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# **Talking Terrorism**

A discourse analysis of  
people's talk about  
terrorism in their world.

A thesis presented in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts in Psychology  
at Massey University,  
New Zealand.

**Lesley C. Olley**  
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Lesley C. Olley  
Counsellor, 'talkingcure'

## **Abstract**

This study explores the talk of people living in New Zealand Aotearoa as they confront the phenomenon of Terrorism. Ten participants were interviewed about their views on international terrorism and local terrorism, the impacts of terrorism, and the meanings of terrorism. The data was analysed discursively and two key discourses emerged; a sense of Justice discourse and a discourse emphasising the safety of New Zealand Aotearoa. The justice discourse was supported by a raft of anti-repertoires including anti-American/George Bush talk, anti- media resources, and fear and revenge repertoires. The safety discourse saw participants identify resources that keep them safe from international terrorism and reject recent attempts to allow terrorism to wash up on New Zealand shores. These discourses are discussed in the context of recent terrorist events.

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## Part 1: Background

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

'**Terrorism**'. Attempts to define this term have foundered on the inconvenient fact that one person's terrorist is another's freedom-fighter (Hoffman, 2006; Rees, 2005; Robertson, 2006). This form of violence is not a new mode of warring but a form of rebellion or asymmetric warfare practices through history, by the stateless, oppressed and less powerful against established governments when alternative resistance is no longer achievable. The term is an intentional hysterical, panic word in the contemporary world and any residue of caution about the use of the word 'terrorism' was engulfed in the wreckage of the destroyed New York World Trade Centre buildings on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, now represented iconically as simply 9/11 (Rees, 2005).

*"Terrorism" is what we call the violence of the weak, and we condemn it; "war" is what we call the violence of the strong, and we glorify it.* Harris (1986) cited in Dyer, 2006, Dedication page.

Contemporary resources have identified another form of terrorism; that of 'State terrorism'. The definition of this is fraught for the above reasons and highly dependent on which side of the political realm one is standing. Chomsky (2003) uses the example of the US sponsorship of Turkey in the 1990's, whose government has a longstanding terrorism against their Kurd population. This internal struggle has been boosted by US military aid. So a simple layperson explanation for what 'state terrorism' could be is that when the state takes up arms and force against a group or smaller country for its own political gain and

needs. Likewise, it is when another more powerful force provides the military and/or financial means for another country to defeat an internal force within its boundaries. There are plenty of examples of that occurring through history including Germany with the Jews in World War 2, the US with Iraq against the USSR, the US with Pakistan.

It will be obvious to most observers of the terrorism phenomenon, that the incredible plane-bombing events of 9/11 were not the first of such happenings that have overwhelmed our sensitivities. They have been preceded by many others through history including; the thousand year old independence struggle by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against British occupation, the killing of 7 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, the Basque Separatist Movement terrorist activities in Spain, a multitude of hostage-takings by terrorist faction groups especially in the Middle East, and the violent struggles between Israel and Palestine. This project, however, definitely has its genesis in the New York terror attacks due to simple happenstance. It was simply coincidental with the timing of my academic foray into a Master of Arts degree. 'Terrorism' and people's talk about terrorism became the agreed topic for my thesis project. This was in the aftermath of the most dramatic version of terrorism and most highly visible terrorist attacks the world had encountered. The Twin Tower attacks of September 11, 2001, and the consequential global political rebalancing, is the climate where the very word 'terrorism' evoked a variety of emotional and

intellectual stirrings and responses in all of us, even living way beyond the shores of the USA.

Through our media and in our very living rooms 'terrorism' has arrived uninvited to sit alongside our families and us. What are we, in New Zealand Aotearoa, at the bottom end of the globe (well away from the gaze of so-called terrorists), saying about our unwanted guest 'Terrorism' and its presence in our world? How will this phenomenon impact on our lives today and into our future world? What do we think about the 'evil'-ised Muslims/the Arabs positioned by Bush's 'embedded' media as the epitome of the bad, extremist and very scary terrorists? What is the discussion and talk out there in our cities, in the suburbs, the provinces and the rural areas about these Arabs/Muslims cum terrorists? Should we just not have anything to do with 'them' and not allow them to live amongst us as immigrants? What are the other more long-standing issues that will be raised such as racism (Hocking, 1993; Legrain, 2006; Poynting, Noble, Tabar & Collins, 2004)?

There is a mass of literature both for the *West/pax Americana* position and much expression in opposition. Terrorism is centre stage of American political discourse as "the future promised land of terrorism" (Zulaika & Douglas, 1996: viii). Linguist Sandra Silberstein (2002:2) states, "terrorism is an act made for television", that feeds on the news media in a symbiotic mechanism of mutual survival both of which has transformed even the office of the US Presidency. The impact of Bush's 'War on Terror' is global and ongoing with issues around

immigration and the upheaval for refugees finding safety in lands where people are often extremely hostile towards them (Poynting et al, 2005; and Hocking, 1993). We have been dragged reluctantly or otherwise, into Bush's clash between Western and Muslim worlds and the pathologising of Muslim's culture (Legrain, 2006), although this situation will be amended with the arrival of a new US President apparently who is already exhibiting more good will and positivity towards culture beyond America's shores.

New Zealand's contemporary politicians (Labour government) have stood back from the US/its allies' brinkmanship approach (and Bush's demands against neutrality in this 'terror' era). It is perhaps noteworthy that compared to our Australian compatriots, our country is slightly more receptive to accommodating refugees although some are critical of us as to the low numbers receiving our sanctuary. It appears to me that New Zealand's politicians have managed a delicate navigation of diplomatic minefields with Islamic connections in order to maintain open communications and concerns about terrorism impacting in our part of the world (Charters, Finlayson, van Bohemen, 2005; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2005; Rolfe, 2004). There is a set of literature to this effect though beyond the scope of this research project. However, as I write, New Zealand is hosting the Interface Debate, at Waitangi where Islamic leaders are meeting with an array of other religious and political leadership. This is to dialogue about differences directly as a response to terrorism threats and the acknowledged need to keep

communication channels open and constructive for world safety (National Programme, New Zealand Radio Morning Report News, 29/30<sup>th</sup> May 2007).

### **Reflexivity**

An important notion of Constructionist and Discourse Analysis (DA) is reflexivity; that is acknowledgement of the egalitarian status of both researcher and the researched. Reflexivity in Social Constructionism provides the important template for the researcher to honestly and explicitly acknowledge personal agendas and philosophies that will inform the study (Burr, 2003).

**Personal Positioning:** My positioning with this topic should be clear in its opposition to US militarist responses to terrorism. I am not any sort of expert on international or US politics, and not knowledgeable about Islam or Middle Eastern religion. I am a world traveller and worried that I will not be able to inhabit the globe with the ease I have done in the past, due to perceived and actual threat of terrorist activity. There was to be no Bali for me at the beginning of this project. That position has somewhat changed; after awashing myself in the terrorism topic and listening to the positions of participants and others, it has somehow lost a lot of its power. This comes and goes with each new terrorist attack, however. Also background reading has inevitably informed my brain, my heart and my spirit. I relate to the words of the late and recently assassinated Bhutto's (2008) autobiography. I consider that she attends to many fears Westerner's may harbour around Islamic-prejudice and invites readers to consider the notion (and her dream) of a future bridge between Islamic states and the West. She considered that her Islam and Democracy were not

incompatible. Her reconciliation missive to the West can go along way to addressing the anxieties of people on problems such as international terrorism and the so-called 'evils' of Islam ubiquitously positioned by American/Western media. Bhutto's analysis of the Islamic Bible-equivalent, the Quran (Koran), dispels misconceptions on Islamic faith especially on its positioning of women, countering notions of inferiority and oppression. My background reading around this topic (see Literature Review) has challenged me to explore more closely Islamic philosophies.

**Feminist Agendas and Reflexivity:** I consider it paramount for the sake of personal and professional honesty to be clear about my lifelong allegiance to the philosophies of Feminism, which has shaped my role in this project. I am aware of just how it informs and overarches my personal and professional life. Likewise, that is so with the processes of this study, and also when participant interaction involves challenges to cultures, which oppress women in multiple ways. Those cultures, in my opinion and the opinions of some of the project's participants, include not just Islamic cultures but also the Western globally dominant super powers, especially the USA. I have always considered my Feminism to be a positive element, part of my privilege and an absolute strength in my world.

So whilst I acknowledge my privilege in the aforementioned abilities, that privilege has also aided my encountering a worldview that endorses diversity. I acknowledge my capacity to 'hear' minority voices and champion the rights of those oppressed. I want to be able to hear a viewpoint beyond the dominating

US conservative media filter and remain open to dialogue that is constructive not destructive (Kitzinger, 1990; Ussher, 1990).

**Professional Positioning:** I have worked in various employment environments as a sexual abuse and domestic violence counsellor for almost three decades and more recently as a general counsellor in private practice. This project and its specific modality of Critical Social Psychology have informed my professional work in many ways, particularly in fine-tuning my linguistic 'antennae'. Likewise, I consider that my work has been helpful in the processes of this project.

Although my study has not focused in any cultural sense on Maori and their grievances in our land, I have over many years grappled in my Pakeha way to come to grips with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and consider that I have a commitment for bicultural endeavours in New Zealand Aotearoa. Furthermore, this commitment extends to an understanding of the importance of cultural diversity in our increasingly conflicted world and the injection into our country of people fleeing unsafe homelands. Anxiety, fear and worries that naturally arise from those interactions require huge understanding and awareness for resolution (Pert, 1997). This is surely the bread and butter work material for psychologists.

## **Significance**

*Nothing is easier to denounce than the evil doer;  
Nothing is more difficult than to understand him.*  
Fyodor Dostoevsky

My interest in this topic comes out of a wider interest that I have about the notion of 'evil/hatred'. In this work, my interest lies not just with the notion of the 'Bad Terrorist' and that the 9/11 attacks may be evil and hateful, but also that the contemporary US/President Bush's responses to that terrorism is equally offensive and horrifying. It may be that with the passage of time, the war against Iraq by the US and their allies may be seen as criminal. Likewise, the media may well be culpable and complicit with Bush in their misuse of the terminology of notions of terrorism (Rees, 2005). This work could provide explicit evidence of the power of the political rhetoric as it is captured from the mouths of President Bush and his conservative war marshals and delivered into our homes along the media wires for us to decipher, digest and adjust our lives around. Their alleged quest to make the world arguably safer for the west has actually created the opposite effect (Catherwood & DiVanna, 2008; Chomsky, 2003; Dyer, 2006).

The topic "Terrorism" is probably one of the world's paramount issues alongside Global Warming as well as the recent global financial upheavals, which are just beginning to play out as of this writing. Terrorism takes centre stage in world political discourse today. For many observers and those on the receiving end of the US so-called anti-terror efforts, the US is now regarded as the world's biggest terrorist in their quest to over-control global politics and in fact exacerbated world security with their aggressive militarist response. Many writers identify that the US has sided with and sponsored brutal military dictatorships around the world

as well as accusing America of having helped found a “University of Terrorism” thus creating the so-called monsters who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks (Chomsky, 2003; Pettiford and Harding, 2003). We have arrays of US eyewitness and victim material from 9/11 and other incidents that identify terrorism impacts (Fink & Mathias, 2002).

To bring this writing up-to-date with political developments in America now as of November 2008; a very different political landscape has been democratically voted for by the American population on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2008 with Barack Obama becoming the new US President. Bush and the Republicans relentless ‘mad dog’ rhetoric in chase of terrorists and a ‘War On Terror’, has now been cast to the annals of history both at home in the US and throughout the world. The inarticulate rants, the reign and rhetoric of George Bush are over. The US and indeed the world are excited by the advent of a new President with a new worldview that involves withdrawing troops from the Iraq arena. As this is written we are witnessing a reshape of American politics that may impact on the phenomenon of terrorism. I know my American friends are over the moon about having a President who is articulate and less combatant. They full of hope for a better America and world.

Despite this, the questions remain: What are our people’s understandings of this political circus when much of the information we receive is filtered through the US/Western media services deliberately intent on spreading a positive spin for

the dominant culture of the time (Catherwood & DiVanna, 2008; Chomsky, 2003; Pettiford & Harding, 2003; Rees, 2005). Are we able to navigate the media roller coaster and withstand propaganda anymore today than in previous world-struggle situations for example World War 2, Vietnam, Ireland (Catherwood & DiVanna, 2008; Dyer, 2006)? What do we have to say about “terrorism” in New Zealand and specifically the provinces, where I live?

The next chapter will be a review of the literature around the topic of terrorism. I will write about writers who outline historical impacts of terrorism, the various problems of defining terrorism and show how fraught that process can be. Some writers challenge the position taken by the discipline of Psychology in dealing with Terrorism and the problems faced therein. Some sources provide differing perspectives from the various factions and different ‘corners’ of the globe. All these issues impact on all of us, as is evident from participants' interviews, and they ‘wrestle’ with terrorist talk and give their ‘take’ on terrorism. All of us are affected by powerful words of the terrorism debate, both spoken and written, and by the forceful images portrayed by an equally persuasive media, on this important contemporary issue.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

*"It is a common topic to dwell on the wickedness of that man who endeavours to wrest to his own purposes not only the effect of things, but also the meaning of words, in order both to do as he pleases, and to call what he does by whatever name he likes".*

Cicero, *The Treatise on Rhetorical Invention*.

Quote cited in *Unspeak* (Poole, 2006:12, 13).

There are enormous terrorism resources available and containing it all in some semblance of a workable 'beast' for the purposes of this thesis was difficult. The terrorism material arrives (for all of us) via satellite images and words, on the television and radio, from local and international commentaries, the Internet and its blogs, from libraries, in books and reports, and in journal and newspaper articles. For my project, I decided to take note of local commentaries that were easily available to participants; that is local papers and commentaries by New Zealand journalists and commentators. A pivotal book was Rees' (2005) narrative of his experiences meeting some of the world's most wanted militants. My adventure with Terrorism began in earnest after the reading of his book. For the purposes of this review, and the necessity of reasonable limitations, I have sought to broadly categorise and corral the material into a number of general areas with a sample of the resource reading for this project. This makes up the literature review on the topic of Terrorism.

