

Bush, Hussein and the Cultural

Preparation For War

by

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The study of political symbolism has been impoverished by a simplistic overemphasis on notions of strategic manipulation by power elites, false consciousness, symbolic capital, and ideological hegemony. Culture does the dirty work of power, a glittering dependent variable that mundane social structure manipulates at will.

Even in nonreductionistic treatments of meaning, culture is conceived of as little more than a black box. It is glossed as values, norms, or ideology, and summarized merely as a set of attitudes towards key aspects of social structure itself. This black box must be opened up and culture conceptualized in a more internally complex way. Only after a more muscular conception is established can the relative autonomy of the meaning-making process be understood. The internal logic of culture is a circuit through which every social process must pass. No matter what the political or economic inputs, culture must always be

1. This is an highly uneven draft and may not be quote without authors' permission. We would like especially to thank for colleagues at SCASSS for critical comments that allowed us to significantly strengthen the paper.

seen as an independent variable in its own right.

I

Democratic or even mass-mobilized nations may go to war to defend geopolitical interests, but their citizens do not willingly fight wars over them.

War has its rational reasons. Certainly geopolitical dominance is always at stake, dominance that offers market control and privileged access to scarce resources and political power. The gain or loss of such resources may be critical to the internal position of an entrenched or aspiring elite and may even be critical for the lifeworld itself, in the sense that jobs, wealth, status, geographical, and certainly ethnic and religious position are all critical means by which social groups seek to realize cherished values. There may also, of course, be rational reasons not to take up arms. The threatened resource may be something that a nation's citizens can learn to live easily without.

Interests like these may create a rational case for war, or against war, and on these grounds, with more or less popular support, political and military elites can and often do initiate wars for these strategic reasons alone. Yet, insofar as the public of a nation impinges on the decision-making of the center -- whether through the vote, public discussions in civil society stimulated by media and extra-political elites, or merely through the private networks of sheltered personal communication -- the feelings and beliefs

of citizens are necessary ingredients for fighting wars, at least for fighting them effectively over extended periods of time. Wars spill blood; family and loved ones die. For the masses of citizens, these primordial, lifeworldly factors constitute the real interests at stake. This is how war threatens the real interests of social actors: it reaches deep into their guts, stirring their emotions and challenging the values by which they live.²

2. My emphasizing primordiality here we are definitely not associating ourselves with the primary group emphasis of Shils and Janowitz in their study of the Wehrmacht military structure of World War II, which sought to separate emotional and primary group loyalty from commitment to ideological values. Our position is quite the opposite and we emphasize primordiality in order to explain why evaluations about the moral correctness or incorrectness of wars are so strongly and deeply held. The notion that these German noncommissioned officers experienced solidarity and emotional bonds to their group which were not "represented" in a cultural sense is far-fetched and certainly was never empirically demonstrated in the Shils/Janowitz study. (Shils moves beyond this early, vulgar Durkheimianism to what we would call a late-Durkheimian position in his later much more interesting discussions of charisma.) At any rate, our focus in the current study is not on armies or soldiers but on civil populations.

It is the primordiality of the representational systems associated with war that explains why war is so much more important in the creation of serious social upheavals than phenomena like unemployment, poverty, or even self-consciously mobilized internal domestic conflicts around race, class, region, religion, or ethnicity. I will suggest below that revolutions must themselves engage in the culture structure of war if they are to create support for violent and sustained confrontations with ruling powers. However, the linkage between war and revolution is even more direct: it is a well-known but too often neglected fact that virtually every successful social revolution of modern times (e.g., the Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese) has been triggered by its association with a major foreign war. Through semiosis, metaphor, and analogical thinking, the cultural idiom of war becomes a transfer vehicle for legitimating internal violent transformation. When the connection between

For these reasons, wars demand "meaning." They must be justified in terms of ultimate values that reach into the metaphysical and moral worlds, mobilizing the most basic resources of the sacred against the intractable powers of the profane. Legitimation is the word that social scientists give to this process, but the Weberian roots of the term have greatly impoverished it. Legitimation has been structuralized, as in the notions of traditional or charismatic kingship or possession of office; it has been psychologized in the notion of the charisma of personal leadership; it has been strategized in the notion that legitimation is merely a medium for the struggle for political distinction and domination, for hegemony in Marxist terms. In the functionalist tradition, Weber's position is translated as the articulation of power with political values, which in the most sophisticated versions means its articulation with the codes that govern the political medium of exchange. But values are a gloss for behavior (Alexander: Autonomy) and codes even in this sophisticated version of functionalism remain merely a symbolic translation of functionalist need. We will return to these general problems of legitimacy theory in the conclusion of this essay. For now we will simply repeat our earlier criticism. Even in the Weberian and functionalist

war and revolution has been thematized, for example in the work of Skocpol and Mann, it has been treated in such a thoroughly anticultural manner that its destabilizing effects are considered primarily in terms of the economic impact of war on state treasury and finances.

theories of legitimacy, culture has been treated as a black box, with the result that there has been little real understanding of how the meaning-making dimension of politics actually proceeds.³

In the section following we will open this box up and model the internal cultural dynamics of a nation's preparation for war. We will, of course, be talking about political legitimacy, but our analysis will demonstrate that legitimacy cannot possibly be fruitfully considered in the

3. By disputing Weber's theory of legitimacy, one thing we are not doing is lodging a so-called "idealist" argument that political power is impossible to exercise without the belief in those exposed to its force that it is just or right. The accusation that functionalist critics of Weber were making such a claim was the strawman of the-normative Weberians of the two postwar generations, led by Bendix and later by Roth, who focussed on such sterile issues as the translation of Herrschaft (cf. Dahrendorf's [1958] impoverished treatment of structures of power which followed on such criticisms, and which helped to produce the theoretical cul-de-sac of "conflict sociology"). The valid part of this antifunctionalist criticism was that Weber meant to focus as much on the structural aspect of what makes a legitimate role in power structures, an issue that has to do with the procedure of election, as on the value dimension of politics. This very emphasis, however, further impoverished his work on political values.

