e., the West) during the period of colonial expansion and domination (1815 to 1914).[26] This cohered around a "family of ideas" or "unifying set of values" used to explain the behavior of Orientals (i.e., peoples of the Arab Near East), which provided for Europeans a means "to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics."[27] For Said, this political view of reality affirms difference between "the familiar (Europe, United States, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')" and perpetuates Western superiority over Oriental inferiority. These early Islamaphobic discourses and Orientalist tendencies have continued to evolve, from stereotypes of exoticism to Muslim fanaticism, the latter holding sway during the Rushdie saga in the 1980s and reaching its zenith in the aftermath of 9/11.[28]

The contemporary North American and British media in particular have been charged with representing the Middle East in line with classical Orientalist and Islamaphobic frameworks, which pits "the forces of destruction represented by terrorism, rogue states, and Islamist extremism" against "champions of democracy and freedom, represented by the USA and its allies,"[29] Salaita defines Islamophobia as "the systematic marginalization by non-Muslims of Muslim individuals or communities based on Islamic practices, Muslim identities, or ethnic features deemed synonymous with religious observance" and may include "hate crimes, profiling (at airports and elsewhere), and institutionalized discrimination."[30]

In resonance with this conceptualization of Islamaphobia, Deepak Kumar outlines specific discursive strategies that have achieved media prominence: Islam is a monolithic religion; Islam is a uniquely sexist religion; the Muslim mind is incapable of rationality and science; Islam is inherently violent; and the West spreads democracy, while Islam spawns terrorism.[31] Affirming Said's argument,[32] these media representations and images through their Manichean stance set up a presumed us-and-them polarization between the West and the global Muslim community,[33] such that the latter are depicted as enemies to Western society.[34]

Discourse, War Journalism, and the Struggle for Representation

The media, however, have drawn a chorus of conflicting criticism, some pro-Arab and others pro-Israel, concerning the broader Arab/Palestine-

Israeli conflict.[35] Both contend that the North American media are biased in similar ways—for instance, in disproportionate, unfavorable reporting, cultural stereotyping of Arabs and Jews respectively, distorted views on the conflict, and reporting with double standards.[36] What strikes as the pivotal basis in these disparate representations is the power of language in the media to influence, persuade, or alter public opinion. As Lea Mandelzis has shown, media discourses are subject to change as they mirror changing events of war and peace.[37] For instance, quantitative content analyses revealed that the image of Yassar Arafat, the deceased Palestinian Liberation Organization leader, underwent transformation in the Israel news media—that is, from stereotyped image of "evil" prior to the signing of the Oslo accords to that of post-Oslo "partner of peace." Similarly, Ahmad Atawneh's analysis revealed that the political statements by Palestinian and Israeli actors in media headlines were a reflection of their power profiles.[38] Israel, as the more powerful participant in the conflict, employed the use of threats more frequently, while the Palestinian's use of appeals appeared to reflect their more powerless position. According to Atawneh, these speech acts mirror an imbalanced power relationship in the war that reflects dominant and powerless positions respectively.[39] Other studies have critiqued the speech acts of prominent political figures, namely the employment of pronouns in category work that serve to create an us-and-them divide, and further lay the groundwork for anticipated actions.[40] For George W. Bush and Tony Blair, these distinctions were made on social, political, and moral terms (e.g., "acts of mass murder," "attacks on the civilized world," "monumental struggle of good versus evil"), whereas for Osama bin Laden, these were framed in religious terms (e.g., "rise up in . . . defense of Islam").[41] Dalia Gavriely-Nuri argued that "war-normalizing" metaphors (e.g., war is a sport or game) and "metaphorical annihilation" (e.g., war as a *mivtza* or fighting) served to downplay the conflict as a normal event in Israeli life and justified the cause for war. [42]

These studies also show that the media—as instruments of hegemony and vehicles manufacturing consent—not only construct reality, but also define, create, and shape reality. As such, information originating outside one's personal experience is constructed and is seen as the apparent, true state of reality.[43] Teun Van Dijk proposes that a "group self-schema" is created, comprising ingredients—such as identity/membership, tasks/activities, goals, norms, values, position, and resources—that form the basis for one group's dealings with another.[44] Embedded within language are dominant ideologies that reinforce the group cause or action. However,

linguistic complexity enables multiple, even conflicting ideologies that are struggling for dominance to coexist.[45]

As Wenden points out, these ideologies are at times subtle and hidden, but nevertheless have powerful effects.[46] Although the recipients of news may be actively engaged in understanding news reports, their attention is directed to the thematic content, rather than the linguistic strategies used to influence comprehension and to convey values and beliefs. In an analysis of an Aljazeera[47] special report, an alternative to Western media, Wenden explored the discursive themes underpinning the struggle of political representation during the second Intifada, the Palestinian uprising against Israel.[48] Underlying thematic representations of the uprising were specific ideologies that were reinforced and justified. A militarist ideology, promoting violent resistance, while opposing a non-violent approach to conflict resolution—failing the futility of peace talks—provided the justification for martyrdom attacks and fostered the armed struggle as the only solution. Moreover, an Islamic ideology of spirituality and politicization provided a sense of renewed hope and deliverance that rose above the failure of Arab nationalism. As Wenden asserts, the critical interrogation of the language of news media through the media's characterizations of events, discursive themes, and attribution of agency, lends insights into how language both provokes and exacerbates conflict.[49]

