

‘Blood is boiling’ in Gaza: Emotion Metaphors in the *New York Times*’ Coverage of the Second Palestinian *Intifada*

M. Mosheer Amer

Department of English, Islamic University of Gaza

Abstract

This paper investigates the most prevalent metaphors used by the *New York Times* in constructing the emotions of news actors during the second Palestinian *Intifada*. Drawing on a systematic sampling of news texts published during the newspaper’s coverage of the *Intifada*, I first show that Lakoff’s (1987) ANGER IS HEAT metaphor is primarily used in characterizing emotionally-driven responses of Palestinian and Arab peoples. On the other hand, an examination of the themes, metaphors and images associated with Israeli society shows a rather favourable representation which evokes scripts of familial and social cohesion. At the centre of this treatment is the metaphorical construction of Israel as an in-group entity which is being encroached upon by an amplified outside threat primarily associated with the Palestinians. The selective use of metaphors and their evoked conceptual and emotional associations highlight the role metaphors serve as potent linguistic devices used to legitimate or delegitimize particular social actions and ultimately contribute to the construction of an ideological version of social reality.

KEY WORDS: emotion metaphors, anger, Palestinian Intifada, (de)legitimation, NYT

Introduction

This paper focuses on the metaphors that news writers of the *New York Times* (hereafter NYT) predominantly draw upon in conceptualizing the emotions of news actors during the second Palestinian *Intifada*. My analysis shows a marked contrast in the metaphorical representation of Palestinian and Arab peoples’ actions on the one hand, and the construction of Israeli society, on the other. I first examine the emotion concept of *anger* and how it is realized via conventionalized linguistic expressions which serve to delegitimize the emotions and political actions of Palestinian and Arab peoples. Conversely, news writers

evidently construct Israeli society in a favourable light through a combination of related metaphors and themes which invoke scripts of familial and social cohesion, i.e. Israel is portrayed as an in-group entity which is encroached upon by an outside threat which is characteristically associated with the Palestinians. At the heart of this analysis is my interest in identifying the evaluations these metaphors evoke of participants and actions, and how these evaluations invite the reader to conceptualize “a particular model of the social and the moral order – a model of what is normal and aberrant, beneficial and harmful, praiseworthy and blameworthy, and so on.” (White, 2006; 38) In this way, I show that by selecting particular metaphorical processes and consequently assigning positive and negative values to particular participants and actions, news writers contribute to the appropriation of a preferred version of reality which would likely play a role in influencing how the readers of the NYT understand both social groups and their political actions.

Emotion Metaphors: A cognitive linguistic perspective

Interest in metaphor from a cognitive linguistic perspective has burgeoned since the groundbreaking work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Cognitive linguists see metaphor not simply as a decorative feature of literary language, but as an integral component of the human conceptual system and how we understand aspects of the world in which we live (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002; Kovecses, 2002, 2005; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff and Kovecses, 1987; van Teeffelen, 1994). Lakoff and Johnson point out that our human conceptual system is “metaphorically structured and defined” (1980: 6), and that metaphor contributes fundamentally to the construction of social reality. Conceptual metaphors can be seen as mappings from a source domain (for example, fire) onto a target domain or experience (for example, war) ,which facilitate the understanding of complex or ill-understood domains and concepts by constructing them in terms of experientially concrete or familiar ones.

Metaphors structure not only our understanding of aspects of the social world, but are also instrumental in how we

conceptualize our emotions. In fact, correlations between metaphor and emotion concepts from a cognitive linguistic perspective have been demonstrated in studies such as Kovecses (1990), Lakoff and Kovecses (1987), Lakoff, (1987), and Kovecses (2002; 2005). Central to these studies is the argument that emotion concepts are best defined and understood in terms of prototypical cognitive models which characterize more or less our cultural (or folk) understanding of emotion. By examining the use of conventionalized language mainly of metaphors, metonymies and inherent concepts to describe emotions, we are in a better position to obtain “certain prototypical cognitive models associated with particular emotions and with the abstract category of emotion” (Kovecses, 1990).

A wealth of critical discourse analytic research has examined the use and functions of emotion metaphors in political, public and media discourses on socio-ethnic and political groups and events (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2006; Drury, 2002; Lee, 1992; Sykes, 1985; van Teeffelen, 1994). Perhaps the common thread in many of these studies is that emotion metaphors are not only used in the ideological mediation of a particular version of the social world, but also in the *legitimation* or *delegitimation* of social actors and their respective actions along the lines of positive in-group representation and negative out-group representation.

Lee (1992:93) examines the perspective of white reporters on the political actions of the people of the African township of Soweto in Zimbabwe during clashes with the police. Lee points out that their action are conceptualized as “some kind of natural force, specifically here as a volcano which had been ‘simmering’ with unrest and then ‘erupted’”. One effect of this metaphorical process of objectifying the emotions of the Sowetans in terms of a natural force and a place is likely to distance the reader from the participants in this ethnic event whereby the emotions of and decisions made by the African demonstrators are excluded from the process of interpretation, i.e. “the situation is seen as resulting from some kind of inevitable set of natural laws rather than from human feelings and decisions” (p. 93).

Similarly, Drury (2002) examines the use of a pathologizing discourse in newspaper constructions of anti-pedophile crowd protests in Britain. He identifies a set of negative themes, vocabulary, and metaphors which seem to delegitimize crowd action by evoking notions of irrationality, uncontrolled emotionality, and pathological behavior. He points to the use of metaphors of *fire* which negatively construct the crowd as a natural, inanimate force, thereby reinforcing their lack of self-control and their susceptibility to outside manipulation. One can make the point that a semantic strategy of metaphorizing human emotions and experience in terms of inanimate forces, e.g. fire, volcanoes and floodwater, seems to be at work in dominant discourses on social groups belonging to the 'other' camp.