#### **Historical, Definitional issues, Terrorism and Psychology resources**

The three resources I consider the usual obvious places to go to if one were interested in sourcing mainstream information and facts on the topic of terrorism

would be those outlined below. I tended to be reticent about more expansive accounts of the phenomenon from out of the US. I sought out a name that was repeated often, in Silke (2003) from the UK. That area of the world has been dealing with Irish 'terrorism' and I deemed that this source might have something to say about many aspects of the problem of terrorism. In the above work edited by Silke, Horgan, states an important point; that mainstream psychology has spent the last four decades erroneously searching for the Terrorist personality template of psychological pathology but there is little empirical evidence to back that conclusion. Horgan (2005; 2008) provides a new, clearer and more complex view of the psychology of terrorism. He concludes how frighteningly 'normal' and unremarkable the contemporary terrorist is in psychological terms.

Corlett (2003), Mulgan (2006), Sutherland (2007) and Tilly (2006) provided excellent background psychological resources and perspectives as to motivations for terrorism. Also helpful was a set of resources on emotional issues from Blumenfeld (2002), Bourke (2005), Catherwood and DiVanna (2008), Gardner (2008) and Tumarkin (2005) especially in accounting for fear and anxiety processes as are experienced with terrorism victims.

### **Western perspectives – US**

Zulaika and Douglas (1996) tell us that between 1989-1992 there were no fatalities caused by terrorism in the US; 34 Americans were killed worldwide but 1,322 new 'terrorism' books and 121 about 'terrorists' were written. Terrorism has

become a huge industry throughout the world. Hoffman (2006) stands out. He deals with historical origins of terrorism today and its success as a quasi-military tactic. Napoleoni (2005; 2008) is an American author whose work maps 'the arteries' of international economic systems revealing interdependency between Western and armed groups that definitely shifts the terrorism focus from religious and cultural differences.

Richardson (2006), another American terrorism authority states a central tenet is to understand the terrorism/terrorists, as being the most efficacious way of containing it. Political commentators Chomsky (2003) and Singer (2007) write inexhaustively against the US regime and Bush's war on terror. Fink and Mathias (2002) have written a book that provides witness and survivor accounts of the 9/11 attacks on New York. Another US terrorist expert Stern (1999; 2003) concentrates her gaze on religious extremists even to the point of travelling into terrorism danger zones to interview terrorists. Pivotal in her philosophy is the notion that we should not distance ourselves from evil by 'demonising' those who commit evilness.

The last US writer to impress me and inform this project with alternative perspectives, is Churchill (2003) who challenges what he terms "America's false self-concept" of being the most peace-loving nation, even though history details of brutal military campaigns that the US has engaged in from 1776 until the

present day. This American Indian believes that the 9/11 attacks was revenge for US imperial arrogance and criminality all over the globe.

### **UK terrorism perspectives**

Fisk (2006; 2008) and Pilger (1999) provide background resources on the political arena that has seen terrorism and the fear of it proliferate. These and US critic Chomsky are a trilogy of political commentators that it appears most people seem to go to. Another is Dyer (2005), who I shall comment on more fully in Australasian material, as he has contributed weekly material to our local newspaper, that critiques the super powers (US and UK) handling of terrorism and the war on terror.

I found the writings of Phillips (2006) challenging for alternative perspectives to the consequences of immigration and refugee issues. Phillips is critical of what she perceives as passivity of the UK government, Church of England and British officialdom for their “scandalous appeasement” in not checking an ascendancy of radical Islamic fundamentalism within the UK. She accuses them of allowing the growth of extremist groups, permitting Islamic ideas and cultural practices to ride roughshod over traditional British human rights and democracy (back coverpiece). Phillips entitles her book “Londonistan” critiquing the Islamic takeover of the capital’s economic-political environment. It is a very thought-provoking take on the melting pot our world has become due to political unrest and one where there are no easy answers.

## **Islamic perspectives**

I began this project knowing almost nil about Islamic culture and political endeavours apart from owning a sense of repulsion at what I perceived as an environment where males were positioned as superior and a general oppression of women and children. Pakistan's Bhutto's (2008) work published just before her assassination, challenges those perceptions and enlightens with her hopeful vision of a world reconciled; a bridge that connects the widening gap between the West and Islamic world. Bhutto describes an Islam that does not require oppression of women and she rails against Western and Moslem promotion of radicalism that is resulting in world terrorism. This visionary woman leader saw no incompatibility between Islam and Western democracy.

Another insightful resource with similar messages to Bhutto is journalist Manji (2003) who promotes and challenges for an Islamic reformation that remembers its traditions of encouraging independent thought of previous centuries.

A journalist born and raised in Australia as a Moslem, Aly (2007) confronts the cultural differences between Moslem and Western culture and the way that arrogance is dividing the world and creating an environment that leads to terrorist inducing environments. Allen's (2006) expose of the Wahhabi (militant fundamentalists) and the roots of "jihad" (struggle against those who oppose Islam) is an important source of knowledge about modern terrorism, al-Qaeda and the Taliban's dangerous ideologies. Stratton (2006) states that two thirds of

Middle Eastern people are under 25 years old, educated and often unemployed within a youth culture she calls “muhajababes”- the young, cool, sexy and devoutly Moslem – and part of a ripple of change bringing the vote to women as well as the less positive aspects of Western culture. Stratton identifies a new order of Islamic revival but suggests that this may well just be a veneer over religious conservatism.

### **Terrorism and impacts on immigration/refugee/prisoners**

Terrorism has many consequences. At the forefront of them is the problem of what to do with those displaced by terrorism? Our country and immediate neighbour navigate this people problem sometimes optimally and sometimes with horrifying results. For the two parties; the country of refuge and the refugee/ and families are involved in a problematic environment where plenty can go wrong and often does. Sometimes though things work well and refugees settle positively into their new (hopefully safe) life. Moorehead (2006), Legrain (2006), Sheehan (2006) and Veitch (2005) outline the issues of immigration/ refugee status and some of the cultural issues that are faced by those people and the countries they settle in.

With the US militarism since 9/11, much has been reported about the large numbers of prisoners/terrorists that their intelligence has managed to pluck and incarcerate in a series of US-run secret or “ghost” prisons. In these places, ordinary and natural justice is displaced by US security and anti-terrorist

legislation supported by an apathetic America public intent on revenge for the insult of 9/11. This may well return to haunt the military and various politicians in distant future and place them in the International Law court as war criminals. Gourevitch and Morris (2008) describe atrocities by US military guards at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison (Iraq) which matched the results of the famous Zimbardo experimental Stanford Prison study where pretend guards, charged with attending to so-called prisoners, underwent psychological metamorphosis that transformed their behaviour to brutalising sadism and cruelty (Zimbardo, 2007). The activities and background to the terrorist prison at US naval base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba is described by Stafford Smith (2007) as part of the asymmetrical militarism of the US offensive against international terrorism. Likewise in Sales (2007) explores issues surrounding the imprisonment of so-called terrorists, plucked often in the middle of the night and with very little incriminating terrorist evidence against them and sending them to prisons set up as described above in all parts of the world and specifically at Guantanamo. Sales writes about the Australian David Hicks' imprisonment after capture in Afghanistan and his struggle for release despite being detained without trial.

### **Terrorism and conspiracy**

The books that I used to frame alternative perspectives to the problems of terrorism were; Tarpley (2007) and his concept of "synthetic terror" concerning who he believes was behind the September 11 terror attacks in New York in 2001; and Porter (2005) about the Illuminati and accusations that this global,

ghost group were responsible for the aforementioned terrorism. The notion that a US or a global power deliberately conspired and created the 9/11 terror in order for world domination was intriguing. In contrast, Thompson (2008) borrows crime writer Sherez's concept of 'counterknowledge' or misinformation packaged as fact and circulated in incredible speed electronically around the globe so that the public encounter and have to sift through conspiracy theories and bogus history. He highlights the million-dollar industry that has evolved out of counterknowledge and supports the need for critical thinking to counter the recent pandemic of conspiracy theories.

### **Women and terrorism**

Feminism provides a personal template that has framed my life and always assisted me with alternative perspectives on a variety of issues. It was easy for me to locate Feminist resources on my project topic. Although written before 9/11, an old feminist 'friend', Morgan (2001) provides Feminist theory for war and terrorism, for the 'democratisation' of violence and the notion of the "deadly hero". At essence of her theory is what she sees as the "genius of patriarchy". That is the ability of humans (patriarchal society) to compartmentalise and institutionalise disconnection; "Intellect severed from emotion. Thought separated from action. Science split from art. The earth itself divided; national borders ..." (p.51). She attributes and critiques this essential process in the creation of masculinity as causal for our history of warring and terrorism. Likewise, Morgan (2006) is a critical exploration of language, debates and a captured media that

serves a powerful set of religious masters that is intent on “Christianising” America. Morgan checks historical words from the US Foundation documents that ensured that secularism was integral in the constitutional foundation for the new society, not right wing religious dogma of the Bush regime. Braudy’s (2003) work also provides insights that challenge traditional notions of masculinity, issues of war and chivalry on the phenomenon of terrorism.

Another Feminist writer, informing my opinions/ philosophies and is an important contributor to discourses on Terrorism, is Faludi (2007). Faludi takes an unusual but equally valid positioning (in my opinion) that examines on the psychological responses to 9/11 attacks, critiquing media, popular culture and political realms that exposed an insecure social bedrock of conservative American society with a wish list that included the restoration of “traditional manhood, marriage, and maternity” (front flap). She presents notions of counter myth about “cowboy swagger and [so-called] feminine frailty” that has reanimated post “homeland terror and humiliation” (cover flaps) when intrusions of terrorist attack broke the “deadbolt” on US protective mythology. She suggests this reanimation has its origins in 200 year-old notions of pioneer inabilities to repel invasions from indigenous American. Faludi challenges Bush’s response by the war on terror as impractical and improbable protective politics post 9/11. Faludi places fear and fantasy under the microscope as they relate to US history and contemporary society.

Although probably not professing Feminism in their quests to travel through lands of terrorism and danger, there is a set of brave women writers who have set out to live in foreign and dangerous sites such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. These include Jones (2006), Lamb (2008), and Makler (2003) who tell the untold stories from the women's perspective in countries actively oppressive of women and children, and enduring warring and destruction from superpowers from the West.

### **Terrorism and language**

I am interested in words and language used in the talk around terrorism and the impact of media 'services' which people have to navigate to sort through information they are being told about terrorists and terrorist acts. There are many who benefit from the possible 'propaganda' being peddled by governments, politicians and commercial enterprises who gain from huge security and anti-terror environments. There is a quantity of impressive resources, which have at the forefront language, and words of terrorism and war. Poole (2006) uses the concept of "*unspeak*" to describe the euphemism and propagandising that has become the globalising political language of our contemporary world. He suggests we adhere to the trio of healthy scepticism, clarity and independent thought to hold spindoctoring at bay. Jackson's (2005) work is an analysis on the language, politics and counter-terrorism that explores 9/11 reporting and afterwards, that looks at the positioning of 'bad' terrorists and 'good' Americans as well as analysing the power dynamics in discourses. "It is never too late to reclaim the political space for genuine dialogue, even that which has been lost to

the suffocating atmosphere of anxiety and acquiescence engendered by myopic leaders and a subservient press (p.vi).

Likewise Silberstein (2002) and Zournazi (2007) attack the media's role in reporting of terror with the former questioning the use of news as a new type of entertainment with sound bites and linguistic battlegrounds in a symbiotic relationship with the terrorists. Silberstein critiques the harassment of intellectuals (and Feminists) post 9/11, who saw a need for domestic introspection about American responsibilities around terrorism. This matches the words of Faludi and others (Altheide, 2006: 2007; Braudy, 2003; Hoglund, 2003).

Zournazi writes to restore the links between language, words and moral conscience in order to evoke a more compassionate alternative to the current US political climate of fear and counter-attack. Manjoo (2008) writes an expose on media bias and an insight into new technologies such as the blog and You Tube that challenges the notion of what he terms "truthiness" –something that *feels* true without any evidence that it is. Certainly I am aware of how many people use these sites as alternatives to traditional media information sources. Tuman (2003) looks at the communication of terrorism rhetoric and the variety of dimensions of that process. The work of Rich (2006) came to me via an Oprah Winfrey Show (2007) where the story was presented on highlighting the differences of political responses to 9/11 and the inadequacies of responding to their own Americans victimised due to Hurricane Katrina.

## **Terrorism and the ways of terrorising**

Hostage taking, kidnapping, hijacking, guerillas, suicide bombing, chemical or bioterrorism are all ways of the world of terror-making from our history to the present day. Recently an entire huge ship was hijacked off the coast of Somalia and held for ransom. There are many examples of resources, which tell the story of terror and in backgrounding this project; I found these sources of great interest. They include: Anderson (1994); Auerbach (1998); Baer (2002); Carew (2000); Child (2002); Dyke and Winder (2004); Gero (1997); Gilmour (2008); Halkyard (1993); Hart Dyke & Winder (2003); Jonas (2005); Key (2007); Lindsay (2003); Luttrell (2007); Miller (2001); Preston (2002); Rashid (2001); Razzaque (2008); Reuter (2004); Riverbend (2005); Start (1998); Victor (2004); Waite (1993).