War journalism in particular may adopt several frames to produce specific agenda setting effects: the *conflict frame* emphasizes the conflicts underlying the war between the parties. It is related to winning and losing with the emphasis on the performance and style of the warring parties.[50] The *human interest frame* emphasizes the personal, emotional side of the war. This frame is used to personalize, dramatize and give emotional content to the news and thereby capture and hold the audience's attention.[51] The *economic impact frame* places the accent on the economic impact of the war for individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries. The focus on the economic impact has important news value in that it attempts to render the war relevant to the audience. The *morality frame* adds a religious and moral tone to the war. Lastly, within the *responsibility frame,* the war is attributed to a specific cause or party.

Power, Language, and Discourse: Elements of an Interpretive Framework

Following this preceding understanding of war journalism, we draw upon Wenden's work that highlights the power of linguistic devices in reproduc-

ing ideologies that sustain conflict or violence,[52] to elucidate an interpretative-cum-theoretical framework for our article. The framework guides the analysis in terms of identifying: (1) how particular ideologies are framed (e.g., through identification of propositions or the topic of, discourse); and (2) how particular ideologies are legitimated (i.e., attribution of agency and characterization). While there are various means by which ideologies are legitimated,[53] we focus on the textual devices of *characterization*[54] and *intertextuality*[55] to illustrate and critically explain how local newspaper depictions of war fought beyond the boundaries of the South African geopolitical entity are made to be politically and emotionally relevant to the people within the local context.

Characterization refers to the choice of words or expressions used in a text to depict an event, persons, social groups, and relations between them. According to Norman Fairclough, "objects," events, conditions, people, etc. are constructed through discourse as "representations" of the world.[56] Often framed from a particular perspective, these representations are not neutral. Instead, they are chosen to "reinforce and legitimate" a particular ideology.[57] Depending on the authorial stance adopted, these characterizations mirrored Van Dijk's "strategy of polarisation," yielding a positive in-group description and a negative out-group description.[58] War reporting is characterized by the identification with one side, creating a particular view of the world in which certain groups/institutions involved in the war are depicted either as innocent victims, enemies, or allies. Implicit in such thematic depictions is what Wenden has termed "propositions." Propositions are identified in the recurring themes that reflect a particular thesis statement or statements about the topic of discourse—in other words, the general statements of meaning to understand a particular issue, which when closely analyzed reveal the assumptions or (hidden) ideologies of the author.[59] According to Wenden, propositions frame the ideology.[60]

Through what Fairclough calls "intertextuality," news texts provoke non-neutral responses in its audience.[61] Intertextual analysis "aims to unravel the various genres and discourses . . . which are articulated together in the text."[62] Through the tracing of genres and discourses in the text, the presence of multiple voices through colloquialisms, conversation, political rhetoric, narratives, or poetry may be located.[63] According to Wenden, the text or talk is made up of representations derived from various rhetorical strategies—such as causes/consequences, problems/solutions, compare/contrast, description, or argumentation.[64]

Central to the notion of power and politics is the role of language that is used to shape, sustain, alter, or legitimate particular views. In unpacking

the relations between power, discourse, inequality, and dominance, critical discourse analysis is key to uncovering how conflicts are represented in the media.[65] Such a framework considers the interrelationship between discourse and social practice as constituted in historical, political, and social settings.[66] Fairclough defines critical discourse analysis as having the following aims: to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination—between (1) discursive practices, events, and texts; and (2) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes—to investigate how such practices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power.[67]

Importantly, as Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Gilla, Martin Reisigl, and Karin Liebhart argue, there is "a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded."[68] Stated differently, discourse shapes social and political reality and is in turn shaped by it. According to Vivian Burr, discourses are a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, and stories—statements that in some way produce a particular version of events.[69] A discourse, as Ian Parker suggests, is realized in texts, is about objects, contains subjects, is a coherent system of meanings, refers to other discourses, reflects on its own way of speaking, is historically located, supports institutions, reproduces power relations, and has ideological effects.[70]

Such definitions suggest that discourses produce a way of thinking and creating meaning. They offer truth claims, ways to interpret the world and versions of reality and opinions to adopt. Discourses are about the production of knowledge through language; they make it possible to construct a topic in a certain way, and also limit other ways in which the topic can be constructed. Both discourse and ideology share the same assumption that people make sense of their social world through language or a system of signs that find transmission via people and institutions.[71] Although we adopt this understanding, we also borrow further from Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt's conceptual distinctions and connections between the terms to lend clarity to how they are employed in our analysis.[72] While *discourse* involves the creation of meaning and truth claims (through language and social practice), which form the basis of social experience and subjectivity, *ideology* reflects the "interpellation of subject positions"[73] to reinforce and reproduce relations of domination or subordination. Accordingly, discourses become ideologies when they are connected to systems of domination; in a sense, where ideals are subsumed into lived experience, in which interests that are specific and sectional, ideals are represented as universal.[74]