Orientalist Tropes: Rage, violence and irrationality

Themes, images and tropes of rage, irrationality, atavism and violence have long dominated Western discourses on the Muslim Arab Orient (Said, 1978, 1997; Karim, 2003; Shaheen, 1997, van Teeffelen, 1994). The most influential study of these discourses is Said's (1978) *Orientalism* which examines the reservoirs of images, motifs, themes and vocabularies which are used in dominant Western discourses to talk about and regulate knowledge about the Arab and Muslim Orient. Said points to a binary opposition between the Orient and the West in which the former is recurrently characterized as static, uniform, irrational, and aberrant, and the West which is presented as rational, normal, humane and developed (see pp. 40 and 300-1). These negative depictions also circulate in Western media representations of the Arabs:

In newsreels or news-photos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures. (p. 287)

Similarly, Karim (2003:158) examines Northern media constructions of Islam as the primary post-Cold War 'Other'. He illustrates that there is primacy in the North to core images of

Muslims as “a people generally prone to fanatical impulses” and “as driven by an irrational hatred as opposed to the scientific rationality that is the mark of modern Northern civilization.” For instance, during the first Gulf War, portrayals of supporters of Saddam essentially emphasized the “perceived lack of rationality and logic among those who supported the Iraqi leader – this was blamed on Islam and the Arab character” (p. 125). Such dichotomous constructions of Southerners as essentially controlled by emotion as opposed to the Northerners who apply logic to deal with difficult situations are symptomatic of traditional Orientalist narratives.

Another manifestation of negative constructions of the Arab Palestinian is discussed in van Teeffelen’s (1994) study of the metaphors used in western bestselling literature in the portrayal of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He holds that dominant metaphors about the Arabs emphasized images of threat, atavism, violence, irrationality and sexuality. Van Teeffelen points out that metaphorical references to heat, explosion and pressure in a container are used in framing Arab action as uncontrollable anger which is explained in reference to environmental conditions, “the Arabs are said to be amenable to sudden emotional outbursts due to their historical inability to overcome natural (desert-like, dry) conditions.” (p. 392) Sea, fire, and animal metaphors are also used to suggest an amplified Palestinian boundary threat to Israeli society.

Historical Background

Here it is necessary to situate the reader into the historical and political context of the second Palestinian Intifada. This account needs to go well beyond the event which triggered the violence to include the major events which have shaped and defined this decades-long conflict, though a thorough and nuanced account of this complex and multi-layered conflict goes beyond the scope and aims of this paper. Therefore, I will confine my contextualization of this violence to the major events which I believe had been turning points in the historical trajectory of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The most momentous event in this conflict is perhaps the War of 1948 between Israel on one side and the regular armies

of neighbouring Arab countries and the Palestinians on the other. A direct consequence of this War was that the State of Israel was proclaimed on 78 per cent of historic Palestine and the subsequent disintegration of Palestinian civil society and the expulsion and flight of nearly half of the Palestinian population – most accounts estimate about 700,000 people, from their cities, towns, and villages (Khalidi, 2001; Morris, 2001). In June 1967, Israel conquered and occupied the remaining 22 per cent of Palestine which constitute the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the eastern part of Jerusalem, and also captured parts of Egypt and Syria. The Palestinians inside the occupied territories had remained largely quiescent. After 20 years of growing widespread discontent with the Israeli occupation, the Palestinians inside the occupied territories eventually took to the streets in 1987 in a largely unarmed, popular uprising which lasted for six years and came to be known as the first Palestinian *Intifada*.

Efforts for reaching a peaceful settlement for the Middle East conflict culminated on 13 September 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Agreement on the White House lawn between the Palestinian leader Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. The understanding guiding the Oslo Accords was a five-year interim period during which a number of reciprocal steps would be implemented which would eventually lead to ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories which Israeli occupied following the 1967 War (Malley and Agha, 2001; Reinhart, 2002; Hirst, 2003). The interim period was fraught with obstacles and little progress was made to advance peace in the region.

The decisive moment came when the second Palestinian *Intifada* broke out on 29 September 2000 when then-leader of Israeli right-wing party Ariel Sharon escorted by 2,000 soldiers staged a “right-of-ownership walk-about at the Temple Mount-which is also the site of the mosques of al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock, Islam’s third most holy place” (Hirst, 2003: 25-26). The provocative march triggered Palestinian protests on the mosque’s site as well as other protests in the Palestinian territories and in Arab towns inside Israel proper. Mass street

protests first characterized the early weeks of clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli military forces. Then the level of violence grew more deadly with Palestinian bombing attacks against Israeli military and civilians on the one hand, and Israeli military attacks and incursions into Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza. During the Intifada, especially the first few months of the Intifada and in April 2002, popular demonstrations in the Arab world and across the world were held to protest Israeli army actions against the Palestinians.

Methodology

The present analysis is part of a study that critically investigates the coverage by the NYT of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using a *critical discourse analysis (CDA)* framework (c.f. Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The present analysis explores the role of metaphor as a linguistic tool in political (de)legitimation of political actors and actions and is limited to metaphorical language used to characterize emotionally-driven actions of news actors. The aims can be summarized in the following questions:

- 1. What are the predominant metaphors drawn upon in representing the emotions of political actors in the NYT's coverage of the Palestinian *Intifada*?**
- 2. To what extent do these metaphors contribute to the legitimation or delegitimation of political actors and actions?**

For purposes of analysis, a four-month sampling of news reports, editorials and op-eds published during the first three years of the second Palestinian *Intifada* were selected; these four months are October 2000, August 2001, April 2002, and October 2003. News texts were available on the web-based source of LexisNexis and also on microforms in an Australian university library. The texts compiled formed a total of 293 news texts including 25 editorials, 28 op-eds by columnists and 214 news reports. An online corpus of all news texts was formed with a total word count of 281,330 words.