## **Terrorism and Radio, Television and Newspaper Resources**

National Radio has been regularly supplying speakers on the terrorism issue and I have referenced only four of those talks from various shows including a regular news item about a interface debate on terrorism at Waitangi; Kim Hill's Nine to Noon show concerning conspiracy theories and Middle East politics; and then Katherine Ryan's Morning Report where she interviewed Paul Rogers from The Oxford Group. For Hager (2007) I googled *How to decide who is a terrorist?* In *Back Story* Hager (2007b) follows the route from 9/11 to New Zealand's terrorist responses. Discovery magazine editors Glausiusz, Kenigsberg, Mohseni,

Ruvinsky, Stahi, Stone & Svitil (2006) wrote about where the future directions of terrorism may be.

### **Sample of Journal articles concerning Terrorism**

Altheide (2006;2007) examines the use of the media in the promotion of public fear, and as a propaganda mechanism to garner political support to target Moslems. Hoglund's (2003:245) paper looks at gender-related implications and the notion of femininity in war situations. She contests that wars today are remarkable for "their fluidity, which dissolves traditional understandings of both war and gender". Rolfe's (2004) work examines post 9/11 terrorism and the implications for the South Pacific of terrorist threat. Wallace's (1991:1993) two papers are explorations of the plasticity of the concept of terrorism, with definitional difficulties already addressed earlier in this work and the linguistic gymnastics involved in locating a meaningful terrorist template in our contemporary world.

### **Local authors NZ/Australian: International and NZ terrorism perspectives**

Veitch (2005) is Editor of seminar papers on Terrorism from the New Zealand perspective. Whilst he searches the problems of defining terrorism, stating who the terrorists are and what they want, he also addresses post 9/11 issues of how our world has changed. Higgies and Wevers papers both place the context on terrorism in New Zealand where it is a new risk to be accounted for, with new security and legislation to counter terrorism internationally and locally. Papers also speak to issues of psychological perspectives of terrorists as psychopaths

(Wilson and Evans) a notion generally dismissed by international sources as a fundamental attribution error (Arena and Arrigo, 2006); and Maghaireh writes on responses and issues around controlling cyberterrorism. It is good to see local material from a New Zealand perspective.

Also the work edited by Keenan (2008), which looks at recent so-called terrorist acts attributed to Tama Iti and Tuhoe, the history of political acts of coercion aimed at Maori and a variety of issues of institutional racism. These issues were all going to be part of interview questions to the project's participant and this is a valuable resource for me. The notion from the title of "searching for terror" in our country has been on many lips with many taking a variety of positions on the question of whether terrorism had finally splashed up on our shores.

The Australian writers Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins (2004) explore the Australian public's worry about Moslem refugees turning to criminality in the suburbs. In some minds the Arab migrant is a "subversive will" as they "invade our shores, take over our neighbourhood and rape our women" (back cover); and Rees (2005) writings were pivotal in my beginning this project as I embraced his notion of terrorists being "freedom-fighters" and his having dined with some of the world's most wanted militants.

Dyer (2005) was regular centre-stage contributor to our local newspaper's Editorial page through the duration of this project. He visited our city (2008) and talked about terrorism not being the biggest threat to face humanity in this time;

the pursuit for resources such as water will launch future squabbles and mini-wars as the lessening of this valuable resource occurs due to global warming (the biggest problem according to Dyer). Campbell (2005) is a foreign correspondent who travels the most dangerous routes and becomes personally involved in a terror attack that killed his friend. Suter (2008) covers 'everything one needs to know about terrorism' concisely overviewing conflict zones, local and international issues for background information.

In concluding this review of Terrorism literature, I would say my position has somewhat altered from the start of this project where I was fearful of overseas travel and there were definite no-go zones because of the reported dangers. I am more skeptical of those dangers now but also more determined to fend off the fear that is peddled by those who may benefit from a fear-induced world.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Philosophies**

Psychology has largely ignored the topics of terrorism and terrorists (Silke, 2003). Silke cites a 1985 review of all available researchers on the topic by Schmid and Jongman where they found just 10% (11 individuals) were psychologists. His published review (2000) saw this lowered to less than 6; all in a time when terrorist attacks were occurring almost daily. Traditional psychological methodology has had difficulty wrestling with such a topic; it is impossible to drag the terrorist into the laboratory and out in the field the psychologist would be in extreme danger. Likewise, mainstream psychology interest lies in searching dead-ends of the terrorists 'abnormality' and the template of a terrorist personality (Silke, 2003).

The Discourse Analysis (DA) to be used in this project deals with naturally occurring talk and texts, when people relate experiences and tell their stories. In the interviews with the participants of Talking Terrorism, I will be exploring the content of that talk, with the subjective material and the social aspects from that material (Edwards & Potter, 1992). A social action is performed in all the talk about terrorism as participants construct their unique version on the topic of terrorism, on what sense they make of this phenomenon. I will examine DA's triple concerns of action, construction and variability in the participants talk; in their talk styles and their various linguistic resources and rhetorical devices

utilised in their accounts about terrorism and the political responses to it. DA focuses on the constructive features of such talk and the interpretative aspects of how we understand and deploy the various constructions and rhetoric of the terrorist problem we all face today (Burr, 2003). What are the significant issues about terrorism, the assorted political debates and responses to it? How is terrorism impacting on people?

This work is significant as it may provide expression to previously unheard voices and invisible viewpoints from provincial New Zealand Aotearoa that may differ or have similar viewpoints to the dominant discourses. The results of my exploration may well expose “ugly” talk and thinking, such as prejudice, stereotyping and racist discourses. These results, though, will be all the better for its exposure in my opinion (Legrain, 2006; Poynting et al, 2004). The results of this study will not, however, in any way, be a definitive expose on racist or anti-US/Moslem talk. It is a set of differing versions/discourses as would be expected with a DA that is embedded within social constructionist philosophy of multiple truths from the specific geographic context of the various participants involved (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985; Tuffin, 2005; Wooffitt, 1993).

It will be argued strongly that a DA research approach is best practice for this study as such an approach has a set of unique characteristics that are most suited to identifying the significant issues of this topic. These are outlined below.

Traditional psychology utilises empirical research methodology obtained from experimental processes based on statistical, “objective” analysis and quantitative data that can be regarded as conclusive and rigorous. At centre stage of empiricist psychology is “objectivity”, a notion that focuses on only observable behaviour of organisms and leading to the set of assumptions about such actions being internalised/individualised processes; that is cognition. As well, traditional experimental designs/studies investigate the individual subject or group of subjects to isolate one or more variable and to measure variation over different conditions/treatments. Positivist philosophies insist on researcher ‘neutrality’, the myth of distance or objectivity from the subjects and dispassion for the benefit of so-called scientific purity. Indeed, decontextualisation in the experimental laboratory is an imperative in traditional psychology retaining its scientific stake. Traditional psychological paradigms have previously neglected/ignored the rich set of subjective constructions potentially available in a DA approach (Burr, 2005; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Gergen, 1985; Tuffin, 2005).

Edwards and Potter (1992) define DA simply as a “functionally orientated approach to the analysis of talk and text” (p.27). It is a qualitative methodology that explores the functions of talk or language along with their implication i.e. social relations, communication etc. DA is concerned with the content of talk/text or speech, as well as its triple concern with action, construction, and variability (Edwards and Potter, 1992). O’Connor (1997) states that the “landscape of the

spoken word becomes multi-dimensional” as we position ourselves in relation to the objects of discourse or talk. Indeed, she states that there “is nothing but language”(p.124). This is a radically different way of approaching beliefs and meaning represented in our language and not merely constrained in traditional psychological modes as internal, individual processes, nor single definitive truths or understandings of our world. Thus, in DA, and constructionist perspectives it is entirely acceptable and possible for a person to construct differing versions of their psychological being over differing contexts and often in contradiction of their particular set of repertoires. ‘Interpretative repertoires’ is a term introduced by Potter and Wetherell (1987) that refers to a stock of ‘culturally available’ language devices that enable people to construct accounts. DA purports the view of human language and our social abilities as incredibly flexible and dynamic (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985; Potter and Wetherell, 1994).

In Edwards and Potter (1992:28) a model is used that distinguishes DA's perspective about language. They identify the DA focus of naturally occurring talk/text as research material. From that DA concerns itself with talk's content, its subject matter and its social organisation. DA is focused on language/talk and its social action or performance nature; what it is doing. Pieces of talk are formulated from within a person's social environment as well as constrained by it (Burr, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1994). My research participants live in provincial New Zealand Aotearoa, potentially conservative and isolated from minority

groups. Provincial talk about Terrorism will reflect that specific context, with possible discourses of blaming, fear and racism.

Construction of talk is a concern in DA whereby people manufacture and assemble their discourse from their range of linguistic resources. People actively choose/construct differing versions for specific realities and functions. So it may be that the talk about terrorism in this study may identify blaming, fear, racist and other discourses due to the specific contextual constraints of living in provincial New Zealand Aotearoa; for example isolation from multicultural experiences.

Another concern of DA is 'variation' where a range of talk/text styles, linguistic resources and rhetorical devices can be marshalled and identified in the DA. The analysis is interested in the person's constructive processes and version-making processes dependent on differing interactional contexts the talk/text is constructed to serve (Burr, 2003).

An additional central theme of DA relates to the persuasive or rhetorical organization and interpretative devices of everyday talk and thought (Edwards and Potter, 1992). What do we understand is the nature and function of specific versions in accounts and being open to possible alternative versions of countering in the person's talk/text? This is illustrated in how people will undermine alternatives, skillfully utilise extreme case formulations and a talk

precision-vagueness scale as well as constructing implicit defenses against objections raised (Burr, 2003:163).

The final concern of a DA approach as outlined by the above source is its reworking of mainstream psychology's cognitive focus on attitudes, learning, memory etc. DA shifts to exploring cognitive issues of reality and mind, filtered through language discourses around such pairings of "knowledge and belief, fact and error, truth and explanation" (Burr, 2003:29). In this DA study, I will explore how the various descriptions are marshalled in the context of the subjects' lives in living in provincial New Zealand Aotearoa and their various resources or interpretative repertoires from that particular cultural setting (Burr, 2003; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996). The issues concerning personal and political stake and accountability will be pervasive and significant in this work. This is especially around just how subjects manage their agentic capacity such as blaming and holding others responsible (or not) for terrorism in the world today, and the other allied consequences of terrorism (Burr, 2003; Potter, 1996).

DA, with its focus on multiple truths and constructions of knowledge, is entirely respectful and honouring of subjects' positioning within the dominant culture. Mainstream psychology links such subjectivity as irrationality, affectivity or the lack of objectivity with suspicion and ignores such voices of our world; that is, domestic violence victims, offenders, racists; all traditionally do not receive attention in traditional psychology. DA welcomes such diversity, multiplicity and

rich potential of research material (Gergen, 1985; Harre and Gillett, 1994; Potter, 1996; Tuffin, 2005).

In the above, it has been argued that this specific DA approach to people's talk about terrorism, is the best treatment for all of the special features and characteristics as outlined. There are many other ways that DA could be utilised in this area; for example, looking at issues of power dynamics would be another focus point. Finally, Chomsky (2003), Poynting et al (2004), Rees (2005), and Silberstein (2002) are but a few of those writers who have identified the power of that word 'Terrorism' and the linguistic manipulations of the US, President Bush and his powerful media. What has a small group of people at the bottom of the globe been able to make of such extreme behaviours and what do they have to say about their encounter with terrorism? The DA approach has all the characteristics that should make it the most effective choice in that exposure. This approach will be outlined in the next chapter that examines research methodology.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Methodology**

In this chapter, I will describe the planning of a qualitative Discourse Analysis project that has as its focus the subject of 'Terrorism'. The aim of this present study is to establish what the participants have to say about their personal experiences in dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, their constructions of terrorism; what they consider are the causes, consequences, responsibilities, media issues and other aspects. I interviewed ten people from within my community and their 'talk' is the raw material for my project. Potter and Wetherell (1987:160), outline a set of ten stages for the entire process of discourse analysis that they suggest are not sequential steps necessarily but phases that merge and vary. Whilst I understand that there is no single correct method for DA, their template was my process in the 'Talking Terrorism' project when I worked through the first five stages of the Potter and Wetherell model. The last five stages form the final part of this project at the analysis and report phases of this DA study and form Chapter 5 and 6.

#### **Method**

For the methodology chapter that follows I worked through this sequence described by Potter and Wetherell (1987:160): research question construction, sample selection, collection of records and documents, interviews, transcription preparation.

## **Research Question Preparation**

What I wanted from my participants for this project? In order to get 'terrorism talk' from my participants, I needed to prepare a set of interview questions that would be able to procure that information, be acceptable to them and be helpful and fruitful for the analysis stages of this DA study.

- I wanted to allow each participant to talk about their 'take' on the issue of terrorism and their definition of what terrorism may be.
- I wondered about whom they attributed responsibility for terrorisms 'so-called' proliferation in these times (if that is what they considered to be true).
- I wanted them to comment on what they considered the socio-political agendas and tensions that may drive people and groups to utilise a terrorist-type response in their environment.
- Participants would be able to consider the roles of media in helping or exacerbating terrorism today.
- Also I wanted them to talk about their fears and anxieties about travel around the globe and then for them to give consideration to a parochial terrorism position on New Zealand Aotearoa.
- I also wanted their comments about the future of terrorism and what they consider would be the shape of terrorism in our ever-changing world.

The task to design a set of pertinent and appropriate questions was more difficult than I previously imagined. I used a set of questions that came from what I

imagined I wanted to be asked about the topic. I thought about how the responses would be analysed in later stages. I piloted my interview questions on myself and then a friend ran through the process to 'winkle' out any problem areas. No alterations were necessary. The Interview Questions that frame this DA project are in Appendix A.

**Interview format:** Each of the semi-structured interview was to be around an hour long and three-staged; firstly there would be introductions between the 2 parties, rapport building began and then a brief statement concerning the purpose of the study. Participant rights were reiterated. Then in the second stage, the topic of terrorism was briefly introduced and the interview and taping began. The last stage consists of a debrief process according to ethical processes.