Parsons's (and later in a narrow form, Luhmann's) notion of power as a generalized medium that can be deflated and inflated, that possesses a symbolic code and a material base, was an effective attempt to go beyond the theoretical resources of Weberian theory, and Parsons fully intended that even with a deflated medium power can continue to be exercised in a coercive form. For a critical evaluation of Weber's legitimation theory, see Alexander (1983); for a related confrontation with the legitimacy problem and a proposed solution that is closely related to the suggestions that are made here, see Smith's important recent investigations (thesis) and Smith's fundamental reformulation of Weber's charisma theory along these same lines.

impoverished frames of reference we have considered above. Neither manipulating governments nor rebelling antiwar movements control the internal dynamics of cultural life. They can legitimately make war, and resist war, only by formulating their interests in terms of the possibilities that the cultural system creates. After we have described this model in relatively abstract terms, we will employ it to explore America's activities during the Gulf crisis, from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, on August 2, 1990, until the beginning of the Allied air war, on January 16, 1991.

II

The meaningfulness of war-making involves the interrelation of three distinctive symbolic forms: code, narrative, and genre.⁴ It is within these forms that

4. Subsequent notes will describe the theoretical resources upon which our own conceptualization of these three key terms draws. Here we wish simply to acknowledge that these terms are surely among the most highly disputed terms in contemporary social and cultural theory. In what follows, we draw upon our own theoretical and empirical work in this area, which has been informed by what might be called a late-Durkheimian perspective: Alexander 1987 ("Action and Its:::"), 1988 (Durkheimian Sociology), 1990 (Analytic Autonomy), forthcoming ("Challenge of a Cultural Sociology ... [french article]) and Alexander and Smith, forthcoming; see also Sherwood's two articles, and Alexander and Sherwood (LA Timesö Thomas). We also wish to acknowledge the very important influence on our formulation of Smith's work, not only his writing on war (1991) but most importantly his work on narratives and their relationship between codes (see Smith forthcoming:a, on violence, and Smith forthcoming:b, dissertation, and Smith forthcoming:c, charisma paper). While Smith's forthcoming work on war differs in certain respects from the model we present here, the interaction between among us has been substantial and fundamental, and the various pieces should be regarded as different segments of a shared research program.

citizens understand the actions of political authorities and their staffs, and their counterparts on the "other" side. For war-making to succeed, these forms must be defined and interrelated in very specific, conceptually restricted ways. 5 While our discussion of these forms can only proceed sequentially, in practice their temporal articulation is not so neat. At any given historical time, shifts in one or the other form may take the lead.

Code. Members of society understand themselves and their leaders in terms of structured sets of symbolic oppositions (Sahlins 1976; cf., fn. 3, above). The symbolic structures are not contingent. To the contrary, in democratic societies they form a "discourse of civil society" (Alexander 1992 and Alexander and Smith forthcoming) that has remained remarkably constant over an extended period of time. This discourse defines motives, social relationships, and institutions in terms of highly simplified qualities of good and bad, "essences" that separate the pure from the impure, friends from enemies, and the sacred from the profane.⁶

5. The purpose of the discussion which follows is to introduce the conceptual rudiments of our cultural theory; it is not intended to be a definitive analysis of them. Our goal, rather, is to provide an understanding that will be sufficient to follow their role in the empirical analysis that follows. After the empirical discussion we will return to the scheme and suggest in a more precise manner some of the internal and external causal relationships that it implies.

6. Alexander 1992 presents and discusses the theoretical rationale for such a model of the discourse of civil society

Yet, while these structures of understanding are not contingent, their application in any specific historical situation most certainly is. In this sense, and only in this sense, politics is a discursive struggle; it is about the distribution of leaders, followers, and nations across these symbolic sets. Politics is not simply about who gets what and how much. It is about who will be what, and for how long. In the cultural preparation for war, whether one group or another occupies particular symbolic categories becomes a matter of life and death. In the conflicts that permeate the cultural preparation for war, individuals and nations may be transferred from one side to the other in rapid and often bewildering bursts of shifting historical time.

Anti-democratic discourse pollutes social actors and institutions and thereby codes him, her, or them as worthy of repression. By providing purifying terms, democratic discourse constructs candidates who can perform this repressive task. But code positioning is not in itself

and Alexander and Smith (forthcoming) applies this model to American history. Appendix A reproduces the schematic cultural grid that summarizes these investigations. This schema should be consulted as a referent in the empirical discussion that follows later in this paper.

We use "essences" in order to emphasize that when actors employ these categorical classifications they are not aware that they are constructing the categories that they employ any more than they are aware that they are employing them. They regard these categories, rather, as identifying already existing qualities, essences refer to the core characteristics of themselves and others. An anti-essentialist theory, then, must not lose sight of the fact that classifying actors remain essentialist. Postmodern theorists should not mistake the actors they are studying for themselves.

enough to make legitimate war. These classifications do not tell us how much is at stake. They do not weigh the importance of this particular conflict in the vast scheme of things. It is possible to dislike categories of person, even to fear and hate them, without being convinced that killing them is desirable, or even important. To proclaim such a murderous ambition involves, moreover, the expressed willingness to die oneself. The desire to commit righteous slaughter demands the willingness to undergo ritual sacrifice in turn.⁷

Narrative. War can be imagined -- and the process of collective imagining is what we are definitely speaking of here -- only if the coded participants in a struggle are arranged in a story, or myth, which proclaims that life, death, and civilization are at stake.⁸ Good and evil must