The analysis was conducted in two phases: in the first

phase, I conducted a lexical analysis of emotion metaphors by searching in the online text corpus for evidence of metaphors used in representing the emotions of Palestinian, Arab and Israeli political actors. This initial lexical analysis was based on the literature reviewed in sections 2 and 3 above. Lexical units searched for electronically included words such as 'anger', 'wrath', 'rage', 'wave', 'flood', 'tide', 'fire', 'flame', 'volcano', 'eruption', and 'explosion'.

The initial online search was followed by a careful reading of all texts since the online search does not include all possible instances of metaphorical language in the corpus and also given that some of these words searched for electronically were used non-metaphorically. Take, for example, the word "fire" which was used both literally and metaphorically respectively as in '*2 Hour Gun Battle in West Bank Strains the Cease-Fire*' (Headline, October 20, 2000), and '*Dousing the Mideast Fire*' (Headline, October 10, 2000). Similarly, the word "explosion" was frequently used metaphorically to characterize violence, as in '*this unrestrained explosion of Palestinian-Israeli violence has taught the Bush team something as well*' (Thomas Friedman, April 17, 2002), or '*But the explosive street fighting raged on throughout the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Arab towns within Israel*' (New Report, October 3, 2000).

Therefore, a manual search of the whole corpus was necessary in order to arrive at any additional source domains used to characterize emotions. Linguistic features such as idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, prepositions and word classes were also added to the selected data if they exhibited instances of metaphorical language.

In the second phase, selected items or phrases from both online and manual searches were grouped together based on which items were associated with which actors. Then a further coding of lexical units was conducted by first establishing the basic meaning of the lexical unit and its contextual meaning while taking into account what comes before and after this lexical unit¹. A word or phrase was identified as metaphorically used when, strictly speaking, it can be understood beyond its

literal meaning in the context of what is being said. As suggested by the PRAGGLEJAZ Group (2007: 25), in order to supplement the researcher's individual intuitions about the contextual and basic meanings of lexical units, the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* was used as an external source to further establish the basic meanings of words. A second coder who was a trained linguist was requested to follow similar procedures in reading and coding all texts for metaphorical language to avoid biased or inaccurate sampling of materials. There were a few cases of disagreement between the researcher and the second coder and these were resolved following discussion.

Each instance was assigned a source domain and a target domain without any attempt on the researcher to force predetermined source domains on the data, but to let the metaphorical patterns emerge freely. Each metaphorical token was then inputted together with other pertinent information such as text type, date, co-text and other contextual information. Here it is important to bear in mind that no attempt was done to quantify metaphorical language in relation to the whole corpus since "the boundaries between the literal and the metaphorical are rather fuzzy," and therefore any attempt at quantification is a necessarily inexact undertaking (El Refaie, 2001: 357). More importantly, providing a specific number of metaphorical instances is not in itself significant for the analysis in this paper. Instead, the researcher is more interested in dominant metaphorical characterizations or themes which are recurrently associated with emotions.

Metaphors of anger: hot fluid, fire, insanity, and natural force

The present analysis shows that a tapestry of related ontological metaphors denoting anger are drawn upon to characterize the political actions of Palestinian and Arab masses. These expressions are mapped from various source domains such as fire, hot fluid, water, insanity and natural force. Lakoff (1987) refers to such metaphors as basic-level metaphors linked directly to experience, rich in information, and rich in conventional mental imagery. The general conceptual metaphor *anger is heat*

is central to metaphorical language used to describe emotions.

Lakoff (1987), Lakoff and Kovecses (1987), and Kovecses (1990) suggest a cultural model of the physiological effects of anger. They propose that the physiological effects of anger metonymically presuppose the presence of anger, e.g. an increase in body heat and internal pressure, agitation, and interference with normal functioning are physical symptoms which stand for anger emotion. Two related conceptual metaphors of the *anger is heat* metaphor are proposed in this model: 1)- the central metaphor *anger is a hot fluid in a container* is used when heat is applied to fluids and the body metaphorically stands for a container for the emotions, and 2)- when heat is applied to solids we get the metaphor *anger is a fire*. The analysis shows that *anger is a hot fluid in a container* metaphor predominates the metaphorical formulation of Palestinian and Arab emotions and seems to indicate the a negative evaluation of Palestinian and Arab emotions and actions.

Anger is a hot fluid in a container

In talking about the *Intifada*, news writers assign more weight to the presupposition that intense angry behaviour and emotions dominate Palestinian and Arab political action. This is clearly evident in a plethora of metaphorical expressions which are derived from the central metaphor *anger is a hot fluid in a container*. The underlined conventionalized expressions in the following extracts illustrate this:

- 1- **Blood Is Boiling** in West Bank and Gaza (headline NR, Oct. 18, 2000)
- 2- The two leaders arrived in defiant moods. Mr. Arafat, **whose people are at a boiling point** over the visit last Thursday of the right-wing Israeli opposition leader, Ariel Sharon, to the Muslim holy sites atop the Old City of Jerusalem.
(NR, Oct. 5, 2000)
- 3- But **this street** continued to **erupt**, albeit **less intensely**, and the oral cease-fire is considered tenuous, with increased violence predicted for Friday. (NR, Oct. 6, 2000).

Expressions such as “blood is boiling”, “at a boiling point”, and “this street continued to erupt” invite the reader to conceptualize an image of intense levels of anger associated

with the Palestinians. What is noteworthy about these expressions is the impersonalized representation of emotions in terms of a 'hot liquid' which leaves the impression that this anger is bursting out and getting out of control. Note also that in extract 3 the phrase "this street" stands metonymically for the Palestinian people. The effect of these metaphorical selections is likely to distance the readers from relating emotionally to the participants and events in question by means of objectifying the human feelings and experience of the participants involved in the actions reported, i.e. "the situation is seen as resulting from some kind of inevitable set of natural laws rather than from human feelings and decisions" (Lee, 1992:93).