Methodology

Text Collection and Analysis

The data corpus for the present study consisted of newspaper reports focused on the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (July 12 to August 14, 2006). Drawing from the South African Media database, we conducted a search of relevant newspaper clippings, using key words such as “Israel/i,” “Lebanon” (“Lebanese”), “Hezbollah”/“Hizbullah,” “war,” “conflict,” and “Israel-Lebanon.” We identified 131 newspaper articles. We selected these as texts from the following English newspapers: Cape Argus (1), Cape Times (3), Citizen (8), City Press (1), Daily News (1), Mail & Guardian (26), Saturday Star (2), Sowetan (1), The Star (51), Sunday Argus (1), Sunday Independent (25), Sunday Times (10) and Sunday Tribune (1). We chose these newspapers because of their high circulation and readership (see Table 1). They also have different target markets (for example, some are aimed at high-income earners, while others are aimed at the working class) allowing a variety of different types of articles, writing styles, and content. We also restricted our search to newspaper articles with the highest circulation for the period that was available via the database. We excluded tabloid newspapers (e.g. Daily Sun, The Post, Sunday World) from the data corpus.

Table 1. Newspapers with Highest Circulation Figures for the Third Quarter of 2006

Daily Newspapers	Weekly Newspapers	Weekend Newspapers
Beeld (104,932)	*Beeld, Saturday* (86,444)	*Mail & Guardian* (43,102)*
Burger (92,319)	*Burger, Die Saturday* (109,218)	*The Post* (46,700)
Business Day (41,981)	*Citizen, The (Saturday)* (52,002)	
Cape Argus (73,417)*	*City Press* (186,224)*	
Cape Times (49,718)*	*Independent on Saturday* (53,574)	
The Citizen (71,858)*	*Rapport* (311,573)	
Daily Nation (153,520)	*Saturday Star* (136,335)*	
Daily News (52,339)*	*Sunday Independent* (44,020)*	
Daily Sun (467,681)	*Sunday Nation* (214,952)	
Sowetan (133,195)*	*Sunday Sun* (216,686)	
The Star (168,776)*	*Sunday Times* (504,376)*	
	Sunday Tribune (106,863)*	
	Sunday World (181,090)	
	Weekend Argus (104,275)*	

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa (ABC)
*Selected newspapers forming data corpus

The lead author (Ursula Lau) followed five steps to analyze the data: (1) She reread newspaper articles to familiarize herself with details pertain-

ing to the conflict, the authorial stance contained therein, and the texts' discursive effects; (2) she identified the recurring themes that represented the conflict; (3) for each article, she analyzed the characterizations (expressions used to depict actors, events, actions) and references to intertextuality; and (4) together with her coauthors (Mohamed Seedat and Victoria McRitchie), analyzed and described texts illustrative of the identified discourses and textual practices.

Findings and Discussion: Themes, Discursive Contestation, and Intertextuality

Themes and Depictions in Newspaper Texts

As Wenden points out, themes reveal what the writers of the text consider as relevant and important to making sense of the topic.[75] The lead author identified several key themes recurring in the newspaper corpus and which depicted the 2006 Lebanon war:

1. Hezbollah's cross-border capture of two Israeli soldiers, the "triggering act" for Israeli attacks on Lebanon
2. the Israel-Hezbollah conflict as reflective of the broader Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation
3. peace as an illusory notion in the Middle East
4. diplomacy as ineffectual due to the split in world powers regarding intervention
5. the victims of war as the innocent civilians

The above thematic depictions were primarily framed as *causes and consequences*, as reflected in themes 1 and 2 and themes 3 and 5 respectively. Theme 4 was structured such that diplomacy and UN intervention was presented both as a solution to the conflict and as a factor fuelling the conflict (e.g., lack of resolution interpreted as a "green light" to continue attacks).[76] In the following sections, we attempt to describe the hidden ideologies, embedded within the characterization of the protagonists and the conflict through an analysis of specific textual strategies used by newspaper texts to depict the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

Characterization of Protagonists

Israel as "a Law Unto Itself." Newspaper reports offering a negative

view of Israel portrayed it as a lawless state, lacking moral accountability and having little disregard for international war conventions. Seen as being "backed by the world's superpower,"[77] these texts positioned Israel both as a formidable force and the "puppet regime" of the United States.[78] This was achieved through relational processes ascribing particular attributes to the object under consideration,[79] (for example, "the Israelis are ruthless exponents"[80]; "Israel was established and has existed purely through force and by instilling fear"[81]; and Israel being "unperturbed by international criticism."[82] Through performative verbs (italicized), Israel's use of force was depicted as brazen and unlawful:

1. Israeli attacks *flout* codes of war.[83]
2. Israel also *acts with impunity* on the international stage because it is backed by the United States and other developed countries.[84]
3. Israel *arrogates* to itself the sole right to use force and would *deny* those who seek to resist it—in this case, Hezbollah and Hamas—such a right.[85]

Supporting depictions of a "lawless state," texts that were unfavorable toward Israel characterized their military actions as "disproportionate." This was achieved typically, through the employment of metaphorical depictions denoting size, number, and proportion. As illustrated below, the result was a representation of Israeli retaliation as fierce, abusive, and excessive:

1. One can understand Israel's anger and its desire to seek retribution. . . . But, I would humbly suggest, this was out of all proportion; akin to repeatedly banging a child's head against a wall for being naughty.[86]
2. The trouble is that the enemy is elusive, living by Mao Zedong's dictum of being "like fish swimming in the sea" of Arab civilians. Finding it difficult to catch the fish, the IDF resorts to attacking the sea itself.[87]
3. . . . in its military campaign against Hizbullah, Israel was using "a mallet to hit a mosquito."[88]

Israel's Right to Exist. Texts reflecting a pro-Israel stance, however, contained justifications for both its military action and the nature of its retaliatory force. Through characterizations of the other as the "enemy," Israel was represented as being "well within their [sic] rights"[89]:

1. Israel is taking flak over attacks on Lebanon, but they have their logic. . . . Perceiving itself to be surrounded and vastly outnumbered by mortal enemies, Israel retaliates very hard to any aggression to send what it hopes will be a clear enough message of deterrence to be heard throughout the Middle East.[90]
2. This time, Israel is not invading Lebanon. It is defending itself from a daily harassment. . . .[91]
3. What in heaven's name constitutes disproportionate force when a country is in a state of war with enemies sworn to its total destruction?[92]

Pro-Israeli texts also defined Israel as having a sovereign right (e.g., "the fact remains that Israel is a Jewish state"[93]) to fend for itself by conducting a "legitimate defensive war."[94] Drawing a rights discourse, such texts affirm Israel as having a legitimate right to exist:

> That means, first and foremost, dealing with Hezbollah and its threat to the existence of the state of Israel as demanded by the UN Security Council Resolution 1701.[95]

Hezbollah as Agents of the Islamic Resistance. Newspaper texts which presented a positive view of Hezbollah, depicted it as the favored, compassionate "Party of God"[96] who "won hearts and minds with its social services, schools and hospitals."[97] Moreover, as a "Shi'ite resistance group," Hezbollah is depicted as a defiant and powerful force that "enjoys unique credibility because of its role in ending the Israeli occupation of the south."[98] With its "advanced weaponry" and "military and organisational prowess,"[99] Hezbollah is shown to challenge its "profile of the oppressed" against its "colonising power."[100] Although defiant, these actions were legitimated on grounds of patriotic zeal—for instance, in the statement by Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrullah: "but nobody should behave in a way to support the enemy. Today we behaved in a patriotic way."[101] In various newspaper texts, several allusions to a "religious war" were evident (i.e., the "jihad" or "holy war").[102] Hezbollah's capture of the two Israeli soldiers, an event repeatedly identified as the provoking incident leading to the war, is portrayed as "an unmistakeable message of defiance intended for the Jewish state."[103] Such military acts are couched in heroic terms that are given sanction:

> But its admirers might reflect on the significance of the fact that one of its rockets is called "Khaybar"—the name of the battle where Muhammad defeated the Jews in the seventh-century Arabia.[104]

In the quoted speech of some Lebanese displacees in the news story, Hezbollah's actions were seen as the "beginning of our victory" and as "support for the Islamic resistance."[105]

Hezbollah as a Terrorist Guerrilla Group. Newspaper texts depicting a negative view of Hezbollah questioned its legitimacy as a military power representing Lebanon (a "quasi-state," a "state-within-a-state in Lebanon"[106]), and framed their actions in light of a renegade militant group usurping power (e.g., "an attack on the authority and integrity of the elected Lebanese government"[107]). Its actions are presented as audacious: "carried out without [their] consultation" and is "trying to divorce itself from Lebanese politics."[108] Through verbs such as *hijacked*, *divorce*, and *attack*, Hezbollah is represented as lawless, violent, and criminal. Labelled as a "terrorist organisation,"[109] it is depicted as "the West's most potent enemy in the war on terror,"[110] "a sworn enemy of all peace initiatives in the Middle East,"[111] and a "threat to the existence of the Israel state."[112] Foregrounding the illegitimacy argument, pro-Israeli texts justified the Israeli attacks on Lebanon:

> In the absence of any credible military power to oppose them, the Israelis are free to pursue their main objectives with impunity, namely the recovery of the kidnapped soldiers and the destruction of the military network that Hezbollah has been allowed to establish in Southern Lebanon.[113]