7. Katz on "righteous slaughter"

8. This emphasis on narrative-as-myth departs from the treatment of narrative in literary theory. We draw upon the latter literature in the following discussion of "genre," particularly upon the pioneering and we believe still unsurpassed work of Frye (195X), which as been elaborated by literary theorists like Whyte (197X), xxxxx, and xxxx, and employed by cultural historians like Fussell (1978) and social scientists like (regeneration and Wagner-Pacifici). The problem with traditional narrative theory, however, is that it has no way to differentiate what Frye calls the hero dramas of High Romance from deeply felt myths. The latter might be described as social archetypes, narratives which have the capacity to generate highly motivated and sustained individual and collective action even unto death. The effects of myth go beyond simple story telling to an engagement with lived morality and even religion. Narrative becomes mythicized when its characters achieve a superhuman status that allows them to communicate with the "ultimate" issues of life and death (see especially Abrahms, Natural Supernaturalism, Alexander forthcoming:c "religio").

not simply be engaged; they must be engaged in an ultimate and decisive battle for the very fate of humankind. The historical religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam provide compelling master narratives of just this sort (e.g., Watt). Not only do the sacred works of each religious civilization classify the world into the powers of light and darkness, but they describe human history as a long struggle between these forces which will culminate in an apocalyptic battle, after which a final peace will reign. Purifying ritual through force of arms has been central to these traditions (e.g., Walzer 1965: and regeneration). Violence is conceived as a means of this-worldly salvation, physical danger and death as intrinsic to the ultimate triumph of the good. Righteous wars are not the only evidence of this

Perhaps this is no more than to say that the problem with narrative theory, important as it is, is that it confines itself primarily to literature, which has typically been viewed as the sublimation of earlier mythical forms. Frye, indeed, specifically categorizes myth as an "earlier" narrative that was religious in a manner that contemporary narratives are not. This evolutionary pattern is true enough if we take religion in an ontological sense, but it misses the "religious" aspects of the small number of secular narratives that become myth.

Another way to look at this problem is to see that the "narrative" of literary theory has no audience, and that because it does it cannot provide access to the dramaturgical elements in social life. Without considering the role of audience, the relation between citizen and authority cannot be articulated in a coherent and productive way. "Myth analysis" -- as in the work of Henry Nash Smith (194X), Eliade, regeneration, etc. -- provides what narrative theory lacks, but it typically fails to provide any of the fine texture and differentiating analytical categories by which narrative theory explains a series of discrete symbolic forms.

narrative format. Millennialistic revolutions (Cohen, Bloch) and crusades are also manifestations.

While this salvation narrative is essentially a positive myth, it possesses apocalyptic overtones that allow negative variations. Any particular battle, after all, may end in disaster. If Armageddon is the real "mother of all battles,"⁹ in any particular struggle partisans on the home side may not prove worthy. Nonetheless, if the coded figures in a civil discourse are to become involved in major social transformation -- in war or revolution -- they must see themselves as participating in a world-historical narrative.¹⁰ If those who uphold the good are to be preserved, good must triumph over evil in a violent, apocalyptic confrontation. Without sharply dichotomized coding, the salvation narrative cannot be brought into

9. This phrase, which was employed by Saddam Hussein to inspire his people during the Iraq war, has been traced back to earlier Islamic and biblical texts, in which it refers to apocalyptic confrontations with the forces of evil.

10. "World-historical" is an adverbial translation of Weltgeschichte, a term that originated with Hegel to indicate how the metaphysical quality of his historical narratives, and particularly their heroes, were immanently connected to the provenance of God. I believe Hegel took the term, or at least its metaphysical and apocalyptic connotations, from the Hebrew Bible, and in his work the term has a barely concealed religious connotation. Marx secularized the term world-historical and related it not to God's will but to actions, men, or qualities that he considered critically related to successive revolutionary stages in history. The term subsequently became standard in Marxist social theory, applied to groups, individuals, or situations which were supposed to manifest revolutionary potential. The narrative interpretation we are offering here explains this connection to revolution in a theoretical rather than historical way.

place. Yet only if these collective representations are implotted in the salvation myth can war-making become a meaningful way of resolving the distance between the sacred and profane.¹¹

Genre. The ability to put this world-historical narrative into place, however, depends on something in addition to the classificatory code. Alongside code and narrative, genre provides yet another mold, or structure, within which meaning must be formed. Citizens need to know what kind of performance they are watching. They need to put the characters and the narrative into a frame before knowing whether apocalyptic thinking really applies.

The heroic epic and the tragedy are frames that allow mundane social processes to be converted upward, to be inflated in symbolic importance. Both create strong identification between audience and character, emphasizing high personal and metaphysical stakes. In the romantic quest genre, the hero is a superman figure who fights against great odds, overcoming evil with an extraordinary effort and will that gives him the image of perfection. In tragedy, this image of perfection is stripped away, even while the sense of identification, pathos, and high stakes remain. The hero is convicted of fundamental flaws which undermine his ability to control events. The result is destruction, a

11. Barthes on the structural analysis of myth ...

violent confrontation that ends in a negative, not a positive way.

Comedy, satire, and realism, by contrast, are deflationary genres, all partaking of irony in Frye's sense. In comedy, negative representations of character are pushed from the profane to the mundane, from criminal guilt to guilt by virtue of foolish mistakes or stupidity. There is a levelling of audience and actor, protagonist and antagonist, with the sacral aura of the good being dissolved in a similar way. Satire moves from the mundane to the ridiculous, from portraying humorous mistakes to lampooning farce. Yet, while it plays upon symbolic inversion, satire reserves no sacredness for either side. Realism represents the most deflationary genre of all. Characters are described in purely instrumental terms. Nothing is at stake; neither good nor bad seem to be involved. Comedy, satire, and realism increase the distance between audience and event. Identification gives way to separation, earnestness to irony. With realism, indeed, there seems scarcely any concern at all. Only cold-blooded reasoning -- the literary equivalent of real-politik -- comes into play.¹²

12. While this tripartite model has been introduced in terms of cultural theory, it is perhaps important, and certainly so for the social scientific reader, to make clear what we take to be the significant connection of this schema to the classics of sociological theory. While the notion of binary coding is obviously semiotic, the stipulation that binarism can significantly evoke the sacred and profane is late-Durkheimian (Alexander 1988). Indeed, while Saussure derived from Durkheim key issues of his structural linguistic theory, it is the later, "religious sociology" of Durkheim

that restores to the overly literary theory of semiotics a moral and normative dimension and provides an opening within semiotics to the dynamics of power -- the tensions between deviance and control, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality that mark social as compared to purely symbolic life. To understand events as codes in this more amplified way is to say that they become "religious" in a non-ontological sense, which is to say that these events are constructed in a manner that allows actors to communicate with dimensions of individual and collective existence that are considered to transcend mundane life (see Alexander forthcoming religio).