Lakoff (1987) posits that as part of our conceptual knowledge of the behaviour of hot fluids in containers, certain metaphorical entailments can be carried over from the source domain of hot fluids behaviour onto the target domain of anger. In group (A) below, points 4-8 are some of the main metaphorical entailments which can be derived from this central metaphor (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff and Kovecses, 1987; Kovecses, 1990).

Group (A)

- 1- When the intensity of anger increases, the hot fluid (anger) rises
- 2- When anger rises past a certain limit, the container explodes (the person loses control)
- 3- An explosion (loss of control) is damaging to the container (the angry person) and dangerous to bystanders.
- 4- An explosion may be prevented by the application of sufficient force and energy to keep the fluid in (to keep anger under control).
- 5- It is sometimes possible to control the release of hot fluid (anger) for destructive or constructive purposes.

What is striking about these metaphorical carryovers of the emotion concept of anger is that news writers also use them in conceptualizing Palestinian action. I matched the number of each metaphorical entailment in group (A) with its corresponding number from the data in group (B) below:

Group (B)

- 1- With diplomacy at a standstill and **anger over** the Israeli campaign **rising** across the region, oil prices hit a six-month high on fears that the turmoil could spread. (NR, April 3, 2002)
- 2- This **explosion of violence** would be totally understandable if the Palestinians had no alternative [...] Mourn the dead and pray that after this **explosion of hatred** is over, the parties will find a way to live apart. (op-ed, Friedman, Oct. 13, 2000)
- 3- **The volcanic rage** on both sides – intensified by the live TV coverage from the West Bank and the ability of the Internet to transmit people's immediate reactions – is terrifying, and **it is spilling, like lava, out of** the Middle East **into** Europe and beyond. (op-ed, Friedman, April 7, 2002).
- 4- A huge Israeli security cordon prevented thousands of Palestinians from attending Friday Prayer services at the ancient mosques inside the Old City today, a move that further **angered** Muslims here but kept the embattled holy site from **exploding anew into violent confrontation**. (NR4, Oct 14, 2000)
- 5- But this war is also a revolt of Palestinian **youth** against the corrupt tyranny of Yasir **Arafat, who has turned their wrath** on Israel to deflect it from himself. (op-ed, Friedman, Oct. 31, 2000)

What can be seen in these examples are various applications of hot fluid behaviour onto Palestinian anger, i.e. Palestinian anger rises, explodes, spills over to other regions and is negatively manipulated and channelled. Central to this metaphorical representation is the image-schematic metaphor of *a container*. While in Lakoff's (1987) folk model the human body is metaphorized as a container of anger emotion, in these extracts the occupied Palestinian territories, West Bank and Gaza, are metaphorized as the container for the emotion of anger. Thus, anger in this container rises and builds up as in extract 4 and intense anger causes an explosion as stated in extract 5. There is also expressed fear of spillage of this anger onto other containers as extract 6 illustrates, while Israeli army action in extract 7 are conceptualized as the force used to keep a lid onto angry emotion and prevent it from bursting out. Criticisms of Arafat for refusing to control violence are voiced where the Palestinians are portrayed as a passive, angry population manipulated and controlled by their leader as extract 8 illustrates (see also section 6.3.2 below).

Anger is insanity

The negative conceptualization of Palestinian action as intense angry emotion entails drawing on another related metaphorical process which describes Palestinian action as insane, irrational and abnormal behaviour. Kovecses (1990:59) refers to this as *anger is insanity* metaphor. He suggests that this metaphor is essentially based on the notion that agitation is part of the American folk theory of insanity in that “people who are insane are unduly agitated – they go wild, start raving, flail their arms, foam at the mouth, and so on.” These physical symptoms are metonymies for insane, irrational behaviour which impairs rational judgement and thinking. Evidence for this in the data can be observed in references to Palestinian violence as an overly frantic, uncontrollable behaviour that is motivated by feelings of vengeance and rage at Israel rather than the result of calculated, rational reasoning and logic. Let us trace the lexical and syntactic choices the reporter in the following extract makes which negatively evaluate the action of Palestinian protesters.

The streets in the center of the city **erupted** at nightfall when thousands of youths, calling on the militant **Islamic** group Hamas to avenge the attacks, **flooded down** the main avenue. Faces were **contorted with rage** as the crowd, **waving** green **Islamic** banners, **pushed, shoved, spat and shouted**. (NR2, Oct. 13, 2000)

Note that the reporter uses negatively charged verbs such as “shoved”, “spat”, “shouted”, and “contorted”, which can metonymically stand for irrational, aggressive, and highly frenzied behaviour. Thus, an image of the Palestinian crowd is constructed which is essentially derived from domains of psychopathy and abnormal activity. Note also the use of ‘natural force’ metaphors in the metaphorical verbs “erupted” and “flooded” which imply not only that the crowd is in massive numbers but also uncontrollable and menacing (see more on natural force metaphors in the following section). Furthermore, a script of Islamic violence, threat, and religious fervour is intertextually drawn upon in lexical references such as “militant”, “Islamic” (twice), “waving green Islamic banners” which reinforce this delegitimized formulation of political action by evoking negative associations of violence and threat. The

negative judgement of the event is also elicited by the transitivity choices in the text; note that the protesters are agents of the material action verb processes “pushed”, “shoved”, “spat”, and “shouted” and the semantic agents of the whole extract, thus thematizing their negative role in the event.

The delegitimation of this crowd’s protest as a frenzied, uncontrollable, and pathological behaviour rather than giving an alternative account of the same event along the lines of legitimate political expression is similarly discussed in Drury’s (2002: 42) analysis of press accounts of anti-pedophile crowd protests. He pointed out that negative, delegitimizing constructions in the press of crowd events tended to pathologize or criminalize an event and paint it in negative terms (e.g. “mob” or a “riot”) rather than neutrally (e.g. “demonstration”) or positively (e.g. “people power”). He indicates that studies have shown a correlation between the language used to construct crowd behaviour and the speaker’s social position and perspective.