### **Participants**

In order to recruit participants, I advertised in our local daily paper by writing a letter to the Editor for publication requesting interested people to volunteer for my project (Appendix B). From this, other participants were recruited, in a 'snowball' type of recruiting to achieve my goal of ten participants (Trochim, 2001).

However, three of my group withdrew from the project for various personal reasons. I filled their places with newer participants, out of social encounters where people asked me how my thesis was going and them suggesting that they would be interested in participating.

The participants were aged between twenty to sixty plus years and included six females and four males. Of the ten, one had Maori ancestry, six were Pakeha New Zealanders, one was Australian born, and two were born in the United Kingdom. These aspects had little role in the selection process and nor was there any particular emphasis on gender in selecting participants; it was all about who was available and willing to participate. The researcher knew five of the interviewees casually. Several of the participants were known to each other. All were ordinary members of the local community. Prospective participants were given an Information Sheet (Appendix C) outlining the nature of this research, their rights and requirements for their involvement.

By the time I had completed seven interviews it felt like I had a wealth of material to utilise in the DA. It is claimed that small number will still provide sufficient data to account for all the linguistic variance. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest that even with just a small number of participant interviews, sufficient interesting material can be found in regard to discourse themes/patterns and interpretative repertoires.

My project on terrorism talk is not intended to be generalised to other populations as is generally understood within the empirical research model. I realised that the texts from my 10 interviewees would provide my project with a unique set of discourses that represented only my group and this researcher. Another

researcher and another group of people, in the very same area of New Zealand or elsewhere, would have their own style and resultant discourses.

Furthermore, the knowledge base on any given topic varies greatly ranging from considerable depth to practically nil. Despite that, in any discussion people will generally be able to construct an argument and contribute their opinion. All the ingredients of dynamic, strident and maybe even 'ugly' talk are present in the interviews with the combination of the participants, the terrorism topic and myself as the researcher. I was personally surprised at the result and indeed, achieved a set of reasoned and contained rhetoric in the discussions on terrorism. Burr (2005:65) says on this subject that the "point is that numerous discourses surround any object and each strives to represent or 'construct' it in a different way. Each discourse brings different aspects into focus, raises different issues for consideration, and has different implications for what we should do... [Each discourse] ... claims to be the truth". DA and its overarching philosophies reject so-called 'objectivity' and is, indeed, 'honouring' of personal bias and partiality for each party in this study. Bias of researcher and participant is considered inevitable and their 'dance' of reciprocity the essential ingredient sought after for this type of research.

### **Procedure**

I interviewed people whose transcriptions went into the final text analysis for the Terrorism project. When they had made their decision to be part of the project, they were then asked to sign a Consent Form (Appendix D) which they returned

to me in a provided, stamped, addressed envelope. On this form they were also asked to indicate their preferred option for handling their interview tape, post-project.

Participants contacted me by telephone after seeing the advertising in our local paper whilst some I was able to make contact with by telephone after gaining their agreement via a third party upon the participants' agreement. I confirmed their participation upon receipt of their Consent Form and both parties agreed to an interview appointment. Some of the participants were happy to be interviewed at my workplace whilst several wanted to be interviewed in their own homes.

Each participant was assured of confidentiality in their participation in the project, given a pseudonym and the commitment to disguise or eliminate any identifying information. Each participant was offered a debrief process. Also I arranged the provision of counselling in the case of any psychological disturbance in their participating in this project about the topic of Terrorism. No participant took up the latter offer. After their interview, each participant was sent (by post or email) a copy of their transcribed interview in order that they could edit, delete and change any of their text. Two participants took that opportunity and made minor editing changes of their interview. At the conclusion of my project, the last link I have with my project participants is to send to each of them a copy of a summary of the various research findings of the Terrorism thesis.

Using a tape recorder, a pack of audiotapes and the Interview Questions each participant participated in a semi-structured interview process in order to gather their 'Talk on Terrorism'. A summary of this includes questions about local and international terrorism, about their perceptions of the 9/11 attacks, their language around terrorism (definitions), whether they feel pressure about terrorism, what they think the terrorists are trying to achieve, the media role, and who they hold responsible for terrorist activity.

I felt confident to be able to generate the texts for analysis due to my professional experiences of nearly three decades working as a counsellor, where taping of sessions was a reasonably normal practice. The semi-structured questions about the topic of Terrorism were always a guide and one that I adhered to in the initial stages of 'talk' gathering and I became more fluent in the process and with the topic. After the first interview, I was able to maintain the information and gathering process without such an inflexible and structured mode and generally allowed my participants to pace and direct the various 'terrorism' conversations. In Tuffin (2005:88) in the 'fly on the wall' discussion, Zygo states, " I think interviews are great in that they mirror conversational exchanges while also permitting the researcher to focus the conversation around topics and questions of interest".

I began the interviews after completing the Massey University ethics procedure and peer review of ethical issues in October 2007. The interviews were

completed in July 2008 through which time there had been many global incidents as well as parochial 'terrorist' type incidents; and an abundance of media terrorist material on which people would be able to focus their interest.

There were times during interviewing a participant that I would find myself agreeing with their positioning and other times where I knew I strongly disagreed. Inevitably, sometimes it was more than obvious from the flow (or not!) of the interview that this researcher's position became known. Indeed, in most interviews, I needed to say very little, as participants were well able to hold their own discourses on what they felt about terrorism with only minor interruption from me. Sometimes it was hard to get a word in. One participant argued vehemently with me when he felt that I was blaming Moslems for all the terrorism today because I mentioned 'Moslem' twice. In DA there is no need for me as researcher to become under/over-involved or tangled in the above participant's rhetoric other than as a collector of it. My endeavours at partiality or a lack of judgment or bias allows her/his words to stand on their own and for her/him to explore. Harre and Gillett (1994:180) suggest that we "need to see mental life as a dynamic activity, engaged in by people, who are located in a range of interacting discourses and at certain positions in those discourses and who, from the possibilities they make available, attempt to fashion relatively integrated and coherent subjectivities for themselves."

## **Ethic considerations of the project**

Ethical considerations for research safety required attention. Key ethical principles for a researcher to adhere to include: Informed Consent where the participant has all information about the nature and purpose of the study; Confidentiality ensures anonymity and privacy within the project with identifying material disguised and participants have a pseudonym. Their interview material would be kept secure; Information Sharing involves each participant receiving their copy of their transcript and be able to edit that contribution. Participants have received a summary of the project findings on completion of the study; a debrief process was offered at the end of the interview; the notion of 'do no harm' is paramount so the study was subjected to normal ethics protocols, peer reviewed; and finally, use of information from this project is intended for the researcher's Masters of Arts Thesis requirement.

## **Transcription and text themes**

The process to transcription of participant texts from audiotape turn them into written text with notational aids was completed. Potter and Wetherell (1987:164) say that transcription is not merely "putting words down on paper" but a constructive and conventional activity to clarify and represent the participant's words.

In Appendix E a limited selection of Jefferson's (1985) transcription notational system provides the reader with a key to the aids/symbols for understanding the participants' talk quoted in the following Chapters on the analysis (cited in Potter

and Wetherell, 1987:188). The DA process does not require the full range of transcript symbols in order that an accurate record and clear picture is available from the words said between both interviewer and interviewee. The various symbols used in the present study represent talk features such as laughter, pauses, voice intonations, unclear words and conversation interactions.

Full transcriptions were completed for each interview though omissions/editing did occur in the portions of the participant talk when I considered that the material irrelevant to the topic of terrorism. Also two participants went through their interview transcripts minutely to edit their texts, as per ethics provisos. Neither of these processes (researcher and participant) made major impacts on the nature of their talk. With each completed transcription, I also had a word map of the various keywords/themes from each interviewee. These were plotted onto a 'master map' with page numbers, which will allow me to locate the phrases and words with relative ease at the analysis level. The analyses of these have become two dominant discourses: political terrorism discourse and a local/parochial terrorism discourse. Within this twin focus I have identified a number of the linguistic repertoires and devices used by the participants on terrorism.

## **Part 2: Analysis**

### **Chapter 5: Political discourses of Terrorism**

The focus of this work is not 'terrorism' but 'talk' about terrorism. As could be imagined, there are many identifiable discourses from the participants' interviews. Potter and Wetherell (1992) have provided a helpful 'landscape' metaphor to map language and discourses in Discursive Psychology. Using their landscape metaphor, if we consider a topographical map of the area around say Mt.Cook/Aorangi in the Southern Alps of the South Island, then it is the highest peaks of those ranges that will be under scrutiny for the purposes of this study. There are equally interesting items and themes from my participants that topographically would be positioned in the valleys of the terrorism landscape. What follows are the chief 'peaks' from the topographical map titled "Talking Terrorism" with two dominating participant political and parochial discourses.

#### **The Justice Discourse**

The first dominant 'talk' gleaned from the analysis of the participants' interviews is the Justice discourse, which is constructed from a raft of anti-repertoires; these include talk that is anti-American/Bush, anti-media, anti-militarism, anti-global superpower and even anti-capitalism resources. It is formed around who the participants attribute responsibility for recent terrorism and is accusing, blaming and expressive of disgust and anger at behaviours of the present US, UK leaders

and their 'obedient' media for what they see as making the issue of terrorism very much worse than if things had been handled differently. From their range of linguistic resources, almost all the participants used talk of anger, outrage, passion and high-energy metaphors of action to explain, strengthen and support their rhetoric about the natural justice against the power of the US/Bush militarism (the war on terror). Part of their talk concerns an understanding that 'of course the 9/11 attacks happened, it was always going to end with such an attack, that 'chickens always come home to roost' in the end; especially as the US has treated other nations with such invasion, contempt and abuse; it is only natural that this be so'. I also heard a philosophical rejection of and awareness that many of the participants would not succumb to the political manipulations and fear-inducement by political and media forces.

'Freedom', egalitarianism and 'a fair go' are long-established quests of New Zealanders especially in the Pakeha sense. I have some sense that this justice/fairness resource being utilised is integral of the New Zealand identity. This sense of fairness, justice and connection with the 'under dog' appears to be a pivotal identification of things 'Kiwi', and part of our combined heritage and history, about self-reliance and independence, of being in a far-flung part of the globe down in the South Pacific away from the rest of the world (Head, cited in King, 1991).

### **Anti-US/Bush- Blaming Repertoires, George Bush, 'the biggest Terrorist'**

Many of the participants located responsibility for recent increased terrorism with the militarist responses by the US and especially George Bush's so-called "War

on Terror” in what Tarpley (2007) terms “synthetic terrorism”. They saw this as exacerbating the problem of terrorism on the world scene and the way the so-called terrorist suspects were handled, the US Patriots Act and the various incarceration locations (Guantanamo Bay, Abhu Ghraib) drew finger-pointing criticisms from the various participants at the US and its allies.

*(6) Because I think America thinks they are ten-feet-tall and bulletproof or they did at the time and they didn't realise that people could do a thing like that on American soil. It's okay for them to go and invade other countries but the thought of them being invaded in this particular way probably hadn't occurred to them. They certainly, in my opinion, um (.) how can I put this? I'm not saying they asked for it but they certainly have created a situation where, where they had been not well thought of in a lot of countries around the world. **Sally** (p.2)*

In this extract Sally uses impersonal pronouns (they) referring to the collective American population who she constructs as in favour of their country's political status. This positions her in the opposing collective of 'non-Americans' in her generalisations and anti-American rhetoric. Such generalisations are an extremely common speech device in ordinary conversations. She also employs a 'cowboy'- style metaphor to describe her version of the American political stance around the world as a bully that is ten-feet-tall and bulletproof.

*[] Because of the way they go into different countries and they try and change the diplomatic structure, the political structure. They invaded Cuba. They just seem to be able to think they can do what they like and in fact they are the biggest dictators out of the whole lot. [] And in a way George Bush does throw out these ridiculous challenges to people, “we are not gonna put up with this”, “we are not gonna put up with Iran having nuclear weapons”. Who, who left him in charge of everything, why do they think they can rule the world? Why do they think they can have a say over these smaller countries and stop them from having nuclear weapons and doing what they like with their governments? (1) That's what the United Nations is for. [] Because I think he's got some sort of idea that (2) he's doing what God wants or just an arrogance*

*that they know best, that their system is the best that they're going to push it on to everyone else. Sally (P.2, 3)*

Sally's liberal philosophies, rhetoric of egalitarianism and social justice enable her to position America as a military aggressor who received some measure of natural justice in the 9/11 incident. This is anti-American discourse and is achieved by a set of linguistic repertoires that are available to Sally that include positioning, previous knowledge that supports a confident opinion on the political issues involving terrorism, metaphors, generalisations, list making and affiliative devices that support and strengthen her stance and personal notions of 'truth' about terrorism. This is how she assembles and marshals her talk (Edwards and Potter, 1992).

On the continuum of dictators, Sally positions America as the biggest dictator compared with all the other dictators in the world. This talk places further emphasis on Sally's confident opinions about this topic and the aligning of America with the worst case dictator scenario ensures that for the listener there is no sense in trying to shake that confidence. Likewise, her talk constructs and strengthens her positioning with the 'cowboy' metaphor, that frames an out of control, unstoppable, loose cannon sense in her descriptive speech on America's military behaviour throughout the world; "who left Bush in charge?"

Sally's disparaging language positions George Bush as the archetypal 'cowboy' listing the ways he is out of control and her perception of his 'ridiculousness' that challenges her notions of justice. She uses the rhetorical device of list making to strengthen her argument about the various ways that Americans/Bush militarism offends her and how 'they' are the world's biggest dictators; they 'go' into

different countries; they try and change things in those countries; they think they can do what they like. The list implies actions and energy about the power base of 'they' as opposed to other more reasonable people. Her set of questions acts to construct and reinforce her position and feelings of outrage.