Through visual images of smoke and shadows, moreover, Hezbollah as a group was represented alongside its allies, Syria and Iran, as the dark force, a symbol of oppression exercised through fundamentalist religious ideology:

> The dark shadows of . . . fanatic Islam are hovering over the smoking towns and villages. . . . These shadows are at the same time suppressing Lebanese society. . . .[114]

Undercutting Hezbollah's religious stance, these texts critique the "jihadist" aspects of the movement. Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, known as the "unchallenged leader of Hezbollah," for instance, is cynically depicted as "the new face of jihadism."[115] This is further reinforced through emotive labels, such as "toxic extremism,"[116] "mullahocracy,"[117] and "Islamo-fascist terrorists."[118] Within these constructions, *terror* is construed as the antonym of *peace*: "Hizbullah doesn't want there to be peace. . . ."[119]

As the texts illustrate, in setting up Hezbollah as the hostile imposing force, as an enemy to Israel specifically and to the ideals of Western

democracy generally, pro-Israel texts reinforce another ideology—specifically one, which attests to the right of the existence of the State of Israel:

1. Hezbollah is a vicious, anti-Semitic organization that openly proclaims its goal to murder every Jew on earth.[120]
2. The reality, unfortunately, is that radical Islamist groupings are not interested in achieving peaceful coexistence with Israel, but are seeking the eradication of Israel.[121]
3. How long must a sovereign country withstand hundreds of rocket attacks and incursions across international borders by a movement that captures Israeli soldiers and then demands a hostage swap as it was a business deal?[122]

Lebanon: A Place of Suffering and a Symbol of Hope. Lebanon was referred to simultaneously as a place of beauty and pain, for instance, "their charming but cursed little acre,"[123] "death visits beautiful Beirut again."[124] Destruction as a recurring reality was made evident in references to her people has having "experienced war before and dread its ghosts."[125] The people of Lebanon are portrayed as the victims of war: the "poor people . . . caught in the crossfire."[126] As the "civilians paying [a] disproportionate price,"[127] they are "trapped in the middle,"[128] and "wedged between powers who have little interest in their wellbeing.[129]

Their vulnerable and helpless state is amplified alongside the apathetic stance of the international community in phrases such as "desperate plea . . . for international help,"[130] "whose suffering we almost always ignore,"[131] and the "international community stand[ing] by."[132] Despite her powerlessness, Lebanon was also represented as the "symbol of hope, a phoenix state risen from the ashes of a terrible civil war."[133] Metaphorically, this denotes transformation, resilience, strength, and triumph against suffering. The vulnerability and destruction that contrasts with Lebanon's "irrepressible spirit,"[134] and her attitude "rooted in optimism"[135] paints a poignant illustration.

As revealed here, the lexical choice of words produce either a favorable or unfavorable view of the specific participants in the war. Labelling as a categorizing function, therefore, informs an ideological decision.[136] Categorical functions that reinforces an "us" and "them" divide, or alternatively a distinction between "good" and "evil," legitimate what Wenden has termed a militaristic ideology.[137] Through drawing upon the discourse

of the oppressor/oppressed, colonizer/colonized, pro-Hezobollah news texts evoked a moral justificatory discourse legitimizing Hezbollah's military action as suggested by the phrase "the anger of the helpless."[138] The recourse to violence is legitimated on grounds that "wherever there is injustice there is resistance."[139] This is further exemplified by the rhetorical statement: "How much longer will blood flow so that force can justify what law denies?"[140] Similarly, pro-Israel texts evoked the "fight to defend" discourse to justify their attacks on Hezbollah on the people of Lebanon:

> Certainly the Israelis are well within their rights to hold Beirut accountable for Hezbollah's provocative presence on their northern border which has effectively become Iran's front line in a country it disparagingly describes as the "Zionist entity."[141]

Characterization of the Conflict

A Religious War. The performative verbs working alongside powerful metaphors functioned to portray a particular side as vulnerable and weak—eliciting dual emotions of sympathy on the one hand, or outrage on the other. The depiction of embattled Lebanon as a "fiery holocaust,"[142] a "conflagration,"[143] "chaos," and "hell . . . broken loose"[144] underscored the extent of "destruction and suffering,"[145] alongside other descriptive phrases, such as "hellish scenes"[146] and "canyons of devastation."[147] Other metaphors depicted the Middle East region as tumultuous—for instance, as "the boiling cauldron that makes up this fiery region of the world."[148]

The "hell/pandemonium" metaphor, moreover, carried a moral undertone which contextualized the war as a religious one. Religious binaries, such as the "righteous" and the "sinner" were frequent. "The city of the damned,"[149] for instance, was assigned to Beirut, the Lebanese city regarded as the "Hezbollah stronghold"[150] evoking notions of eternal punishment for evil doing. Israel was also positioned as the agent, the inflictor of punishment: "G-d promises that he will come down and judge your country and other nations that have judged the Jewish people"[151] and "Israel 'opens gates of hell and madness.'"[152] Depending on the stance adopted, however, the role of punisher and punished was reversed, as one text revealed:

> Muhammad draws on his computer: his latest drawing is of a Hizbullah fighter. Next to the fighter is a star of David stabbed with a dagger—blood drips down into a vat full of blood marked "Hell."[153]

The "hell/pandemonium" metaphor, served as a powerful appeal to the imposing authority of a religious order. As shown with lexical choices, moreover, they may also serve to justify a particular ideology (e.g. war is to right a wrong, or eliminate evil). By evoking a religious ideology, war becomes revisioned as sacred responsibility, as a moral duty toward one's God—rather than an act of destruction, as illustrated by the pro-Israel and pro-Hezbollah statements below, each justifying its own cause:

1. The primary, almost sacred duty of an Israeli prime minister is to defend the Jewish people by any means at his disposal, and no prime minister can tolerate the constant terrorization of Israel's northern population.[154]
2. I tell her that she is Ummul Baneen, a woman in Shia history who gave her four sons to fight alongside the grandson of the prophet, Husayn, in Karbala. Her eyes filled with tears and her face full of pride. "You have honoured me and I thank you," she said, smiling. I leave wondering who is under siege.[155]

In the same way that war draws in allies on each side, as Althusser suggested,[156] the discourse calls out to us, and draws us in as "subjects." As subjects in a discourse, we are to take on a certain role, whether as supporter of Israel or Hezbollah—as peace activists, human-rights activists, or protesters. This may be likened to Bush's propagandistic statement frequently aired prior to United States' invasion of Afghanistan: "You are either with us or against us."[157] Through what Fairclough calls "intertextuality," news texts provoke non-neutral responses in its audience.[158]

Intertextuality

Intertextual analysis "aims to unravel the various genres and discourses . . . which are articulated together in the text."[159] Through the tracing of genres and discourses in the text, the presence of multiple voices through colloquialisms, conversation, political rhetoric, narratives, or poetry may be located.[160] Intertextuality was evident in the manner in which the war discourse drew in readers as subjects. Gwyne Dyer[161] and others,[162] for instance, hearken back to history and Israel's previous occupation of Lebanon:

> Israeli troops were there for eighteen years after Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, and they killed several thousand people before they finally withdrew. Now they're back, for God knows how long.

Within the broader context, the Arab-Israeli conflict is foregrounded and serves as an historical narrative for the hostilities in Lebanon. Evoking the voice of Leila Khaled, the embodiment of "Palestinian militancy,"[163] the political link between the attacks on Lebanon and the larger Palestinian struggle was emphasized: "We are attacked everywhere. Israel is attacking Lebanon, attacking Palestine." Pro-Hezbollah texts repeatedly drew upon the sufferings of the Palestinian and Arab people who were seen as "the main victims of the creation of Israel."[164]

Alternatively, pro-Israel news articles utilized the same textual strategy to invert the historical narrative and overturn its assumptions:

> Why is the truth of the causes of Palestinian refugee tragedy never explained, and readers are left with the inference that these refugees were created by Israel as opposed to Arab aggression? The Palestinian refugee problems were caused by unprovoked attacks on a tiny nation of Israel by Arab neighbors in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1971 in their openly stated attempts to "drive the Jews into the sea."[165]

Newspaper texts' intertextual references to the historical narrative of apartheid drew comparative points between Lebanon and South Africa as "an ancient site of implacable identity clashes turned rainbow nation."[166] Such allusions to South Africa's history of suffering during apartheid functioned to bring the Middle-East conflict closer to home, and to evoke emotions of sympathy, solidarity, pain, and injustice. News texts drew upon the voices of ordinary Lebanese people, who are brought in as newsmakers:

1. The struggle of the South African people gave us strength to bear the suffering of the Israeli occupation.[167]
2. Lebanon, like South Africa, was also a rainbow nation, "but so far not all our colours fit together."[168]

More than merely eliciting sympathy, the apartheid narrative used in Pro-Hezbollah texts also functioned to draw South Africans into the Lebanese struggle by encouraging a call to action, whether through political action or "protest,"[169] or "donating money or medical supplies."[170] Through the use of moral metaphors, these texts call upon South Africans to exercise their "principled judgment," for example, "South Africa should urge the government to take a principled position in line with its moral standing in the world."[171] The voices of key figures like the chairperson of the Media

Review Network, the then Minister of Intelligence, and the Deputy Foreign Affairs respectively, are incorporated to give urgency to action:

1. South Africa has the moral and social responsibility to respond to the cries of the Palestinians and the Lebanese by immediately suspending diplomatic ties with Israel.[172]
2. Ronnie Kasrals has *urged* South Africans to boycott Israeli products.[173]
3. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad said Israel's "unprecedented" and "disproportionate" assault on Lebanon and Palestine were threatening to provoke a regional war.[174]