The emphasis on anger as driving Palestinian action is also expressed in extract 10 below. Here the writer accentuates the argument that Palestinians’ anger dominates their action to the level that they are unable to think rationally and act normally as it is communicated by the expression ‘self-delusional’

Recently, the **Palestinians’ mounting anger** with Israel **lulled** them into their **own self-delusional** argument: that the Israeli occupation justified *any* Palestinian tactic for liberation, including suicide bombing of civilians. You can’t build **a normal** state on the backs of suicide bombers. (op-ed, Friedman, April 7, 2002, italics original)

The contrast the writer makes between “self-delusional” and “normal” contributes to the depiction of Palestinian attack as devoid of rationality. It is interesting to note the metaphorical verb “lulled” for it positions the Palestinians as being acted upon by their “mounting anger”, thus suggesting their lack of control over their actions and their inability to making sound judgement. These references register a version of reality along the lines of impulsive reactions whereby anger and violence are presented as unnatural, too extreme, insane, mad, and antithetic to civilized values of meaningful and normal political action. Here the

emphasis on irrationality and insanity downplays or overlooks other contextualizations of the same action which frame violence within a discourse of anti-occupation national struggle.

Arab anger: A natural force and an exploitable sentiment

During the Intifada, popular demonstrations were held in many Arab countries and across the world to protest against Israel's actions in the occupied territories. The Arab protests received much coverage in the NYT and were constructed as an ominous development that would destabilize the pro-U.S. Arab regimes across the region. Therefore, in the following two sections I focus on how news writers metaphorically conceptualize these popular protests. The metaphorical constructions of Palestinian political action, namely, those derived from the central metaphor of *anger is heat*, are also used in constructing protests against Israel in the Arab world. To avoid repetition, I limit my discussion to two related metaphors which are woven into this conceptual metaphor and characterize Arab anger as a natural force and that this anger is exploited by Arab leaders.

Kovescs (2002) posits that emotion concepts such as anger, fear, love, etc, are typically conceptualized in terms of natural force metaphors. Hence, it should come at no surprise that news writers draw on conventionalized metaphorical expressions mapped from the source domain of natural forces such as 'fire', 'tide', and 'floodwater' in constructing these popular demonstrations in metaphorical expressions such as "*the tide of anger*", "*a wave of militant anti-Israel sentiment*", "*inflame public passion*", "*stoking popular rage*", and "*let off steam*". Let's consider the following extracts:

- 1- When it does, maybe we will have a more honest peace process ... one in which weak, autocratic Arab leaders don't try to keep **their people at bay by letting them let off steam on Israel**. (Friedman, 17 Oct. 2000)
- 2- Heavy Palestinian casualties during clashes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip this month **have inflamed public passions against both Israel and the United States**, which is accused of abandoning all pretense of even-handedness in the now-paralyzed peace effort. **The tide of anger** -- more open and more defiant than any display of grass-roots political activity in at least a decade--. (NR, Oct. 20, 2000)

- 3- Many [Arab] governments have been **playing with fire lately, stoking popular rage against Israel** by constantly broadcasting scenes of past Arab-Israeli wars and war songs. (NR, Oct. 20, 2000)
- 4- Arab leaders, **uneasy riders atop a wave of militant anti-Israel sentiment across the Middle East**, began to regroup after the Sharm el Sheik summit meeting today (NR6, Oct. 18, 2000)

The common thread in all of these metaphorical expressions is the negative portrayal of Arab anger as illegitimate, massive and threatening. In other words, Arab popular action is not perceived as a typical and organized political expression, but it is delegitimized as excessively intense, emotionally propelled, and is *exploitable by others*. Note the absence of words denoting civilized forms of crowd behaviour such as ‘protest’, ‘demonstration’, etc. Sykes (1985) aptly argues that:

treatment in discourse that systematically implies a mechanistic behavior, inability to reason or to act meaningfully, and that therefore denies the mediation of consciousness in behavior or affective states dehumanizes its subjects and should be regarded as unfavourable treatment, as should any discourse that treats large numbers of people as though they were homogenous and hence denies normal human social variety (p. 100).

In this respect, one function of using natural force metaphors is that the emotions of participants are objectified in terms of non-human, inanimate entities thus de-emphasizing the causes of anger and highlighting notions of its magnitude, threat and containment. Anger acquires some characteristics of natural forces while notions of human agency, peoples’ voices and political expression are de-emphasized, if not silenced. One effect of this impersonalized treatment of emotion is that “it can background the identity of and/or role of social actors; it can lend impersonal authority or force to an activity or quality of a social actor; and it can add positive or negative connotations to an activity or utterance of a social actor” (van Leeuwen, 1996; 60). That is, these metaphorical processes ensure that the reader negatively sees the situation as simply an ominous emotional outburst rather than a rational, conscious action.

In this respect, it is not uncommon in the journalistic genre to find metaphorical references to violence or ethnic

conflicts in terms of explosions, fire, etc. For instance, in his analysis of differences in perspectives of reporters in a number of newspaper articles on ethnic events in the African township of Soweto and in what was then the Rhodesian Capital, Salisbury, Lee (1992) points out that from a White perspective the people of Soweto are often referred to as a natural force, as a volcano which had been “simmering” with unrest and then “erupted” (p. 93). Chilton (2004) holds that the projection of the *fire* metaphor, for example, on violence and conflict is to some extent conventionalized. Having said so, it is important to examine what are meanings implicitly or explicitly communicated when a metaphorical process is used, which aspects of this process are emphasized and which ones are hidden or overshadowed, which perspective is involved in presenting the events, and how this particular metaphorical feature interacts with other features in the text.