In her use of the phrase 'smaller countries' Sally is sufficiently confident to draw on her previous knowledge of the asymmetrical and unequal power relations between America and nations involved in terrorist hotspots. She lives in the small nation of New Zealand and has a cultural understanding of power relations. Sally's active positioning against America/ Bush is constructed around her notion of injustice, small nations versus super powers and victim/power interactions (Burr, 2005). Such talk creates a contrast structure employed as a persuasive device (Wooffitt, 1993) Her talk functions as an affiliative device, which indicates her sense of collectivity or belonging to the non-American group and aids her in distancing from them and recognising unfairness and bullying behaviour.

Benjamin also positions himself in opposition to the US/ Bush war on terror;

*...I don't accept the generalisms like the war on terror, that phrase I don't accept. I don't like the way that Blair (2), The Blair-Bush-Howard triangulate reacted to the situation in Iraq and the way the public was manipulated on weapons of mass destruction. Somebody once said, "How do you know Saddam Hussein has got weapons of mass destruction? And the Americans replied, "We know they've got them because we have got the receipts".*  
(Laughs) **Benjamin** (P. 1)

This participant speaks confidently from a strong position of prior knowledge bolstering his views with irony and humour and his notions of 'truth', gleaned

from his experiences of world travel and professional dealings in foreign lands. His anti-US viewpoints are expressed with him closely identifying his stake in his rhetoric. He is categorical in the injustice of US invasion of Iraq; his list of non-acceptance and what he doesn't like is stated to emphasise his argument. This sense of knowing exactly what his position is about the role of US in the issues of who is the terrorist arises out of his personal experiencing. Burr (2005:68) states that what "we call knowledge then simply refersto the particular construction or version of a phenomenon thathas received the stamp of truth in our society".

### **Knowledge, knowing and not knowing**

*"When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all, but only a confusion; a dark roaring, a blindness, a wreckage of shattered glass and splintered wood; like a house in a whirlwind, or else a boat crushed by the icebergs or swept over the rapids, and all aboard powerless to stop it. It's only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story after all. When you are telling it, to yourself or to someone else. (Atwood, 1997:298).*

My project is about terrorism and all my participants talk about their experiences in seeing terrorist images and the impact that the phenomenon has on them and just who they hold responsible for such atrocities. Most have not directly experienced terrorism. However, they all have a 'take', and their own contextual realm from which to draw and relate their particular narrative on terrorism. Most relate with adjectival eloquence on their experiences watching New York's 9/11 Trade Centre terrorist attacks via the television screen. They were watchers of the 9/11 experiences, sitting in the safety of New Zealand/Aotearoa, in a very different context to those 'sitting in the middle' of the terrorist attack story, as Atwood describes above. Hayakawa and Hayakawa (1990:7) state that we

humans “are never dependent for information on direct experience alone”.

Humans are able to fill in any gaps of experience and it is language, the indispensable mechanism that makes that possible; we humans exist/thrive in a “semantic environment” (ibid).

### **Summary of anti-US and Bush repertoires**

In the above extract from Sally and Benjamin, and with most of the participants in the project, here is a positioning in opposition to the US/Bush policies against terrorists. They do that using various linguistic and interpretative devices that add strength to their opinions. Parker (1992) identifies the functions of language and talk as being to blame, to deny, to justify, to describe, to accuse and to legitimate people’s opinions and their knowledge base. On any topic people will position and make their opinions from a baseline of nil to little depth ranging right through to considerable depth and expertise levels. This was so in the terrorism talk with most participants highly aware of the issues and willing to speak their opinions confidently especially around whom they hold responsible for recent terrorism acts. The anti-US/Bush repertoire was merely one plank on the raft of anti-discourses.

### **Anti-Media repertoires**

Nearly all participants exercised their emotions including anger, despair, fury, horror, indignation against the media machine and its treatment of this important news event that terrorism is and will continue to be in the future. Most responded with scepticism and criticism of media’s conflicted role to inform the public and

sell papers. The commercial requirement for media to sensationalise creates an impediment to the public getting 'real' information, as does fear-inducing language and journalistic styles. Most participants spoke about how the media deliberately use strategies for commercial benefit and questioned just who and what is being served in the transmission of terrible images/stories being beamed into our homes from terrorist sites. They ask who owns the media. Instead of journalism, I use the term 'Churnalism' to describe the beat up of ingredients such as fear, anxiety and terror, which can result in a docile public ready to agree to anything for the sake of peace and safety. A New Zealand columnist MacDonald (2009) coins the phrase "if it bleeds it leads" that sums up media sensationalist handling of the terrorism topic. Much of the speech acts in the project reflect those concerns.

*...the big American spin in comparison to other world events which (3) yeah our media is particularly vicarious and captured by America. They are all horrible, horrible things to happen to anybody and traumatising to watch on TV and the media brings it closer and fuels secondary traumatisation to see all those people in the train and seeing all these people in pain. Otherwise you wouldn't be exposed to it unless you've been in a war zone or (1) umm =*

R: = or our television takes us into it=

S: Yes and having to explain it to the kids. (P. 2)

*[] It's been captured by the media and then we get to view TV and video footage and it's become far more visible and that's partly what people who commit these atrocities are counting on. (1) The whole world is watching.*

**Shirley** (P. 4)

This speaker utilises a metaphorical device, which constructs the media as a message-machine that *spins* information, is employed to deliver fearful, and politically directed missives about terrorism. She creates a list to emphasise her perceptions of the mechanical nature of the media rolling on regardless of any conscience or consequence of its behaviour. Shirley operates a

helplessness/victim style repertoire in her talk about the media bringing the horrible things, pain and traumatising images closer via the television. The word 'captured' is mentioned twice; America has captured the media and the media has captured terrorism. This strengthens her helplessness talk against the powerful US media machine in the war on terror. She uses generalisations and extreme case formulations to maximise her rhetoric; "the whole world is watching", and "all these people". This is utilised for the enhancement of effective talk by way of exaggerating or over/under-emphasising occurrence (Tuffin, 2005). She distances herself somewhat from her talk with the use of collective and impersonal pronouns such as our, we, and they. Sometimes people will distance or fend off themselves from a topic they do not know how to handle or want to respond to.

Barbara also attributes blame in the spread of terrorism to a huge media machine that is all too ready to report and be the spreader of bad, mad and sad tidings;

*[Terrorism] it's certainly found its way into the spotlight on the world's stage anyway. ... The fact is maybe the shock factor and the violence and the installation of fear into the people. Yeah the media. If it weren't for the media we wouldn't know about things that are happening on the other side of the world (3) because we'd be waiting for a letter to come in weeks later or something (laughs)...it's instant, instantaneous. Yeah if they're holding a blade to someone's throat or a gun to their head it's on the 6 o'clock news and it's all around the world. **Barbara** (P. 7)*

She utilises a theatre metaphor to describe the intensity and pervasiveness of media portrayal of terrorism; it spotlights and is on the world's stage. Her words indicate the use of helplessness/victim repertoires about the power and impact of the media as it shocks, installs fear with the instantaneous and globalised

injections of terror sent by modern technology. The word-picture she paints of a terror situation strengthens her rhetoric with the use of high energy words such as 'blade', 'someone's throat' and 'a gun to their head', a three part list. Her knowledge base of history allows her to take in a moment of contrast to consider how news was once transmitted compared to contemporary times. In this talk Barbara is positioning the media as holding some responsibility for the spreading of fear and making terrorism work for the terrorists. She is somewhat distanced from her speech as is indicated by the use of impersonal and collective pronouns.

### **Summary of anti-media talk**

This repertoire engaged in which resulted in a lot of high-energy action language as participants challenged the role of the media and their perceptions of how the politicians manipulated many of the terrorism incidents for political purposes. Participants felt they were being manipulated and stated that positioning unequivocally. Other planks of the anti-resources raft follow below.

### **“Chickens coming home to roost” -Ward Churchill (2003) repertoire**

The above metaphor was employed by several participants to describe how they viewed a situation where they felt that the US deserved the attacks on the now most recognisable date of 9/11 Twin Towers terrorist attacks in particular. Most pointed their fingers at how the US had gone about their militaristic domination of the globe with President Bush, as a Global Sheriff of the world, 'poking' their

noses into political affairs and tinkering with leadership that would be advantageous especially to US concerns.

*I think definitely, abso-bloody-lutely, George Bush and his cronies, including Tony Blair are the leaders that have wrecked havoc around the world and now their people are getting what comes with that. And Australia. Don't forget Australia and just how fast John Howard jumped into the barney with Bush. Somehow our government has been smart enough not to get into all that war on terror stuff but John Howard was right up Bush's arse. Excuse me but you know what I mean. Chickens come home to roost eventually. Adam (P. 5)*

Adam introduces me to Churchill's (2003) chicken roosting metaphor. This is an extremely confident opinion with the speaker positioning himself assuredly using extreme case formulation devices (definitely, abso-bloody-lutely) to construct vehemence to his understanding of how 9/11 occurred. One is easily able to see where he stands. He lists the political trail that he is opposed to with action packed metaphors that create a feeling of moving along, and spreading out over the world from the US, UK and into Australia. His John Howard twin metaphors illustrate his disdain, which is bolstered by his previous political thinking, knowledge and belief in the natural justice of revenge.

### **Fear repertoires; anti-Moslems, anti-Culture and Religion repertoires**

*Ye little larvae, lords of the household,  
Potty, P-P, Peppermill, Lampshade,  
Funnybone, Faucet, Face-in the- wall,  
Head-over- heels and Upsy-daisy  
And Coolywobbles and Cupboard-love,  
Be good, little gods, and guard these lives...  
That no paranoiac notion obsess  
Nor dazing dump bedevil their minds  
With faceless fears...  
W.H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety*.*

Suter (2008) suggests that anxiety and fear is often the result of not being told the truth. Within participants' texts, there was a fair sprinkling of talk concerning emotions such as anger, anxiety, fear and even passion. I would like to relate my own experience:

*I would like to share my own personal encounter when I spent a grandparent's Christmas in Melbourne this year (2008). I was returning to New Zealand and had spent some time trying to locate my precious Swiss Army knife for the return trip through Australian customs. It had travelled with me overseas on many occasions in the last twenty-odd years and I admit an emotional attachment to that knife. However I could not find it and thought that I just had not taken it out of my suitcase so knew that it would be safe there from the X-ray gaze of Melbourne customs and anti-terrorist security. How wrong I was! My backpack was **not** returned to me and they had found my knife deep inside. The customs woman, holding my knife, glared at me as if I was a terrorist and then said that it would be confiscated. There were no words to cajole or negotiate its return as I had managed at Christchurch airport last October. No, it was gone! Just like that. On the one hand, I felt a huge rage at her, the Australian security system and the bloody anti-terrorist flavour of our world today. And on the other hand, I felt a complete idiot and frustration with myself for being so careless and allowing this to happen.*

The issue of terrorism has set Westerners against so-called terrorists who are typecast by media and political forces as always being Moslem and against the Western style of life that attempts to dominate other cultures. Likewise we (Westerners) sometimes struggle to absorb their cultural diversity and practices when they arrive amongst us as displaced people fleeing horrors in their homelands. Some participants express cultural inflexibility around issues involving immigration by Moslem refugees to Western countries and the potential for conflict with the melding and clash of diverse cultures. Some, though, express optimism and satisfaction about the colour that cultural differences and diversity brings with immigration.

Benjamin acknowledges a discomfort about the overt displays of Moslem clothing for women;

*I have, probably because of the media, I have a sort of inbuilt dislike of what I perceive as Moslem behaviour. I don't like the women in burqas and that sort of thing. I find that quite sinister.*

**R** *It's interesting 'cos one of their major terrorists used that as a disguise to slip across borders.*

**B** *Yes, yes. I saw it for the first time, a few months ago, I saw two women in Auckland who were completely, just the two eyes were visible. That really, I didn't like that at all. I felt quite uneasy about that. **Benjamin** (P. 6)*

Benjamin offers a tentative opinion positioning perhaps fending responsibility for his dislike to the media and it being not within his control in a helpless repertoire (it was inbuilt). He constructs his position on Moslem women wearing burqas listed in a set of reasons concluding with the strong word 'sinister', which bolsters his rhetoric of fear and 'dis-ease' about menacing perceptions of the burqa. He uses 'I' taking personal ownership of his considered strong opinion and is not diverted by the researcher's comments when he returns to his original thought patterns about his distaste for the burqa. He is confident enough not to seek my consensus and verification even though he is uncomfortable in its expression.

Cindy narrates about her return to her hometown which appears to her to have become a Moslem ghetto;

*= The men, (.) a lot of men around and they were, a lot of them were sitting at tables outside coffee bars drinking coffee and watching. Didn't see many women. The ones I saw were fully-burqaed and in groups. Not single, not on their own. And I felt that I was in an alien land. This is the neighbourhood where my parents grew up. Where I grew up. And it was a really hot day and I was thirsty and I didn't feel comfortable going into any shop. **Cindy** (P. 7)*

Cindy constructs her story with a fear repertoire, building notions of imminent danger walking under surveillance in a strange male-only environment, a woman

on her own, where Moslem women were protected from the male gaze by their burqas. Her 'I' statements indicates her ownership of her strong opinion and positioning as 'other' in her own country. Like Benjamin, her words construct perceptions of imminent threat from an alien culture she is afraid of, does not understand and positions herself apart from even to the point of foregoing a drink when she is hot and thirsty.