What we call "narrative" in this model is our culture-theoretic translation of one of the driving animuses of Weber's historical and comparative sociology of religion. Weber believed that it was the eschatological orientation toward world transformation that gave to the Judeo-Christian tradition its historical force. We can find in Weber's discussions of the prophets and early modern warfare the implicit notion that organized violence has been sacralized and demonized to an unprecedented extent by this tradition. Because the fraught dualism of historic religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam creates a great gulf between righteousness and mundane life, God's judgment can and often must taken the form of violent wrath (see Walzer's chapter on Holy War and the literature on holy war in these three traditions).

"Genres" was not a theoretical concept that was thematized by classical (or modern) sociological theorists, even in the implicit form in which they discussed code and narrative. The reason, perhaps, is that the notion of genre -- the form that encodes imaginative statement and narrated observation alike -- seems to distance itself from the scientific self-conception of classical and contemporary theory. Realism becomes a deflationary genre rather than a mode of secure and unalterable social knowledge. Yet, the kind of purely constructivist and relativizing impact that narrative theory has in the hands of Haydin Whyte may not, in fact, be the necessary epistemological implication of literary theory (Alexander "General Theory in the Postpositivist Mode")

Even with genre theory, however, we can find famous examples of the classics employing it without themselves knowing they are "speaking prose." In the Eighteenth Brumaire, Marx observes that while historical processes may be tragic the first time through, they become farce when repeated at a later time. If we make the assumption that Marx did not mean that the same processes objectively have a different meaning, we can see how he implicitly draws upon genre theory to describe a process by which an actor's re-experiencing of an event leads her to distance herself more

We will see that the relation of these cultural forms to particular historical situations -- the relation between culture, action, and social system -- is contingent and open-ended. By contrast, their interrelationship on the level of meaning -- the organization of the cultural system -- is highly structured. For example, although sacralized figures (codes) may necessarily form the stuff of heroism (genre), the latter certainly cannot take shape without without the former. Satire and comedy, for their part, cannot take form with such sacralization. Righteous violence and ritual sacrifice invoke the salvation narrative, which depends, in turn, upon sharp codings of the sacred and profane and the presence of either the quest or tragic genres.

from its characters and impact, thus undermining tragedy and supporting a more comedic frame.

It is also interesting, although not particularly relevant to the discussion here, to observe that it may well have been the particular genre employed by classical theorists rather than the nature of their scientific observations that created important aspects of the theory they bequeathed to us in the present day. In the case of Marx, for example, his ironic distance from bourgeois actors led him to employ satire to ridicule their motives rather than empathy to understand them; similarly, the fact that Marx employed the romantic genre of melodrama to study proletarian actors made it extremely difficult for him to interpret the meaning of their acts in an accurate way. Weber's observations about the declension from early modern, religiously inspired capitalism to the dominating and materialistic capitalism of the contemporary iron cage involves a genre shift as well. When speaking about the prophets and the Puritans Weber employed frameworks emphasizing heroism and romantic quest, shifting to an ironic realism to describe the effects of this early heroism on social structure and action in the present day. See particularly the last paragraphs of the Protestant Ethic -- "The Puritans wanted to work in their calling; we are forced to do so."

These structured relationships at the level of meaning can be illustrated in literary writing about war and violence. To the readers of Cervantes classical conquistador spoof, Don Quixote was ridiculous rather than heroic because his opponents were seen as figments of his imagination and not actual embodiments of the profane. Cervantes comically deflated the heroic genre, deflating its importance by distancing his audience from its characters and making them mundane. Quixote's opponents were windmills, not enemies, and his friend Sancho was less a saint than a hapless and benighted manipulator in turn. Under such coding and genre, it was the simple survival of Quixote, not the salvation of the world, that was at stake.

Similar meaning structures underlie spy novels in the present day. Robert Ludlum, for example, has taken the Cold War as a fight for the soul of mankind, Western and Soviet characters are equated with the sacred and the profane, and the Western spy embarks on an heroic quest that culminates in a final violent battle with apocalyptic overtones.¹³ By placing hero and enemy on more equal coding, John Le Carre deflates the spy genre from quest to tragedy, and often to comedy and satire as well. While apocalypse lurks just beneath the surface, Le Carre's stories typically conclude without dramatic denouements. In post-Cold War spy fiction, world-historical possibilities have even further

13. Quotes here from some juicy Ludlum passages on violence.

diminished. While good and bad remain lively possibilities, and heroic action abounds, it is more difficult to implot events like industrial subversion and drug busts in a salvationist frame. Le Carre's last novel, The Secret Pilgrim, was entirely retrospective and ironic in tone.