To briefly expound on this point, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out that the metaphorical structuring of a concept in terms of another is partial since comprehending one aspect of a concept would necessarily highlight certain aspects of the target experience and conceal other aspects. A reader’s world knowledge of natural or mechanical phenomena involves the knowledge that they are generally unpredictable, uncontrollable, or inexplicable. Thus, the readers are induced by means of analogy to draw similar inferences about the uncontrollability and inexplicability of the violence. That is, such metaphorical processes shift attention from historical and political contexts which may have triggered violence to issues of how to contain, stop or prevent the action itself. As it is the case when we experience fire, volcanoes, etc, we are prone to ask ‘what did it result in?’ and ‘what are the consequences of this action?’, rather than ‘why and how did it happen?’ In other words, we focus more on the activity and less on its underlying causes. The causality is primarily seen in terms of physical and natural law while human agency or the human dimension of this violence is not the locus of attention.

The construction of Israel: The familial and the normal

Unlike the largely objectified, delegitimized representation of Palestinian and Arab emotions and political actions, the analysis reveals a noticeable absence of metaphorical processes and other textual features which express emotional intensity associated with Israeli actors. On the contrary, news writers present favourable depictions of Israeli society and emotions by drawing on metaphorical processes, emotive language, descriptive details and appeal to factual objectivity that all seem to evoke scripts of familial and social harmony and cohesion.

This positive representation appeals to a common *cultural frame* (Chilton and Ilyin, 1993) with the reader and emphasizes the individuality of news actors and the positive range of human feelings and experience that one would relate to effortlessly. Further, the *container* metaphor is central to this representation whereby Israel is metaphorically constructed as an in-group entity whose security and social cohesion are being threatened by an external Palestinian threat. In order to showcase this treatment, I closely examine the following two extracts which are typical of the kind of texts that the reader commonly reads in the NYT's reports on Israeli society.

Israel is in shock: Disruption of social harmony

A case in point is extract 15 below that comes from a news story on the killing of an Israeli soldier by a Palestinian crowd. Note that there are no expressions indicating intense angry reactions in this segment. For instance, in the headline, the reporter chooses the expression "in shock" which designates a rather favourable emotional response to an offending event than the negative expressions of anger associated with Palestinian and Arab reactions. In other words, in keeping with my discussion of metaphors of anger in the previous sections, instead of using phrases such as 'Israelis are enraged/outraged' or 'Israelis are boiling with anger', or 'Israelis are steaming with rage as they bury mob's victim', the reporter selects the expression "in shock" which seems to be a rather favourable construction of the emotion experienced.

Israel in Shock as It Buries Mob's Victim

Israel buried Vadim Norzich today, **and with him much of its hope for real peace. The image** of Mr. Norzich's bloody body being thrown to a Palestinian mob **hovered over the graveyard here** -- even as the dirt was tossed, the wreaths were laid and the mourning prayer was chanted. Few Israelis could shake **this image** from their heads. Overnight, **it made an indelible mark on the national psyche**, "etched for eternity into the history of the conflict," Nahum Barnea, a columnist, wrote. (NR, Oct. 14, 2000)

Further, the reporter also describes the violent event as a “mob” killing and the soldier killed as a “mob’s victim”; a designation which is likely to entice the reader’s feelings of sympathy for the victim on the one hand, and her feelings of consternation and disapproval of the transgressors. This description is elevated to a headline status and in this way it thematizes the direct cause-effect relation between the mob killing and the emotion experienced. At this point, one can observe a metaphorical process of personification in the headline and in the clause “Israel buried...” in which Israel is metaphorically constructed as a person who undergoes feelings of shock and grief and as a person doing the act of burying. Drawing on the *state is person* metaphor is quite common in political and journalistic discourses (Chilton, 2004; Chilton and Lakoff, 1995; Kovecses, 2002). One function of this personification metaphor is to collectivize and personalize the feelings experienced in that it is not only individuals who are in shock, but it is the whole nation that is in a state of disbelief for what happened.

This personalization of emotions to an act of violence can also be observed in the lead paragraph as well. To illustrate, note the personification of ‘hope’ whereby the reporter imputes a human quality – in this case the act of dying- to an abstract entity “hope”, i.e. ‘hope’ is a person who has been killed and buried together with the soldier victim. This suggests that the Palestinian ‘mob’ which killed the soldier also killed Israel’s hope for real peace. I would add further that a metonymic relation can be established here at a symbolic level in that the killed soldier may symbolically stand for Israel’s “hope for real peace”.

It is interesting to note that the phrase “the image”, which is an abstract entity in this context, is metaphorized as an object in the two instances in which it is used. The reference “the image” in the clause “*the image ... hovered over the graveyard here*” is conceived of as a flying object which is flying over the graveyard, while in the clause “*Few Israelis could shake this image from their heads*” it refers to a substance in a container that can be shaken. The function of selecting these two conventionalized metaphorical expressions is most likely to accentuate the proposition that the killing incident had a devastating impact on the Israeli mourners. This amplification of emotions of shock and grief is also communicated by selecting dramatic, factual, and pictorial descriptions as in “*the dirt was tossed, the wreaths were laid and the mourning prayers were chanted*”. Finally, note the reporter’s sympathetic presentation of emotions in the expression “*an indelible mark on the national psyche*”, and the direct representation of the voice of a well-known Israeli journalist to add more credibility and factuality to this construction of the event. Overall, all these various personalizing moves appear to collaborate in enticing feelings of empathy with the participants in this event, and in emphasizing the threat the actions of Palestinians pose on Israelis.