However, Shirley holds an alternate perspective to the 'otherising' that immigrants can be subjected to, and the long-term consequences of such alienation. She talks tentatively initially but switches to being definitive;

*Being at home, yeah, (laughs) (2) I'm probably not exposed to too many people to be suspicious of. Umm but yeah I think through airports probably I am. I will tell you what it has brought about. People are more suspicious of immigrants, particularly people of Arab and (unclear word) and its heightened racism, don't you think? When people, perhaps are not confident around people of other races or ethnicities or minority communities. I think it induces the hatred you know. What's the word? The division increases the division. The 'them and us'. And it's part of the labelling thing and it's part of the (2) 'enemy versus the good guys' dichotomy. **Shirley** (P. 7)*

Her deference 'don't you think?' is an example of consensus-claiming where she attempts to claim verification for her opinion in order to strengthen her own viewpoint. Verification is an imperative part of human communication especially in this modern age of biased reporting, propaganda and general mistrust of media (Hayakiwa and Hayakiwa, 1990). Speakers attempt to draw causal conclusions by eliciting verification and Edwards and Potter (1992) note that consensus is particularly central to causal reasoners. Her use of the fear repertoire is constructed around focusing on those who are suspicious of

immigrants where she claims racism as the cause of such fear/hatred and people's lack of confidence. She positions herself in opposing 'them and us' dichotomies but retains some distance from her argument with her use of impersonal pronouns. She uses the extreme case formulation device when she refers to 'people' five times in the extract. She constructs an argument that she exaggerates with this inclusive and over-emphasis of 'people', suggesting greater occurrence and numbers in order to strengthen her viewpoint.

### **Religious repertoires**

Fisk (2008) writes about religious conflicts between Christianity and politics being 'uncomfortable bedfellows'. The zealous mix of religion and politics by the US/ Bush has deliberately activated and created fear of terrorism in the American population, which has put the globe on a collision course with the other extreme of fanatical terror-seeking Moslems set to take over the world. Some participants responded with rhetoric of challenge to the tactic of divide and control by fear (Catherwood and DiVanna, 2008; Dyer, 2005).

Sally attributes terrorism to factors such as religious hatred and jealousy;

*... They've been brainwashed into hating Westerners. (2) And they get a reward, don't they, when they get to heaven? Did I see it in the paper, 42 virgins are waiting for them? (Laughs) [] And it's a strange place to go to heaven to have sex. (Laughs)*

*[] essentially I guess that's about land but it's also about religion as well. But it always comes back to (1) bloody religion. And it stuffs the whole world up. If religion was taken in its true sense that what you would expect Christianity and Moslem to be all about, it would be about peace and caring for each other, and caring for the planet. But somehow it's got very twisted on both sides... **Sally** (P. 5, 8)*

Sally employs a set of extreme case formulation in her talk against religion; the opening phrase about Moslems hating Westerners and how religion stuffs up 'the whole world' are exaggerations that strengthen her argument with the purpose to influence others (Pomerantz (1986), cited in Wooffitt, 1992). She also uses consensus claiming in her question 'don't they?' to elicit verification for her viewpoint. Generally she also maintains some distancing in her use of impersonal pronouns. The use of words such as 'stuff' the whole world up and 'very twisted' are linguistic devices used by the speaker to enhance in images what religion is doing to the world in the opinion of Sally; it is her use of an anti-religion repertoire. They are energy images that function in her talk as scaffolding to her rhetoric against religion, something she has preconceived knowledge about and confidence in expressing.

Differently though, Benjamin talks of his experiences living in Moslem cultures;

*...I've felt in much more danger in other parts of the world um from things that would probably come under the heading of crime rather than terrorism. ... And I have worked with these people. I have worked with Iraqis and Iranians, the Indians and Pakistanis and so on. They are just people like us when you get right down to it. **Benjamin** (P. 1, 11)*

He uses personal pronouns here to indicate close ownership and personal stake in his viewpoint in which he has formulated from his intimate personal experiences in his workplace. He employs a three part list device to count the ways he knows and understands Moslems, positing himself as someone who is comfortable in other cultures. He uses minimising language around the danger/fear of living in such places; 'I have felt in much more danger' and 'they

are just like us'. His metaphor of 'when you get right down to it' sees him positioning himself alongside Moslems and unafraid, in a tolerance repertoire.

### **Anti-violence talk**

This repertoire is threaded through the participants' talk when they express anxiety about the impact of terrorism and the portrayal in the media of images of horror in terror attacks. Some participants suggest this is possibly all part of the manipulation by the Western allies to expose their populations to extreme fear situations to make them compliant with Security/Terrorism legislation for our governments to be our protectors.

Shirley constructs her talk here from the perspective of a mother teaching values to her sons;

*...Yeah, I am very much a pacifist, I suppose and the violent attitudes of the society are just overwhelming. I mean the degree of violence in our movies is just astonishing. I can't believe the degree of violence our society accepts (1) I don't know where the immunity has come from. I mean some countries you have to live in the pain and anguish and here, we introduce it into our lives. We shoot it into our lives as entertainment. Yeah it's entertainment. Why would we (3) do we not understand pain enough? ... Shirley (P4)*

This text reflects Shirley's personal liberal philosophies of opposing injustice such as violence, and is worked by her use of personal pronouns indicating close consideration of her views, her ownership, and stake in her expressions. It is interesting that she uses a violence metaphor when she constructs her strong argument against violence; we 'shoot' it into our lives. In the last part of the extract she uses the collective pronoun 'we' as she aligns herself in within the anti-violence grouping indicating that she is not alone in these beliefs.

## **Conspiracy repertoires**

This talk concerns alternative perspectives/explanations for terrorism; such as being a strategy of manipulation, manufactured for economical and political gain for the advantage of the dominant cultures such as the US and Britain; a state-sponsored 'synthetic terrorism'. If they make their populations so afraid, they will be allowed to do anything in the way of military intervention, counter-intelligence and legislatively in order to counter the people's fear about what the government says the so-called terrorist may be doing. Hence all the airport and port security and the US/UK acting against international conventions against people they consider suspect or 'terrorist-like'. Tarpley (2007) writes about the various hidden agendas of the US government in their quest for world domination and state-sponsored terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, and uses the term "synthetic terror" to describe the phenomenon.

*I don't think you get news anymore. Everything we see is filtered. I think it's designed to depress us. And keep us living in fear and a bit frightened about everything. And keep us as the cannon fodder, you know, fairly well down and stop us from asking too many questions and there are people who readily comply with, with so-called anti-terrorism measures. I'm sure the state loves to, I mean you could be accused of terrorism if you parked in the wrong place in (our town) eventually, couldn't you? If you get to that kind of thing.*

**Benjamin (P.4)**

Benjamin attributes responsibility of creating fear to the media even further as a filter of fear used by the state as a social control. He expresses his opinion confidently and he owns what he is saying with mostly personal pronouns indicating his personal knowledge on the topic. This is an opinion he has canvassed before and given thought to his rhetoric. In describing the media

impacts on terrorism, he employs the extreme case formulation device to bolster his opinions about its power; how you don't get news anymore, and everything we see is filtered. Also he backs his argument by listing how fear works.

### **Anti-Capitalism repertoires**

Some rhetoric focused on the destructive mechanics of Capitalism of the Western world in exploiting and destroying developing countries abilities to their own sovereignty in the name of so-called freedom and democracy (ascribed by the US/allies). A case is made by 'underdog states' and their extreme factions for the continuation of terrorism because of US economic/political domination.

*I mean, America is so big that they exploit oil, they exploit the people, you know, all the sweatshops that they have got in the factories in the countries where the labour is cheap...exploitation has to stop, because if people continue to feel they are exploited, then people get angry. And are more likely to resort to violence...* Shirley (P.9)

Here Shirley attributes and reasons that US Capitalism and exploitation as being responsible for the terrorism of the world. She uses a 3-part list device to bolster her views and this all is scaffolded by the anti US/Bush repertoire as described earlier. There are extreme case formulations in her talk about 'all' the sweatshops and 'people' is mentioned four times for emphasising her rhetoric.

### **Terrorism and the future-talk**

Global Warming the real problem of the future and the potential warfare (Dyer, 2005) A participant located the above as the real issue of the not-so-distant future as regions begin to grapple with the real shortage of water and food

resources in their areas. I found this to be a most interesting and important insight. I wanted to include it in this project despite being really only mentioned by her and Dyer (2005). This will be especially a crucial issue for the future, around the world with Western domination and their seizing strategic advantages to the world's dwindling supplies of essentials (water and oil).

*... this terrorism stuff will go by and by if climate change catches up to that position [] The effects of climate change only will serve to undermine economic challenges in the world and make the dissatisfaction worse probably. There's the potential for the climate changes stuff to make people want to fight more with resource shortages. Shirley (P. 9)*

Speaking from an informed knowledge base Shirley constructs a picture of a future world where climate change effects will dominate the terrorism landscape. Such impersonalised 'speech', arises out of the use of affiliate devices where such viewpoints are gleaned from belonging to a specific group (Wooffitt, 1992).

### **Summary of Anti- repertoires and dominant Justice discourse**

In the above chapter, I have identified a set of anti-repertoires from the 'talking terrorism' participants. Each extract has been used to illustrate those repertoires and I have explored issues of how they are constructed and what their function is for the speaker. Each of the repertoires constructs the raft or what I term the overarching dominant Justice discourse as described at the start of this chapter. The participants are not taken in by US/Bush political and military attempts to save them or protect them from the bad, mad and sad terrorists. Indeed the participants argue that the 'war on terror' has made the world more unsafe and they are not fooled by media attempts to make them more fearful. Most considered the 9/11 attacks in New York, understandable and even justifiable

from the point of view of non-dominant population of the world that has encountered American exploitation and invasion for decades. Hence the Justice discourse constructed from the raft of anti-American/Bush rhetoric, anti-media, chickens coming home to roost revenge talk, fear repertoires and anti-Capitalism talk. These are all the minor peaks, ranges and various high points that lead up to the towering peak of Mt. Cook/Aorangi as described at the start of this chapter. The participants' consider terrorism unjust no matter who is perpetrating it. A participant's words illustrate clarity of thought.

*But as I say I go back to the definition of terrorism and that's the hardest thing to pin down actually. What exactly is terrorism? It depends where you're standing, who you are, whether you are a so-called terrorist or whether you're George Bush's buddy or whatever. **Benjamin** (P. 3)*

From international perspectives of terrorism, I will now shift focus to a smaller landscape; that of exploring terrorism matters of local concern for New Zealanders and the possible arrival of homegrown terrorism on our own shores.

## Chapter 6: Local Discourses of Terrorism

*'The namer of names is the father of all things.'*  
Jackson (2008:7)

### **NZ a safe place; an 'ark' away from terrorism discourse**

The 'New Zealand is an Ark' discourse includes a fair measure of denial, rejection, optimism, scorn, vehemence and alternative viewpoints about the threat (or not) of terrorism to New Zealand; terrorism cannot touch our country! I do not think what I am describing here is nationalistic pride. Indeed I believe that it maybe even stops short of a pure patriotism or national identity as such (Head, in King, 1991). I wonder that it has more of its origins in our geographical status (at the end of the world) and is felt by people that our country is too far away from other countries, so unreachable, and safe; even that there is nothing here that terrorists could possibly want.

Most participants position our country as completely safe from terrorist attack, due largely to factors such as its geographical position, a group of islands floating in the South Pacific, away from the firing line as a target, politically and economically. It is almost as though those countries involved in terrorism would not notice our country because we are 'good people' and we do not do anything to annoy anyone that would provoke the ire of the terrorists. New Zealand is simply not seen as a feasible option for terrorist attack.

*I reckon we are just too far away, too tinpot and small to be a worry to any so-called terrorists. Adam (P. 3)*

In this tiny sentence Adam sums up in a three part list all the examples of how New Zealand remains safe. His use of 'I reckon' indicate his close ownership to the issue and he uses the collective 'we' to indicate that he belongs to a group process, the safe population of New Zealanders. All of these notions construct what I call the 'ark' repertoire which is commonly used by most of the participants in this project to describe their collective feeling of being away from terrorism immediate impacts bar that which comes via satellite and introduced into the country by those who travel overseas. His opinion is held with a confidence formed from a knowledge base that he has previously formulated and canvassed. He builds a version of New Zealand with his words that include 'tinpot' (meaning cheap, inferior) that is somewhat disparaging that exhibits perhaps a quirky fondness he holds, that I am able to identify as characteristic 'kiwispeak' of self-effacement (King, 1991). Lastly he positions himself as sceptical about the question of just who is a terrorist with his words 'so-called terrorists' which also aligns with the themes in the previous chapter where some of the participants struggled with media and political interpretations or spins on just who is a terrorist.

Kate recognises New Zealand's geographical advantages as far as being a terrorist target but this becomes complicated by US/Australian military relationships;

*Keeping it at bay, in a way. Keeping it distant, keeping it distant as possible (4)...And how initially this whole thing around the idea of terrorism was out*

*there somewhere. Way, way distant, Northern Hemisphere preferably. And then proximity, or the closeness of George Bush and this little Sheriff down in the South Pacific and Australia (laughter). And hence, I'm just, so that bought it, it brings it closer again...Kate (P.4)*

Kate utilises a three part 'keeping' list to construct her notion of terrorism staying away from New Zealand, keeping it at bay, and emphasising her strength of feelings about safety floating in the South Pacific. Terrorism was something occurring in another realm but with repetition of words and small phrasings in her talk she acknowledges and constructs a notion of the movement of terrorism moving towards us, in its imminence and potential for our country a threat. I gain an impression from her action talk using words to keep terrorism distant and away from New Zealand;- ark metaphor. She constructs a metaphor about terrorism as a monster or bogey that is 'out there somewhere' locating it in the other hemisphere, but getting closer with the political manoeuvrings she is disparaging about. Her talk portrays the US/allies in a 'cowboy' word picture that functions to support the anti-American themes explored in the previous chapter.

Susan looks to our country's distance from hotspots as being a protective factor for keeping us safe from the gaze of terrorist threat;

**Susan** *Well, I think also that New Zealand, in many respects we are geographically isolated, so I don't think, apart from hearing it on the news we don't have in the face issues of terrorism, the same as other countries, but we must not remain naïve. And I think that's a huge issue (.) we mustn't assume that we're going to be safe from all of this. (P.1)*

'I' and 'we' pronouns in variable contexts as she moves in and out of personalising (or not) her viewpoints as she argues cautiously about New Zealand's safeness from terrorist threat.