For war-making to have strong popular support, such deflationary pressures cannot take hold. One's own leaders and the enemy's must be symbolized in terms of the sacred and profane, and the inflationary genres of quest and possible tragedy must be fully engaged. The stakes must be successfully portrayed as world-historical, so that character and genre can be emplotted in the salvationist myth. Quest, salvation, and sacrality, then, make up the perfect cultural requisites for war (or revolution). This combination is the ideal-typical culture structure for the legitimation of war. For Americans, World War II provided such an experience, and even since it has been a metaphor, in literature and in life, for the perfect war. In life as compared to literature, of course, there is one fundamental pragmatic prerequisite for this semantic device to be applied: those invoking this metaphor must have a reasonable chance of convincing their supporters that they are winning, or have won, the war. This imposes certain highly significant objective boundaries on the meaning-making of legitimacy. At the very least, it means that the culture structure of Perfect War cannot easily be invoked when one's own side faces defeat.

The Perfect War

[See Diagram from rough pg 9)

In relation to this model of complete legitimation, we can introduce a set of dynamic processes that produce less than perfect results. This departure from Perfect War must be promoted by an objective fact: victory cannot yet have been secured. Yet, while institutional forces and group actions are certainly involved in this cultural shift, but there is no given set of social factors that inevitably leads war to be delegitimated. Reverses in the field of battle may or may not induce perceptions of defeat, any more than battlefield victories lead inevitably to a sense of imminent triumph. Neither is it possible to argue that domestic events like war-inspired inflation, draft-riots, or even more organized and sustained revolutionary movements will necessarily be interpreted in a delegitimizing way. It is a question, once again, of how these events will be coded and narrated, and of what genre will be employed.

Even if a nation's leaders and opponents continue to be sharply dichotomized -- with no change in the Perfect War scenario on the level of code -- they can be dramatized in a different way. The quest for victory may seem to go badly; situations will almost certainly arise in which the hero's actions meet with frustration and defeat. It is this social fact that make shifts in the culture structure possible. For

example, the narrative form can remain elevated -- action continues to be seen within world-historical terms -- but the plot shifts from salvatory millenium to apocalyptic end-of-the-world. Thus, while the figures involved in the social drama remain larger than life, they are viewed as being engaged in a final battle that brings tragedy rather than salvation. Insofar as public opinion shifts in this way, it becomes negative and pessimistic. Yes, the great purpose was worth fighting for, but the war was (is being) lost. Many patriotic citizens of the Third Reich came to experience World War II within just such a mode of Great Defeat. The same could be said for many Americans who strongly supported the war in Vietnam.¹⁴

The Great Defeat

[See Diagram from Rough pg. 10]

14. This perspective on the downward shifting of public support for war allows the complexity of opinion to be thematized, and explained, in a manner that traditional studies based on poll data do not. The problem with the latter is not simply that they make opinion into a glutinized dependent variable to be broken down by gross independent variables of demography and party. It is that public opinion as such is typically regarded as merely the aggregation of the views of individual rational actors without attention to what we have here described as its internal emergent properties and dynamics. See the book *Wars and Public Opinion* and critique it. The complexity of our perspective would allow us to explain, for example, precisely the kinds of apparent contradictions that XXXX, and other opinion researchers, often find perplexing. For example, how significant segments of the public can lose their enthusiasm for their government's war involvement even while they continue to support war leaders and aims and despite the fact that their dislike of antiwar movements may be intense.

This rightward shift does not, in itself, constitute delegitimation; it is possible, after all, to go down to great and glorious defeat. Still, the combination of interactional exigencies, institutional facts, and dramaturgical pressures make the model of Great Defeat unstable. The key objective factor, once again, is not actual defeat but lack of victory: means are not adequate to achieve the end of war-making, which is, of course, victory over the other side. While a sense of imminent frustration, of the restriction on heroic scope and narrative success, can be maintained in great tragic fiction, in society these meaning strains create strong pressures for distancing the citizen/audience from the human characters of war. This distancing leads to delegitimation, deflating the symbolic dimension of power in a manner that undermines its communicative capacity, a failure that produces a loss of social morale and the sapping of psychological motivation to fight. As the genre shifts from tragedy to comedy, irony, satire, and realism, anger and feelings of betrayal emerge. Rather than continuing to sacralize war leaders, many citizens will conclude that, if the war is being lost, their leaders must have been connected to with the Good after all. These leaders must have made mistakes, often stupid ones. Indeed, they are not only dumb but ludicrous and absurd. Once leaders on the home side are -brought down to the human plane, attention must also paid to the realistic constraints

they face, and realism, even when adopted by patriotic citizens, can often be the most deflationary genre of all.

Insofar as these are deflationary genre shifts, the narrative of violent and righteous transformation becomes impossible to sustain. It also becomes difficult to maintain the home leaders' control over the sacred. With narrative and genre deflation, there is a strong tendency for code shifts to follow, according to which military leaders and their staffs are perceived more as mundane than as sacred things. Since sacrality and profanity are interdependent, moreover, this shift in the identity of home leadership undermines demonization of the enemy side and, indeed, may even be viewed as resulting from it. As the "Other's" leaders become less easily identified with evil, "our own" become more mundane in turn. As identification and demonization decrease, the citizenship/audience becomes distanced from a war that no longer feels as if it were their own. Motivation to fight becomes problematic. There is a run on trust, and delegitimacy results.¹⁵

We are using the late-functionalist language of communication media, first developed by Parsons and currently elaborated by Luhmann, to demonstrate two points. In the first place, because of its opening to language, it is the only existing theoretical model of power that can articulate with the effort at cultural theorizing offered here. Second, without the latter effort, the linguistic turn of this power theory remains something of an empty shell. icely with

15. Obviously these meaning shifts are hindered in authoritarian societies. Because such social structures restrict communicative action, symbolic relationships will not respond as rapidly to shifting contexts and events. Yet

Delegitimate War

[See Diagram from Rough pg. 11]