A familial and private life-world

Another illustration of the legitimation of the emotional experience of Israeli actors can be also observed in extract 16 below from a news report on a bombing attack targeting Israelis. Like the extract above, the reporter here draws on metaphorical processes, emotive language, hypothetical statements and factual details that entice the reader’s sympathy with the Israelis. The emotive headline first alerts the reader to expect a nuanced description of a depressing situation; it gives rise to the inference that this situation has become a painfully recurrent spectacle for Israelis. In the lead paragraph, the reporter dramatizes the situation through providing a pictorially poignant picture of the reactions of Israelis including the *lone windsurfer*, *teams of soldiers*, *others hearing the blast*, and *the stragglers*. Note that the reader is first struck by two contradictory life-worlds in the first clause, i.e. the image of the “gilded sea” and the “lone windsurfer” cruising on toward sunset which stands at

odds with the bombing scene that the reporter chooses to evaluate subjectively as “the carnage” rather than descriptively as ‘the bombing site’, ‘the bombing attack’ or ‘where the bomber struck/blew up’. The reporter’s emphasis on the deadly consequence of the bombing using the evaluation ‘carnage’ can be seen as emphasizing the magnitude of Palestinian attack, and it is almost an oxymoron when juxtaposed with the peaceful and serene image the “gilded sea” and the “lone windsurfer” evoke.

Grim, Familiar Routine At Israeli Bombing Site (headline)

Out on the gilded sea, barely 1,000 yards from **the carnage, a lone windsurfer** carried on toward sunset as though there were no reason to stop a Saturday’s sport. It was **as if** he had neither heard nor seen anything of the blast that others heard from miles away, **as if** he were somehow **quarantined** from the deaths in the afternoon, **as though** he were oblivious to teams of soldiers clearing stragglers from the beach. Perhaps, though, he understood it all, and had **resolved** to make a stand, **not with anger and numbed grief** but with the dogged pursuit of normality in a country where the normal, for many, is a dimming thing. (NR, Oct. 5, 2003)

The reporter’s sympathetic formulation of the event by presenting it symbolically and his construction of a private, normal life-world which is being disrupted by a perceived outside threat associated with the Palestinians is further reinforced in the remaining clauses of the extract as the readers get to know about “the lone windsurfer”, his Saturday’s sport (first clause), how he feels about and reacts to the attack (second clause), and what he resolves to do about what happened (third clause). Note the adjective ‘lone’ is interesting in that it invites the reader, with shared cultural assumptions and knowledge, to infer that it is the attack that disrupted the normal rhythm of life and prevented the people from enjoying doing a normal activity. What is implied in this presentation of the event is the authorial disapproval of the attackers who caused this disruption and suffering.

An additional point to be made about this authorial construction of the situation is that the reporter seems to draw upon his own interpretative resources in what appears to be a sort of an out-loud monologue about how the ‘anonymous’ windsurfer would have felt about the bombing incident. For instance, the reporter provides a number of hypothetical

situations beginning with “as if” and “as though”, which are likely to be interpreted that the windsurfer has acted or felt contrary to all expectations. It is interesting to see the reporter’s selection of the metaphorical verb “quarantined” which metaphorizes the bombing attack as a rampant plague which has caused many deaths, thus intensifying the enormity of the attack and its effect. Nonetheless, the reporter also appeals to factual objectivity in expressions such as “barely 1,000 yards from the carnage”, “the blast that others heard from miles away”, and “teams of soldiers clearing stragglers from the beach”. These factual details mix with and lend support to the reporter's subjective construction of the situation.

In this vein, unlike using metaphorical expressions denoting angry reactions associated with Palestinian and Arab political action, note the absence of expressions indicating anger associated with Israelis. For example, rather than ‘reacting angrily’ or ‘fuming with rage’, the reporter’s reference to the main protagonist in this extract “a lone windsurfer” evokes images of peacefulness and calmness who chooses to carry on normally as if nothing had happened. Note the positive reference to his decision in the evaluative verbs “resolved” and “to make a stand”, which imply a conscious and rational decision not to take it out on someone or something, but to act against all odds by pursuing their normal life. The only reference to anger is in the clause “not with anger and numbed grief” which implies that it is expected or typical to experience these feelings in this situation. The phrase “numbed grief” is particularly interesting in that it suggests that others have not vented their anger on anyone or engaged in angry, uncontrollable behaviour, but rather they were quietly grieving about what happened. One can detect a sense of emotional involvement and empathy for the Israelis which is also visible in phrases like “dogged pursuit” and “a dimming thing” in the last clause which implicitly accentuates the threat Palestinians pose to a beleaguered Israel. In this respect, an image-schematic *container* metaphor is evoked here whereby Israel is portrayed as an enclosed in-group entity whose safety and normalcy is being compromised by an outside threat associated with the Palestinians.

Conclusions

So, where does all this leave us? First, my analysis shows how metaphors function as a linguistic tool in legitimizing or delegitimizing the actions of social actors and their emotions. One manifestation of a delegitimizing discourse on Arab and Palestinian action is by reductively projecting it as intense angry reactions, i.e. a sort of Pavlovian responses which are lacking of rational reasoning and externally exploitable. The emphasis news writers assign to Palestinian and Arab actions as angry, violent and intense emotional actions which need to be contained has negative resonance for a western reader who would associate intense levels of anger with irrationality, insanity, and ultimately a disapproval of the emotion experienced and possibly the causes which produced it. Kovecses (2005) highlights this point by indicating that anger which is predominantly conceptualized in American culture today in terms of a hot fluid in a pressurized container has become a completely negative emotion in that the mechanical metaphor of a hot fluid in pressurized container projects anger as something which is independent of the *rational* self, i.e. “the angry person is incapable of any rational judgment, and the resulting angry behavior as extremely dangerous” (p. 181).

Similarly, the treatment of Palestinian and Arab news participants as natural forces with no individuality and human feeling and experience cumulatively contributes to a delegitimation of their actions and emotions. As Sykes (1985) correctly points out that,

One minimum criterion for the evaluation of treatment: Any lexical or syntactic patterns that fairly systematically deny their human subjects the normal range of specifically human attributes should be regarded as degrading, regardless of the intent of the speaker. By human attributes we mean those characteristics that are presumed to elevate human beings above the rest of animal world- consciousness and the capacity for meaningful social action, plus the infinite variety of social statuses and social relations that stem from these. (p. 100).