Cindy has an outsider's perspective on the New Zealander psyche;

**Cindy** *Generally New Zealanders, the average New Zealander (2) probably (1) only worries about themselves and doesn't sorta think on a large scale, on a global scale, you know. They are insulated in their own little world here in New Zealand right at the end of the world (laughs) and the chances of anything happening, you see it on the news every night. But you probably think, oh no, we're over here, we are safe. And they don't really, they worry more about the every day things in life. I've found that with lots of people. ... (P.5)*

She relates a perception of generalisations that suggest there is widespread support for her viewpoint about the 'average New Zealander'. She constructs the 'New Zealand is a safe place' discourse as she uses an ark metaphor of our country being 'insulated' by isolation, bolstered by her descriptions of our 'own little world' and 'at the end of the world'. On hearing her speak these words at the interview, I was aware fleetingly, of my hackles rising defensively. However, Cindy did not mean to be offensive in her observations. She was pinpointing an interesting notion of something that she had observed at close hand as a newcomer to this country.

### **Summary of the local talk about terrorism**

Terrorism for most of the participants is something that is very bounded and unanticipated in our country and so they respond to it with naivety, disbelief and denial that construct the ark repertoire. They position themselves as isolated from it; it is something that happens overseas which we may encounter when we New Zealanders travel, or it is beamed into our living rooms. There is a reluctance to want to deal with it that indicates their construing our country's physical isolation and political neutrality as keeping New Zealand safer from the

phenomenon of international terrorism than a lot of other countries in the world. Most cope with the new increased airport and flying security and being in travel spots (Egypt, London) with gratitude and understanding.

The 'safe from terrorism' themes above were not the only resources that participants used to construct their talk of terrorism. Local issues of terrorism were canvassed in the interviews with people eager to express their views on a range of parochial matters.

### **Homegrown/local terrorism repertoires?**

This repertoire is the expression of anxiety, anger and suspicion about what is happening in Tuhoë especially around the issue of firearms but with more concern at the criminality of the behaviours. The talk questions and challenges the presumption that what has happened recently in the Urewera is actually terrorism, thus requiring a response from our police on Terrorist lines rather than using criminal legislation. Keenan (2008) has edited a set of papers that questions about so-called local terrorism, the curbing of liberties and "search for terror in Aotearoa New Zealand". We have seen the introduction of potentially invasive and over-zealous security legislation that has its genesis from the political manipulation and pressure from the US's President Bush and his War on Terror that is affecting the participants in their environment and everyday lives.

Liberal-thinking Shirley struggles to keep up with and understand the Tuhoë incident and the role of the state/police. She utilises an amended form of the

“storm in the teacup” metaphor to describe how she feels about the local ‘terrorism’ brand.

*Well (1) it's hard to know for me what really are the recent terrorism activities in New Zealand because it's hard to know (laughs) if there has been any (1) the media alludes to the fact that there have been and the police have tried to lay charges under the Terrorism Act but it depends on what your definition of terrorism is...some point some people like to call it terrorism and be able to exclude people ... Umm (1) terrorism isn't really one of my words...definitely change-makers. (P.1-2)  
... Perhaps it is a bit of a dramatic umm umm (3) what's the phrase about the teapot (2) everybody's in a tizz at the moment. I don't (.) it's hard to know whether we should be all in a tizz or not... **Shirley** (P.6)*

In this extract the talk achieved is constructed around a personalised struggle repertoire as Shirley endeavours to understand what is happening locally all of which is dependent on what she hears from media sources, what the position of the police is and all that is overarched by new security legislation. The struggle metaphor is referred to when she acknowledges how hard it is to decipher local so-called terrorism information, repeating the word ‘hard’ twice. The fact that she positions the police in ‘trying’ to lay terrorism charges and acknowledges terrorist definitional difficulties; she maintains a degree of distance in her rhetoric as she talks cautiously in her quest to find answers. Shirley positions herself opposing calling recent Tuho events ‘terrorism’ preferring to use an alternative perspective of ‘change-makes’ that fits her values more comfortably. She alludes to a drama metaphor in descriptive language; a storm in a ‘teacup’ and everybody is in a ‘tizz’, her choice of word pictures constructed to signify energy and action of her opinion of what is happening.

Another participant prides herself on being on the side of the 'under dog', was equally supportive of the so-called protestors of Tuhoë and their indigenous rights;

*...I'm trying not to jump on board on one side just yet. I am waiting to make my mind up till I know the facts. (1) I do have a personal sense of sympathy for them though. They have got their reasons...*

*...he's definitely, well, he's definitely a political activist...*

*I thought, you know, New Zealand was a place where we had freedom of expression... **Barbara** (P. 1-2)*

Her interview was completed in the emerging midst of the Tuhoë furore last year. She constructs her personalised talk around the need for caution, in not jumping to conclusions before knowing the facts but then positions herself as having sympathies that are supportive towards Tuhoë. From her knowledge base she positions Tama Iti ('he') as a political activist who she considers should be entitled to rights of freedom of speech. Her use of the past tense 'had' is her challenging what may have changed in New Zealand that sees it as a place where freedom of speech is no longer a right.

Adam rejects traditional information sources for informal Internet blog sources to help him form his opinions about Tuhoë 'terrorism'.

*Um, I tend to avoid, just, I suppose, most governments and central institutions as a general rule of thumb (3) just because historically I don't think they have a good record of telling the truth ... It seemed from the start that it was (.) there was that terrorism bill that seemed to be going through at the same time (.) with the government, that I was very suspicious from the start. And um I think well it's sort of gone off out of the media for awhile now but I think it was possibly, there was possibly dodgy things going on with Tuhoë but the way the media put them on to the terrorism idea sort of fuelled that fire as well. **Adam** (P. 2)*

He is positioning himself against the official line concerning what has happened with Tuhoe and the so-called terrorism incidents of Urewera with a confidence in his own ability to find the information and resources he requires constructing his own assessment. This will be an alternative perspective from political sources, as he does not trust them to tell the truth. His anti-media/government repertoire confirms for him that 'dodgy things' are going on around so-called Tuhoe terrorism incidents. The fire being fuelled metaphor he uses adds power to his speech in supporting his suspicions of media beat ups about local terrorism.

Benjamin is also rejecting of notions of so-called terrorism by Tuhoe, instead opting to place the blame and label of terrorism with the police and state;

*I thought that was state terrorism myself. (Laughs) I thought that was a complete over-reaction and it really sort of blew up in the face of the police. I don't worry over that sort of thing in the least. Again you've got a group of people who are over-reacting (2) probably but then they've been over-repressed, variously, so=*

**R** = Who are you referring to?

**B** Yeah. I'm referring to Tama Iti and Tuhoe. I think they've probably got legitimate gripes, so. I just see terrorism as well as a reaction to an action ... I don't think that, no. I don't think that can come under terrorism. It was claimed to be terrorism. It was a sort of, again, it gave the state an excuse to do something. **Benjamin** (P. 5)

Here there is confident opinion positioning using personal pronouns indicating close ownership and stake in his opinion making. He utilises an extreme case formulation device in his description of police behaviour as a 'complete over-reaction'. He is repetitive (over-reacting, over-repressed) to emphasise his perception of the messy police process as they enter conflictual relations with another messy organisation in the Tuhoe group. His metaphor of the mess blowing up in police's collective face indicates his positioning opposing them and

rejecting of the accusation of Tuhoë terrorism. He positions himself steadily alongside Tuhoë processes as is indicated by an acknowledgement of their rights and legitimate gripes.

Bob has a confident positioning opinion about the Tuhoë 'kafuffle' concerning the right to protest;

**Bob** *I think there must always be room for protest. There must always be room for political discussions and agitations and turmoil if necessary to maintain the balance between the control, which the government seeks to exercise over the community, and the community not wishing that control to be excessive (.) so there must, in my view, always be room for protest. (P.2)*

This is a strong personalised opinion that talks to the rights for protest, political discussion, agitation and even turmoil. Bob uses a three part list to illustrate the various modes of protest to indicate his emphatic personal belief in such a freedom process. The word 'must' provides that emphasis. There is a balancing metaphor going on in the talk as he works up the role of government and community/individual responsibilities in his talk.

Even with what was happening locally in the Urewera (so-called Terrorism involving Tama Iti), Shirley is very relieved that it is not in her province (yet!). Her description of terrorism as a 'slippery fish' is indicative of her struggle to 'get' exactly what defines terrorism in this recent New Zealand version;

**Shirley:** *= Oh, it feels like it's on the other side of New Zealand. It doesn't feel like it's in (her province). If it was in (her province) it'd be even more scary. It's still a bit removed, but it's definitely come closer to home. Umm, by labeling if nothing else =*

**R:** *= it's kinda like terrorism has washed ashore.*

**S:** *Yes it has washed ashore. But I don't know what has washed ashore. It's a bit like a slippery fish really. (P. 5)*

In the 'New Zealand is safe from terrorism' discourse, participants construct talk around the fending off of terrorists and terrorism, keeping it away from our country. Likewise, in the extract above, Shirley talks to the notion of keeping the Tuhoë 'terrorism' away from her province. Her positioning is tentative as she thinks her way through the issue she finds challenging; whether this incident is actually terrorism or something else. Her metaphor of the Tuhoë example being like a slippery fish arises out of the metaphorical talk by the researcher, is extended to support her inability to get a grip or understand what is happening elsewhere in her country.

The next set of repertoires is a contrast to the words liberal viewpoints and words supportive words in the speech acts above.

### **Tuhoë and Tama Iti as terrorists: opposing talk**

Other participants are worried and outraged at the level of aggression and armaments from the reports they read about the Tuhoë group.

Cindy worries about the actions of activist Tama Iti, which offends her. She ponders the line between activism and terrorism and believes the Tuhoë activities come close to crossing that line.

*Umm (.) Well, it is worrying to think that people are thinking like that and organising themselves into groups to be anti the rest of us if you like.*

**R:** *So you have seen the Maori activists like Tama Iti and Tuhoë =*

**C:** *= Yes I have. He's got a very high profile. Yes*

**R:** *So are they kinda scary people for you?*

**C:** *(laughs) Well you'd have to say that Tama Iti is with his tattoos. That's kind of anti the norm anyway. (3) I mean to say (2) he's (1) well, a little man in stature perhaps but he has a lot to say and I think a lot of people take notice of what he says. So yes. [] I think it's very hard to draw the line between those*

*two things sometimes. You know, it depends on their demeanour and how they are perceived. And I think he could be perc-eived as a terrorist (1) in the way that he = **Cindy** (P.1)*

In her talk, Cindy is positioning herself in a collective group that Tama Iti is protesting against; she is with the 'rest of us' but she seeks verification in her talk with the 'if you like' phrase. She attempts to strengthen her argument by that phrase and also further on with her 'you'd have to say ' in reference to Tama Iti being scary. She is positioning herself in opposition to Tama Iti who she constructs as a person with a powerful profile, scary with his tattoos. She constructs a version of Tama with a list of the ways he is scary to her; with tattoos, anti the norm anyway, a little man in stature, has a lot to say, and a lot of people take notice of what he says. Her list provides and strengthens her opinion of opposing him. This all leads to an obvious conclusion for Cindy; that he could very well fit the perceptions of being a terrorist. 'Demeanour' and 'perception' are key notions that Cindy identifies that could be helpful in drawing the line between ordinary protestor and terrorist.

### **Our port locked up: a repertoire of anger/fury**

This was a theme mentioned by all the participants who vented anger about being excluded from our local port facility due to new domestic security driven by the advent of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, and pressure from US and Bush's 'War on Terror' tentacles reaching our shores. This has seen citizens being locked out of previously freely available areas for fishing, walking around and general popular enjoyment unhindered by officialdom. We used to own the

port as a community. Now this area is locked behind razor wire and security fencing much to the ire of locals.

*And prior to the Two Towers, if you like, um, one was free to be able to go into the port, fish off the wharf, walk around there, walk through it, walk out on it, walk in it (.) not any problem at all. Now you have to run the gamut of an identity, you have to be approved to go in, you have to pass through these gates, go past the security box, there's high fencing with razor wire at the top, (1) and so you've got these physical embellishments which again take us back to well there's something to be fearful of. Kate (P. 2)*

Kate locates her opinion in time; that is pre-'Two Towers' and constructs difference in experiencing her local environment of walking around her port area freely in talk that she fashions with a palpable ease of movement by the repetition of the same word 'walk'. She employs a lengthy listing device to create and emphasise the ease with which one could travel around the port. Her speech moves the listener into the 'now' where problems abound with her second long list; a description of the security measures taken to keep terrorism at bay. She calls this security 'physical embellishments' and her rhetoric is constructed around metaphorical talk that has a sense of a journey that opens with her pre-9/11 walking, to the security hindrances that take one to a state of fear. Her 'if you like' is an invitational device of inclusion on this personal journey from a good time to a time to be fearful of something. Her use of collective pronouns indicates affiliative devices about belonging and attachment to her home environment and her annoyance that it has become profoundly changed by the intrusion of imported terrorism. This positioning is one that Kate strongly holds.

*And that impinges on me very much directly because the place where I go to work is now surrounded by razor wire and I would give that as an example in*

*the way that terrorism has been used in New Zealand to restrict the residents of (city) because they always wanted to um, the Port Authorities and I was a member of the Harbour Board, always, always wanted to close that port to the public and now they have managed to do it because of an act that has been generated by the Bush government... Benjamin (P. 1)*

Likewise, this participant talks to the impact of imported terrorism on his personal and professional life. He takes a confident and personalised positioning about his experiencing in working at the port indicated from his use of personal pronouns based on prior knowledge and political awareness. He affiliates to another grouping from 'they' opposing group including the Port Authorities.