The model of delegitimate war, like the earlier models, is an ideal-type which never occurs in historical reality in such a pristine way. In the first place, its idealized typicality breaks down on the phenomenological level of perspective. The models we have described are overlapping, providing frames of reference whose edges are fuzzy and which interpenetrate in practice. The discreteness of these models also breaks down societally. There is never consensus within a society over a model, but always, to one degree or another, a situation of refraction and fragmentation in which different versions of war are promoted by, and help to constitute, different groups. The war can remain perfect for some, who see setbacks merely as obstacles in the heroic quest. At the same time, others may see tragedy and apocalypse, with the

even in totalitarian societies private communication proceeds quite rapidly and symbolic relationships do change. Consider, for example, the case of the Soviet Union during the Afganistan war. Despite official propaganda and the impossibility of any antiwar movements publically to emerge, the populations's framework for war support shifted downward in decisive ways. For the first time in Soviet history, tragedy and even comedy became frameworks for intereting the Communist Party's war-making powers. It may even be argued that here, too, war culture and domestic upheaval are interconnected. Gorbachev's revolutionary movement against the totalitarian state was enormously aided by the delegitimizing, antiheroic cultural frameworks that were applied to it as the result of the Afgan war.

moral distinctions between home and enemy leaders still strongly in place. Other groups, responding to the same events, will already have moved to undermine these distinctions and to deflate the grand-historical narratives within comic, satiric, ironic or realistic frames. Speeches, movies, demonstrations, and factual reporting on the war's events all jockey for influence -- and trigger competing interpretations -- within these shifting frames.

It should be clear how such deflationary movement leads to genuine social opposition and can eventually inspire a militantly antiwar frame. Lack of trust and delegitimation are connected to cynicism and the withdrawal of social and emotional participation. In response, frustrated leaders talk about ungovernability, malaise, and rudderlessness. Yet, as long as war continues, this delegitimizing cultural understanding strains against the movement of social structure itself -- against the institutional power and ideological resources that leaders of a once and still partially legitimate war inevitably command. The personnel and facilities of the nation remain organized for mobilization, and the nation's leaders and staff continue to issue orders that demand obedience and war.

This conflict between culture structure and social structure -- which, as we will see below, typically overlaps with the social fissures created by pre-war conflicts -- presents an ideological strain that is uncomfortable for

both prowar and antiwar sides. As such, the strain demands resolution. The symbolic formulation of war may move back into line with the war government's policy, or it may shift even more sharply in a deflationary way. If battlefield difficulties persist, or even if the deflated domestic framework of understanding simply persists without any "objective" change, cynicism and withdrawal can become transformed into committed mobilization against the war. Lack of trust can become active distrust, and delegitimation can be transformed into countermovements that seek to legitimate a broadly anti-administration frame through provocative political and communicative action. Antiwar movements almost always become deeply reformist and often produce anti-regime and even revolutionary frames. Even in democratic societies, the creation and mobilization of provocatively ideological countermovements tends to produce provocative efforts at political and ideological repression in turn (Smelser on students v. police in 1960s).

In this dynamic and complex situation, national war leaders and staff are recoded from the mundane into the profane. Insofar as this reconstitution occurs, they are seen as embodying the very same categories, or classes, of evil against which the war effort was (and for many continues to be) aimed. It is often the case, indeed, that the official national enemies are now sacralized by the anti-official movement against the war, although this is a development that, like the degree of opposition violence, socialism, or

pacifism, is historically specific. At any rate, a transvaluation of values has definitely occurred. Comic satire and irony may still be used strategically as antiwar propaganda, but for those within the antiwar movement a new cultural seriousness has emerged. The movement to stop the war itself becomes an heroic and mythic quest, whose leaders and followers are engaged in a world-historical effort to save the world. Confronting one other as mutually reinforcing enemies of life-as-it-should-be-lived, the symbolic actions of the war and antiwar movements justifies the most extreme formulations on either side.

Evil War and Antiwar

[See Diagram from Rough pg. 13]

III

We have developed here a schematic model of the relationship between support for war-making and shifting symbolic frames.

War and Meaning

[See Diagram from Rough pg. 14■

The outside frames of this model represent the "black box" of which we spoke earlier. Through our discussion of its internal dynamics we have begun to take the lid off this box and open it up to the light of day. In doing so, our intention is to highlight the importance of culture as an

independent variable, for we believe that only in this way can the multidimensionality of power dynamics accurately be understood.

At various points in our discussion, however, we have also referred to the formative role that more distinctly social and institutional factors play in initiating the search for the meaning of war, in triggering shifts between frames, in forming the actors whose interests are in producing interpretations, and generally in creating constantly changing conditions whose impact on real social actors demands that meaning be made. Because references to such social factors will surface continually in the empirical discussion that follows, and because discussions of the type in which we are engaged are so easily misunderstood as having an idealist intent, it might be well to formalize the culture/society relations we have in mind.

At the center of our model we place the war-making politicians, their assistants, and the soldiers of the general staff. We presume that this is the first and the primary group that has an interest in legitimating war. No matter what the objective interests at stake, it is the motives and social position of these groups that activate and first employ the structural grids for war we have described. These war-interested actors face two very different kinds of social environments, and the outcomes of any particular legitimation struggle depends on their historically specific character. In what might be called the

external environment, there are the enemy and the allied groups, which include in each party not only armies but politicians, intellectuals, and official and unofficial spokesmen. The construction of this external environment obviously has enormous implications for the legitimation struggle. Are, for example, the allied and enemy groups of approximately equal economic, political, and historical weight, or do they have a highly asymmetrical relationship? Are the allies and enemies internally cooperative or are there fissures and intramural fights? Are the enemies culturally, religiously, and even physically distant from the war makers, or are they relatively close to home? Each of these considerations, it should be clear, will influence the ability of a nation's warmaking and war-opposing groups to generate effective idioms about the war.