Second, the analysis reveals that the metaphorical representation of political actors and their actions is based on a discourse strategy of positive ‘in-group’ representation emphasizes ‘our’ actions as legitimate, rational, and moral on

the one hand, and a negative ‘out-group’ representation which constructs ‘their’ action as illegitimate, irrational, and amoral, on the other (van Dijk, 1991). In this context, the apparently negative presentation of Palestinian and Arab political action and emotions starkly contrasts with a positive treatment of Israeli people’s emotions and actions.

The favourable treatment of Israelis seems to be foregrounded in a construction of a private and familiar life-world associated with Israel by drawing on metaphorical processes, themes, and textual details which evoke scripts of familial and social cohesion and harmony. In this vein, a related *container* metaphor is called up whereby Israeli society is constructed as peaceful and cohesive in-group entity which is being penetrated or threatened by an external threat predominantly associated with the Palestinians.

Van Teeffelen (1994) shows that metaphors have become central in the study of racism especially conventionalized metaphors of water, wild animals, plague and cancer which are frequently drawn upon in accentuating the divide between self-other and in negatively framing the other’s identity and actions, i.e. “Invasion, plague, cancer, pollution, and wild animals are familiar notions to evoke a boundary threat to an ingroup conceived in terms of organic development and growth, family cohesion and purity.” (p. 385). In his study of metaphors in western popular literature on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, he similarly notes that metaphors of sea, fire, and animals are used to amplify the external Arab threat to and breaking through a containment formed by Israel’s geographical and physical borders.

In closing, this formulation reifies a particular view of reality with all the political consequences that such a view entails especially those relating to sustaining and naturalizing a dominant power relation between social groups which privileges and legitimizes a particular social group and puts another group at a disadvantage politically, culturally, and morally. This power dominance “may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear ‘natural’ and quite

‘acceptable’” (van Dijk, 1993: 254). One such ubiquitous and naturalized discourse form this paper focused on is the conventionalized metaphorical processes which writers use in positioning news actors in the *Intifada*.

Finally, this analysis is an attempt to contribute to an understanding of the roles of metaphor in news media discourse in times of crisis and the ways metaphors contribute fundamentally in shaping, reshaping, and challenging our understandings and perceptions of political events.

Notes

1. The metaphor analysis here is in part based on the PRAGGLEJAZ GROUP who provide a useful method of identifying metaphoric language in discourse using Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). The method involves determining the lexical units in a text and establishing the contextual meaning and basic meaning for each unit and determining whether its contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

References

- Charteris-Black, J. (2006) 'Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign', *Discourse & Society* 17 (5): 563-581.
- Chilton, P. (2004) *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Chilton, P. and Ilyin, M. (1993) 'Metaphor in Political Discourse: The Case of the "Common European House"', *Discourse & Society* 4 (1): 7-31.
- Chilton, P., and Lakoff, G. (1995) Foreign Policy by Metaphors, in C. Schaffner and A. Wenden (eds) *Language and Peace*, pp. 37-59. Vermont: Dartmouth.
- El Refaie, E. (2001). Metaphors We Discriminate By: Naturalized Themes in Austrian Newspaper Articles about Asylum Seekers, *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 5(3), 352-371.
- Hirst, D. (2003) *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*. New York: Thunder Mouth Press.
- Drury, J. (2002) "'When the Mobs are Looking for Witches to Burn, Nobody's Safe": Talking about the Reactionary Crowd', *Discourse & Society* 13 (1): 41-73.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Vol. 2), pp. 258-84. London: Longman.
- Karim, H. K. (2003) *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*. London: Black Rose Books.

- Kovecses, Z. (1990) *Emotion Concepts*. NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Kovecses, Z. (2002) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kovecses, Z. (2005) *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Khalidi, R. (2001) The Palestinians and 1948: The Underlying Causes of Failure, in E.L. Rogan and A. Shlaim (eds) *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, pp. 12-36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987) *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Kovecses, Z. (1987) The Cognitive Model of Anger Inherent in American English, in D Holland and N. Quinn (eds) *Cultural Models in Language and Thought*, pp.195-221. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, D. (1992) *Competing Discourses: Perspective and Ideology in Language*. London: Longman.
- Malley, R. and Agha, H. (2001) 'The Tragedy of Errors', *The New York Review of Books* 48 (13): August 9. Available online <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14380>
- Morris, B. (2001) Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948, in E.L. Rogan and A. Shlaim (eds) *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, pp. 37-56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pragglejaz Group (2007). MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22(1), 1–39.

- Reinhart, T. (2002) *Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948*. NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. NY: Pantheon House.
- Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (revised ed.). London: Vintage.
- Shaheen, J. (1997) *Arab and Muslim Stereotyping in American Popular Culture*. Georgetown University Press.
- Sykes, M. (1985) Discrimination in Discourse, in T.A. van Dijk (ed.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis: Discourse Analysis in Society* 4, pp. 83-101. London: Academic Press.
- White, P. R. R. (2006) Evaluative Semantics and Ideological Positioning in Journalistic Discourse: A New Framework for Analysis, in I. Lassen, J. Strunck, and T. Vestergaard (eds.) *Mediating Ideology in Text and Image: Ten Critical Studies*, pp. 37-67. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (Eds.) (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1991) *Racism and the press*. London: Routledge.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993) 'Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis', *Discourse & Society* 4(2): 249-283.
- van Leeuwen, T. V. (1996) The Representation of Social Actors, in C.R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 32-70. London: Routledge.
- van Teeffelen, T. (1994) 'Racism and Metaphor: The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Popular Literature', *Discourse & Society* 5 (3): 381-405.