The media representation of discourses held by prominent figures is an illustration of intertextuality.[175] Through this strategy, these voices are included in the text to frame the story and imbue it with an emotional flavor. Voices of authority, taken as trustworthy and credible, were given prominence. However, as indicated, the voices of the oppressed and disempowered were also captured to highlight their plight. In texts condemning Israeli action, the prominent voices of politicians, academics, and the like were incorporated, often invoking humanitarian, human rights, and legal discourses—as captured in the statement, "Oxford-based academic Ahmad Khalidi has termed it 'the right to resist.'"[176] As Puleng Thetela notes, attributive qualities are assigned to actions, such that one's own group is favorably represented, while those of the enemy are criticized or cast as unfavorable.[177] Although similar to the effect created by performative verbs, the actions are given greater weight and sanction when spoken by a leader or public figure. Through a personalization process, feelings of identification, empathy, or condemnation are evoked in the reader. The analysis of the corpus of news texts revealed that personalization was used frequently to create rival groups through the process of "Othering" that, effects an ideological polarisation between "us" and "them,"[178] for example: "Israel would not negotiate with terrorists."[179] Below are examples of speech delivered by prominent figures who identify the Other as enemy and invoke the same discourses to justify their own cause for war.

Crime and Punishment:

1. "The worse their crimes, the quicker they will fall," added Ahmadinjejad [Iranian President, identified as a Hezbollah ally], who has already called for the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map."[180]

2. Olmert [Israeli Prime Minister] . . . *vowed* that "Israel is determined to carry on this fight against Hezbollah." He said his government "will not hesitate to take severe measures against those who are aiming thousands of rockets . . . against innocent civilians for the sole purpose of killing them.[181]

Violent Resistance:

1. Leila Khalid *warned* that Israel would meet opposition and resistance: "For every action, there is reaction."[182]
2. Bush *defended* Israel's attacks on targets in Lebanon: "Israel has the right to defend herself."[183]

Both discourses are seen to support a militarist ideology which was legitimated on grounds of retribution, justice, or defense.[184] Firmer support for such an ideology is drawn when proclaimed through high profile figures—such as the Iranian president, who has been very critical of Israel; the Israeli Prime Minister; Leila Khalid, known as the "first woman to hijack an aircraft" to direct global attention toward the plight of Palestinian refugees[185]; and George W. Bush, known for his "axis of evil-war on terror" propaganda.[186] Attention, moreover, is also directed to the choice of particular speech verbs which serve an evaluative function.[187] In Olmert's quoted speech, the union of both word and act ("vowed") is apparent, and since uttered by one in position of power, has power to elicit action and response. Once again, the "struggle for the power of representation"[188] is vividly depicted, as each side draws upon similar discourses to defend their own ideologies.

Moreover, as Thetela points out, the use of direct quotes functions not only to promulgate a statement as truth or fact[189]; in certain instances, direct speech was aimed at showing disengagement from a particular viewpoint.[190] Conveyed through sarcastic undertones, such a strategy was employed frequently in news texts critical of the terrorism rhetoric:

1. Here [center of Beirut], indeed, was the headquarters of Hezbollah, another of those "centers of world terror," which the West keeps discovering in Muslim lands.[191]
2. Then we'll hear all over again that we are fighting evil, that "they" hate our values, and then, of course, we'll be told that this is all part of the "war on terror." And then, perhaps we'll remember what George

> Bush senior said after Hezbollah's allies suicide-bombed the Marines in 1982—that American policy would not be swayed by a bunch of "insidious terrorist cowards." And we all know what happened then. Or have we forgotten?[192]

The preceding analysis is part of our attempt to illustrate how the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war was represented in South African newspaper texts as a contest over meaning, or what Michael Shapiro has referred to as the "politics of representation."[193] Whereas pro-Israel texts, embodying hegemonic discourse and dominance, reflected dual ideologies of "sovereignty and right of existence" and "defense against terror," texts favoring Hezbollah, were informed by opposing ideologies of "religious resistance" and "Israel as an apartheid state." Significantly, the ideologies propounded by both sides respectively provided the impetus, legitimation, and justification for militarism.[194] In effect, they served to support a broader overarching ideology of violence. Violence was presented as legitimate in situations of self-defense or for purposes of maintaining supposed sovereignty. Both Israeli and Hezbollah representatives and supporters appealed to the same rights discourses to legitimate actions of aggression and defense respectively. Thus, on the level of text, a "discursive war" was at play as the ideologies of one side of the conflict aimed to neutralize, subvert, or overthrow the ideologies promulgated by the opposing side.