By the internal environment of the war-culture fight we refer to the domestic situation that confronts the war party. Because our independent variable is culture, its effectiveness depends on communication and symbolic action. Movement between columns and rows in the Cultural Structure of War, and legitimacy dynamics themselves, depend on at least the partial existence of a civil society, a public space differentiated from governmental control that has some institutional media and citizenship access of its own. This condition depends, in turn, upon a level of social differentiation that can sustain a range of extra-governmental elites which possess power bases in relatively

autonomous institutions of religious, economic, legal, and intellectual life.

Yet, in considering this internal environment of war-making, the basic level of social differentiation is hardly sufficient. Differentiation is historically specified by particular articulations of group position and normative order. The internal environment affects warmaking because it provides an historically prior structure of political, social, and ideological opposition and cooperation between the governmental party and extragovernmental groups. In prewar periods of relative consensus, warmakers will be given the benefit of the doubt. Intellectuals and religious leaders, for example, and even members of opposing political parties, will be inclined to perceive the Perfect War scenario as proper and well-earned. The independent social bases for cultural opposition, if indeed they ever develop, will be activated only after a long period of time. By contrast, if the prewar period is one of sharp disagreement and party-political conflict, the warmakers, no matter how skillful, will have a much more difficult time. Domestic opponents will already perceive them in the language of enemy, and relations between government and independent elites may already be strained. Lyndon Johnson, who entered Vietnam in a period of remarkably vigorous domestic consensus, presents a type case for the first situation. Richard Nixon, despite the fact that he inherited Vietnam and organized the withdrawal of U.S. troops, represents a

type case for the second. President Bush, we will see, stands somewhere in between.

III

The period between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Allied airwar was four and one-half months on the calendar but much longer in social time. In the beginning, there was an extraordinary explosion of support for the military option, not only in the U.S. but apparently almost everywhere else. A world that had been celebrating the outbreak of world peace in "1989" woke up to the shock of continuing evil and the possibility of armed conflict. A people who had become increasingly civil in their politics began to study again the tactics and technology of war. A generation that had never supported American foreign policy found themselves waving flags and shaking a big stick. A wimp president seemed suddenly to embody determination and strength.

As quickly as this support for war had built, however, it rapidly declined. Within weeks of the initial American mobilization, America and other Allied nations became sharply divided by internal debate. While American citizens and leaders rehearsed different scenarios to roll back the invasion, and Saddam Hussein engaged in diverse tactics to maintain it, the symbolic fortunes of war leaders and their staffs went on a rollercoaster ride. By December, almost half of Americans had withdrawn their support. In the first part of January, however, a critical series of nationally

televised Congressional debates and a dramatic confrontation between Baker and Assiz began to reinflate the medium of trust. By the time the U.N. deadline had passed, on January 15, American support for war leaders had nearly returned to the peaks of August.

The outcome of this dynamic social process was in no way determined. If the President had lost the Senate vote to support the January 15th deadline, he would have found it very difficult to launch the war; it would certainly have been impossible to do so in a consensual and legitimate way. His supporters won by three votes, a tiny margin that revealed not only the ambivalence of public opinion but the vulnerability of national leaders to its sway. We are reminded once again of the difference between literature and life.

Throughout this decisive period in contemporary history, much more than public opinion was at stake. The levers of political and state power were up for grabs and the political careers of thousands of influential men and women were on the line. Needless to say, these politicians and their parties and factions tried to calculate the ramifications of every decision, every twist and turn of world events, in the most rational and self-interested way. There was also a vast mobilization of material resources; as equipment worth billions of dollars was transferred to the Middle East, the reputation and profitability of the

military-industrial-complex became thoroughly intertwined with the war's success.

These interests, and the intellectual, student, and religious groups in increasing opposition, made extraordinary efforts to control and manipulate public opinion. Close examination of the shifts in public understanding reveals, however, that deeper processes also were involved, processes that were outside the conscious control of the actors concerned. Indeed, during the four-and-a-half month interlude these actors were swept up in a "social drama," in which they found themselves acting out parts they often had no desire to play. The abruptness and seriousness of the unfolding events, and the extraordinary anxiety they induced, had the effect of transforming the whole period into a liminal event. Americans felt themselves separated from their pre-war routines. They experienced a sense of heightened reality, as their leaders, and sometimes they themselves, seemed to be acting on a new, "higher" and decidedly more dramatic stage.¹⁶

16. Discussion here of Turner's conception of "social drama" versus his earlier notion of ritual. Advantages is that linked to literature, audience, and opens way up for narrative theory. Disadvantages is that it loses access to religiosity, with its opening to sacred and profane and concentrated social action. Problems with Turner in general: never wrote about sacrality; never opened up ritual theory to the contingency of communitas, both as a product and as a cross-status group solidarity; had no semiotic or narrative theory. The importance of the three stage theory of separation, liminality, and reaggregation (Jacobs) for discussion of public dramas, which can remain linked to sacrality even while incorporating literary and dramaturgical theory. Ritual should be reserved for periods

Although the outcome of this social drama was not determined, it was highly structured by the restricted repertoire of symbolic forms.¹⁷ Within this restricted frame, there was enormous competition over representation. Episodes of intense, ritual-like experience marked the triumph of one set of representations over another, channelling anxiety and emotion into paths that supported or undermined the deployment of extraordinary material power. These paths are outlined in the "Cultural Structure War" we have presented above. We will now trace them in the discourse of the crisis itself. We will demonstrate how the schematic rows and columns of that structural map come alive as war-making actors and their opponents struggle for control.

IV

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 2nd, he entered a symbolic space that was by no means receptive to the symbolism of war. Indeed, antithetical cultural forms were firmly in place. The dynamism and even the competence of American political leadership had been in question for months; a millennium of world peace was felt to be already at hand; crusading quests

of particular repetition and intensity during the extended period of social drama.