### **Summary of local terrorism repertoires and NZ a safe place discourse**

Even with recent Tuhoë activities being proscribed by government and police as "local terrorism washing up on our shores", most of the participants constructed rejecting rhetoric and language in a similar fashion that they rejected terrorism of an international flavour arriving on our shores. Their use of various linguistic devices and repertoires aided that construction. Most were confident in their opinion positionings and sufficiently attached to their home environment to talk with passion about notions of imported terrorism; to challenge media/political endeavours to locate terrorism on our shores. At the least, most sought an alternative version to explain such behaviour as 'just criminal activity', and for some entirely understandable (considering the history of colonisation of New Zealand) at the very least part of our Kiwi way, part of our democratic right for freedom of speech.

The participants were politically aware and therefore challenged our government's attempts to tow a US prescribed line concerning local security.

Their angry talk about being locked out of our port facilities functioned in opposition to what they considered a US -induced security system that has contaminated their world, their country and now has infiltrated their province. Lastly, the notion that 'New Zealand as the safest place in the world' is identified as the overarching discourse from the participants' local talk. These people want to maintain a considerable distance from international terrorism and are resistant to politicised processes to any changes to that situation.

## **Part 3: Conclusions**

### **Chapter 7: Results and Discussion**

This study attempted to discover and analyse the various discourses, linguistic devices and repertoires used by the men and women interviewed for this project about terrorism and the experiences they had in navigating our world with terrorism being beamed into our television sets and into our reading material on a daily basis. In the first chapter (p.3) I asked a set of questions, which I wanted answered by the participants. They concerned what they considered were the impacts of terrorism on their lives, locally and on the international arena; just who they apportioned responsibility for the political state of affairs leading to terrorist activity in the troubled world we live in? What did they think about terrorists and their actions? These questions were answered in the interviews and various patterns of themes/repertoires were identified and a range of linguistic devices was used in their presentation. From the DA of the 'Talking Terrorism' project, two dominating discourses were identified: a sense of justice discourse and secondly a sense of New Zealand as an ark/safe place of protection and value discourse (*We New Zealanders are so Lucky*).

#### **Discussion**

The two dominant discourses described above are not use in isolation within the participants terrorism talk but 'pop up' and are interwoven through interviews and emerge as required, indicating a linguistic dynamism, of action and careful construction, that is functional for the production of specific effect. There are

various anti-repertoires identified in Chapter 5 that are the ingredients used by the participants to construct what I have called the overarching Justice discourse. They are used to apportion responsibility about Terrorism and to distance each participant from participating in the injustices of terrorism. In this area the people talked in their interviews with the researcher in political discussions that were often rhetorically opinionated and they took strong oppositional positioning to what was happening in the US political landscape with President Bush at the helm in his “war on terror”, and certainly against a manipulating media they saw as servants to the super powers of the West. In their talk there was palpable anger and other emotions, as they challenged the justice of dominant culture warring against cultures that appeared to be poverty stricken, but owning all important oil-lands.

Legitimacy of such asymmetric struggles saw participants struggling to understand and make sense of the positioning by the US and the role they played in so-called ‘terrorist’ states such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The participants talk from their prior knowledge and understand these states were ‘constructed’ by colonial powers in earlier times. These participants knew their history well and easily constructed precise rhetoric to support their opinions and objections about international terrorism. On the continuum of super-knowing ranging to ordinary knowing, most were easily able to find whom they held responsible for the world affairs since 9/11.

As to the other finding of this study; that New Zealand is a safe haven from world terrorism, where the participants position themselves as 'lucky' and happy to be safe on the Ark of the New Zealand in the South Pacific, away from the world of terrorism and US-induced fear. It is my opinion this discourse in our country is a supremely good thing. Such a discourse that promotes positive affiliation is a positive social consequence as long as sufficient cognizance is given to possibilities of naivety, innocence and self-denial. As to possibilities of local terrorism, it appears that most of these participants are well able to fend political manipulations that erroneously name criminal activities as homegrown terrorism. One criticism of the discipline of DA outlined in Potter and Wetherell (1987:174) is that it is "just looking at words – not real things". It is my contention from this study that the participants have identified something real in their talk beyond 'just words'; that they are happy about where they live in safety from the horrors of world terrorism.

### **Limitations of this Study**

With regard to DA's triple focus of construction, function and variation of talk, I have identified and outlined examples of the first two in the previous chapters. However, the notion of variation in talk appears much more subtle and elusive to describe, and has largely evaded this novice DA researcher. I did notice though with some participants that their strength of opinion positioning was variable depending on their stake in the question being asked, and their use of distancing language and deference questioning towards me (as the interviewer) when they were not so sure of what position they would hold in the conversations. For

example, Cindy was highly opinionated about local Tuhoë incidents but less so about the US/Bush contribution to worldwide terrorism.

As already stated at the beginning, it was never intended that this 'talking Terrorism' project was the definitive work on terrorism and it is not a DA requirement to generalise results in a study to any population, as in traditional empiricist psychological research. This project is this researcher's attempt to analyse the discourses of a group of participants in New Zealand. It is assumed that there will be some similarities and some differences in results with any other group of people in our country, in other geographical and demographical environments, and with another researcher.

### **Future areas of terrorism research**

There is a huge scope for traditional quantitative, and qualitative Psychological research modes on the subject of terrorism. Terrorism does not appear to be diminishing in our world although the West has had times of relative peace from being the target of international terrorist attack. Some proponents are just now predicting a reoccurrence of US attacks from Moslem extremists, with the election of Barack Obama as US President replacing Bush with his very own 'War on Terror' waged in various hotspots around the globe. There is no doubt that many of us will continue to argue, debate and 'wax lyrical' about terrorism and those who are involved in terrorist activities wherever they may occur. Our media will indulge themselves and some of us and continue to peddle terror

discourses into our living rooms on a daily basis. Our conversations will continue to wrangle about the things we see technically squirted into our homes from around the world. Certainly, in New Zealand, we will wrestle with our very own political struggles when those in our population push the limits of our laws/lores and some of us require a police or legal response to behaviour we are afraid of.

Recently, I attended a seminar on Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD) in Wellington (October 2008) where I saw a professional link and relevancy between my project on Terrorism talk and my work as a counsellor/therapist. At this seminar, Dr Marylene Cloitre an American psychotherapist spoke about her research project with 120 patients traumatised by the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York. Cloitre (2006) identified that 60% of that sample experienced a re-ignition of earlier/early childhood traumas and attachment issues. Although this material is beyond the scope of this DA project, I am mentioning it here in the discussion section of my report as it could be of interest to others.

Finally, closing words at these times always feel inadequate. This project has been a long journey with me 'taking' terrorism into my home and into my every waking moment, even in my dreams. I have learned much; from the participants in the project, from their words and their talk about terrorism; and from the research and background exploration over the past nearly two years. I have made changes to my thinking about issues of terrorism and consolidated previous knowledge. I want to return 'terrorism' now to a place far away from my

country. Like the participants, I am glad I live here and not in terrorist hotspots of the world. I am considerably blessed to be able to have travelled this journey but even more so to be able live in the safest country in the world with people who understand notions of equity and justice.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Schedule and Questions**

#### **Stage One**

##### **Introductions**

Statement concerning the purpose of the research project.

Reiteration of the purpose of the interview.

Reiteration of the Participant's rights;

- To withdraw from the project.
- To have the audiotape turned off at any time.
- To decline to answer any question.
- To read and edit their final transcript of the interview.
- To have anonymity and privacy.

Establishing rapport with the participant.

#### **Stage Two**

Interview begins. Audio taping commences and the questions are delivered as per the Questionnaire.

#### **Stage Three**

##### **Debrief process.**

Clarification of the interview process and post-interview.

Monitoring of participant's interview experience and feelings.

Monitoring support needs.

## Interview Questionnaire

In recent decades, Terrorism and terrorists have 'forced' their way into our lives even way down here in New Zealand, at the bottom of the world. Terrorism and terrorists enter our homes via the television and other media and through the political realm of international conflict between the West and Middle East. I would like to hear from you about what you make of this battle, this 'War on Terror' and how it is affecting you and your life.

Could you tell me what made you consider being a participant in this project?

What do you make of the recent 'terrorist' activities in New Zealand? How do you see Maori activists (Tama Iti etc) and other so-called radicals; as a terrorist threat/freedom fighter?

Can you remember the New York Terrorist attacks, the Bali bombings, the London Underground attacks...? What about the French bombing of the Rainbow Warrior?

What did you make of these goings on?

Would you consider that Terrorism is a new phenomenon in our world?  
Resistance fighters WW2 etc

'Terrorism' and 'Terrorist'- what does these two words conjure up for you?

Have you ever had any experience/s or know of anyone experiencing Terrorism that you would like to talk about?

Do you feel any pressure concerning Terrorism in our world today?

What are the sources of that pressure?

What affect does that pressure have on you?

Do you worry about loved ones who are overseas and may be in danger?

What do you think about Terrorists and what they are trying to achieve?

Could you ever see yourself as a terrorist?

Would/have you 'fought' for a cause like a terrorist?  
Do you feel that 'Terrorism' works as a strategy?

What role do you think that the media plays in making terrorism worse and helping terrorists- or not?

How has Terrorism/Terrorists made you change your life in any way?

What do you make of the possible impact of Terrorism/Terrorists upon our lives in New Zealand?

Does New Zealand protect its citizens adequately from Terrorist attack?

If you could, what measures would you undertake to protect our country from terrorist threat?

Who do you blame for terrorism?

What do you make of the US/UK's "War on Terror"?

If you were able to talk to US President Bush or Osama bin Laden, what would like to say to them/ and tell them?

## Appendix B

Letter to The Editor

2 October 2007

The Editor

**Terrorism and Terrorists:** What impact do these words have on you? How do you feel about world terrorism – the bombings and the violence? Who do you blame for what is happening in our world today? And just what do you think about the US/UK military response to their “just” War on Terror?

Here is your opportunity to talk to someone about your concerns, worries and opinions about the nightly diet of horror terror images that are portrayed on our TV screens. If you are interested in these issues and would like to participate in a local research study please contact **Lesley** by email; [lesley\\_olley@hotmail.com](mailto:lesley_olley@hotmail.com) or phone 76 99 419 (Monday-Wednesday) for the details. This project is part of a thesis to complete a Master of Arts (Psychology) at Massey University, Palmerston North. All contacts will be confidential and treated with respect.

Yours sincerely

Lesley C. Olley  
Address

## Appendix C

### Information Sheet for Participants Talking Terrorism: A Discourse Analysis

Thank you for taking the time to consider being involved in this study.

My name is Lesley Olley. I am undertaking a research project to complete a Master of Arts Degree in Psychology at Massey University.

My supervisor for this research is Dr. Keith Tuffin, School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North.

Our contact details are:

**Lesley Olley (Researcher):**

Email: [lesley\\_olley@hotmail.com](mailto:lesley_olley@hotmail.com)

Dr. Keith Tuffin (Supervisor) Ph: 06-350-5799 ext 2072

**Email: K.Tuffin@massey.ac.nz**

- **The aim of the project** is to find out what ordinary New Zealanders have to say about terrorism in our world today.
- **What is expected of you as a participant for this project?** I would listen to you talk about terrorism and tape that conversation.
- **How long it will take?** The process should be completed in less than an hour.
- **What are your rights in this project?** If you consent to be a participant you can expect to:
  - To be able to ask questions about the study at any time.
  - Be able to decline to participate in any part of the project or to be able to completely withdraw at any time during the process without needing to give a reason.
  - Provide your information on the understanding that your name or identifying material will be disguised.
  - Be able to debrief at the end of the interview process. Should any concerns from the process and content (terrorism) be impacting beyond the interview, the researcher will provide information for counselling contacts.
  - Check your own transcript and edit it, and have a copy.
  - Be provided with a summary of the researcher's findings when the project is completed.

Your participation in this project could be beneficial to you in allowing you the opportunity to express your concerns and opinions about Terrorism.

Your participation will contribute to our knowledge of just how our population is impacted by this phenomenon and how our society needs to accommodate those concerns.

After reading this information carefully, please sign and return the Consent Form in the stamped, addressed envelope if you agree to be interviewed.

I will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for an interview.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Olley  
Researcher for Talking Terrorism.

## Appendix D

### Talking Terrorism: A Discourse Analysis on what people are saying about Terrorism in our world today.

#### Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet provided and I have had the details of the research project explained to me. The researcher has answered my questions to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask more questions at any time.

I understand that my privacy will be protected throughout this study. I have the right to decline to answer any particular question, to withdraw from the study during the interview and during any part of the research process.

I agree to provide my information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission and any identifying information will be deleted or disguised.

I understand that my information will be used only for this research project. Any variation of this will require a renegotiation with me in order that I may consider any further consent issues.

I agree to the interview of our conversation being audio taped and that the researcher will use that information for her study.

I understand that I have the right to ask that tape-recorder be turned off at any time during the interview.

I understand that I will receive a copy of the transcript for me to check and edit, and that I will receive a summary of the research findings at completion.

I understand that I can choose what happens to my audiotape once the researcher has completed their work with it. I choose the following option:

#### **CIRCLE THE OPTION**

- I want it returned to me.
- I want the researcher to destroy the tape.
- I want the researcher to place the tape in her safe storage.

I agree to participate in this project under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: .....  
Name: .....  
Date: .....

## Appendix E

### Notational Transcription Key

(.)	A full stop in round brackets indicates a pause in speech that is less than a second
(4)	Numbers in round brackets indicate a pause in speech that is measured in that many seconds
(Mmm)	Indicates an encourager or comment by the researcher
[]	Empty square brackets indicate omitted text
(unclear)	Indicates words that cannot be discerned
<b>Sheila</b>	All names are pseudonyms
<u>Victim</u>	Underlined words indicate emphasis either increased or decreased
(Laughs)	Words in round brackets signify speaker's actions
-	Indicates a lengthening of a word
=	This sign indicates an overlap of words between participant and researcher

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