These discursive wars took on particular relevance in the local South African context. Although its physical enactment took place on foreign land quite removed from the African continent, they took on a particular significance on the level of identity. Through attention to intertextual references, pro-Hezbollah texts revealed the scope of identification to lie in the media drawing a parallel between the history of Hezbollah's struggle against Israeli occupation and the history of South Africa's struggle against apartheid. Moreover, the war between the two combatants was also represented as a conflict between two military powers, the "Zionists"[195] and "Muslim guerrillas,"[196] and two world divisions, the "Arab world" and the "West."[197] However, it is when the texts touched upon the more personal and fundamental aspects of our identities (i.e., ethnic, religious, national, etc.) they then generated and fueled the powerful feelings of anger, hatred, and fear within us, the "subjects" who are also participants in the "discursive war." Thus, the media portrayal of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict as a battle between ethnicities, the "Arabs and the Jews,"[198] and religious ideologies, "Judaism" and "Islam," draws upon readers' support or parti-

sanship for a particular side. The headline: "Jews, Muslims take sides,"[199] characterizing the polarized split between two local Muslim and Jewish communities in their respective protest marches, illustrates the power of the text or discourse to mobilize action.[200] In this respect, what is expressed as a human rights struggle in some instances[201] is represented as a clash between ethnicity and culture in others.

Implications: Discursive Intervention and Peace Journalism

Our analysis raises questions about how the media may advance a social-justice perspective to peace promotion and how the politically and economically dominated struggling for self-determination and liberation obtain representation in the media. Our analyses raise questions about how the media may provide representational space to the dominant—that is, hegemonic discourses and cultures of militarism—without reproducing power imbalances. Such questions underlie endeavors to construct peace as a compelling narrative within contexts characterized by national biases in news media, polarized audience responses, and vested political, state, and economic interests that are fostered as dominant discourses by media corporations reliant on sponsorship and funding.[202]

Recognizing such questions, we may look to Wenden's notion of "discourse intervention" that may offer peace activists a means toward cultivating a culture of social and ecological peace.[203] Discourse intervention involves both the analysis of how discourse and in particular language contributes to, provokes, or aggravates conflict and the enablement of "informed empathy" through processes of empathic listening and perspective taking.[204] Grace Feuerverger argues that language awareness plays a role in disrupting the dominant-subordinate or oppressor-oppressed structures in our society, while introducing an alternative emancipatory discourse of conflict resolution and peacemaking.[205] Discourse intervention frames language as a tool of understanding, as an instrument of asserting one's own identity without denigrating the other, and as a means for effective communication.[206] In this vein, Jake Lynch advocates for a peace discourse in the media through adherence to "practical rules." For instance, news may be framed from peace perspectives and be solution-oriented—as opposed to war/violence, propaganda, elite, and victory-oriented perspectives.[207] As a form of knowledge production, journalistic devices may be tailored toward *thematic* reporting—revealing hidden ideologies, effects and origins

of events as opposed to the concrete depiction of events as characteristic of *episodic* reporting. While the latter supports a hegemonic function of news media, the former exercises the agency function of the media.[208] This latter agency function may be strengthened through: (1) the promotion of *structural pluralism* that enables the creation of alternative media institutions buttressed by civil society, rather than state or corporate power; and (2) facilitation of *content pluralism* that challenges "ethnocentric narratives" and lends multiple perspectives and voices to the reporting of conflicts.[209] In peace journalism, the focus is thus directed to giving voice to all parties through empathic standpoints, on exposing untruths, on people as peacemakers, and on resolution, reconstruction, and reconciliation. This may be akin to acknowledging the Other which, to quote Feureverger "opens up the possibility of collaboration instead of competition and hostility, and in so doing . . . trespasses against hegemonic discourses and institutions and thereby creates transformative inter-group relations and inter-personal dialogues."[210]

Conclusion

Our article, focused on the examination of selected South African newspaper reports on the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, supports the view that the media in the form of war journalism in particular are sites of discursive wars and contests for representation. The selected newspaper reports deployed textual strategies—framing modes that placed the accent on the emotional, moral, and political dimensions of the conflict—and hidden ideologies in order to characterize the Israel-Hezbollah war and the protagonist in specific ways intended to draw in the readership as subjects of discourse. At the level of text, the discursive war was enacted through characterizations and intertextual and framing devices to legitimize the choice of violence in the conflict and subvert, neutralize, or debunk the ideologies and claims of the Other. Pro-Israeli articles, continuing Orientalist and Islamaphobic traditions, were framed by ideologies that defined Israeli state and military aggression as the "fight against terror" and a "defense of the right to exist." Pro-Hezbollah news reports, embodying a challenge to Islamaphobic tendencies in the media were informed by ideologies that construct Israel as an "apartheid state" and violence as a "right to resistance." So, in this respect, even though the discursive war had the effect of polarizing influential groups of South African social actors along ideological lines, sections of the print media enabled multiple and conflicting ideologies—struggling for representation —to coexist. Since the spaces for the coexistence of mul-

tiple and conflicting voices are likely to be tempered and constrained by the media's hegemonic and consent creation functions, we ask by way of closing whether such spaces are receptive and to what extent to Wenden's "discourse intervention"—offering strategies to construct peace and peace promotion as compelling narratives in the media. This may be a subject for further exploration.

Endnotes

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