17. Here see relevance of analogy between cultural theory and Chomsky's notion of generative grammar. Deep structures are general and can and must be creatively specified in speech. The whole discussion of language versus speech. Andy Roth.

and clashes of heros seemed relegated to an era gone by.
 [note LA Times feature on heros; contrast with TIME cover
 story recently on General -----, called Hero] TIME recalled
 this prewar mood in its retrospective lead article on August
 20th

Communism collapses, America
 declines. For more than a year, that coupling has
 expressed the conventional wisdom: a new world is
 emerging, a post-cold war era driven as never
 before by economic competition, an order in which
 other nations, new superpowers like Germany and
 Japan, will challenge U.S. primacy. At best the
 argument runs, an exhausted U.S., nearly bankrupt
 after 40 years of containing Soviet expansionism,
 will have to share global leadership in the 21st
 century. It may be that way. It may even be
 likely. But not just yet.

Yet, in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion, this
 routinizing framework was forcefully displaced. The meaning
 of History had not been decided. Alternative symbolic
 repertoires are always available to make different
 meanings out of new -- and sometimes even similar -- events.

Americans reacted to the invasion, and to their
 leaders' initial responses, by constructing the principal
 actors in terms of the discourses of sacred liberty and
 profane repression. The empirical construction of this

manichean duality can be achieved in different ways. In this context, it was achieved primarily by coding the enemy, Saddam, and not the American President himself. To be sure, Bush was identified with character traits that emphasized his capacity for liberty. He had "backbone" and had acted upon "principle" (8/20). These motives attributed integrity and honor; others gave Bush intelligence and rationality. His timing and coalition-building skill revealed that he was handling the crisis in a "masterly" (X) way; he was "adroit, even brilliant" (X). In one particularly revealing passage, TIME quotes from a Bush aide "who watched his boss calculate" as he put the Allied coalition together the crisis's early days.

No memos were required. It was all in his head. He operated exactly opposite of how Reagan worked. He knew the military thrust should follow the diplomatic. He knew that to be effective, the lineup against Saddam had to be perceived as more than just the rich west against a poor Arab. (8/20)

TIME follows this quotation with observation that is taken to be its logical consequence: "Within days, worldwide economic sanctions were in place: a boycott of Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil and a freezing of those nations' assets." President Bush was an effective, rational, clear-headed leader, and a man of integrity as well.

Yet, even in the first, heady weeks of war-mobilization such discourse about Bush was highly infrequent; for reasons

that will later become apparent, the symbolic resources for constructing him as sacred were rather thin. What sustained the dichotomous coding was the rapid, intense, and remarkably facile construction of the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, as evil itself. In contrast with the motives that allow liberty, Saddam's irrationality and wild passions are emphasized. He is "power mad," "bloodthirsty" (8/13) ...

Note: Following are contrasts that have to be reconstructed in terms of motives, relations, and institutions:

an heir to the bloodthirsty Mesopotamian kings (8/13)

his eyes are cold and remorseless as snake eyes on the sides of dice. They are the eyes of a killer (ibid)

Though Saddam now likes to parade around in self-designed military uniforms ... the nearest he ever got to power was assassination (ibid)

ruthless power mad

overlord of the Arab world

despot

suffering from severe megalomania with symptoms of paranoia

brutal expedient dictator

Iraq wants to show that it dominates the Middle East, that everyone has to line up behind it or else (8/6)

learned the ways of intrigue and sneak attack

(8/13)

Secret police are everywhere. Torture is commonplace (ibid)

What distinguishes Saddam from the rulers of other lands is that he is not content merely to "be president. He has a vision -- some would say a delusion -- of grandeur for himself and for Iraq, but the only ways he knows to pursue the dream are to kill and bully and take. (ibid)

A vain, amoral crusader (8/20)

As evil as Saddam might be, however, this polluted identification was not, in itself, sufficient to mobilize the world to war. The American people had to go beyond identifying evil to understanding it as a threat to the very existence of the world as such. Only if Saddam constituted such a threat could the invasion be seen as triggering a fundamental social crisis from which the world could and must be saved. Perhaps the most revealing evidence that this was so is the extent to which early public discussion not only coded Saddam as evil but evoked the Hitlerian metaphor.

"Iraq's land grab drew inevitable comparisons with the 1930s, when Hitler began to gobble up Europe in pieces small enough not to provoke a military response by the other powers of the day ... Fears grew that Iraq, having devoured Kuwait, would turn next to other appetizing and vulnerable

gulf nations ... Even in the fine points of his strategy, Saddam evoked echoes of the past. He excited his people with impassioned speeches full of grievances toward their neighbor. He exploited a broader dispute, scheduled negotiating sessions that were intended all along to be fruitless, and cooked up a request for intervention by supposedly downtrodden locals. The invasion sequence itself was classic '30s: bluff, feint and grab." (8/13)

Father-leader [who commits] genocide ... gassing his own people.

He's done what Hitler did to Czechoslovakia

The Hitlerian metaphor functioned as a "shifter" that upgraded the sacred/profane coding. As Ecco has shown, metaphors are contingent results of creative action, constructing concrete representations of the analogizing process that underlays symbolic thought. Thus, Saddam was not merely evil, but "one of the scariest figures on the world stage" (X). The pollution he threatened was not just local; he threatened "to rock the world." His repressive activities were not just locally relevant; they were of transcendental significance and implied violent transformation. Saddam, it was said, promised a "holy war to burn and murder the land under the feet of the aggressive invaders."

This threat of widespread, transformative violence, and the fear it inspired, worked to inflate the importance of the dichotomy between Western purity and Iraqi pollution.

The stage was becoming transcendentalized, transformed into the platform for a world-historical rather than regional drama. The outcome of the drama would set the agenda not merely for a few nations or a few years, but for an entire epoch and the entire globe. "Whatever countermeasures are taken," TIME wrote (8/13/20), "they had better be decisive." Why? Because, in the words of an authoritative Washington consultant, "The invasion is the first fundamental challenge to the new superpower order." Not an event but an entire order is at stake. The question of war naturally follows. "Does America really want to let the Saddams of the world shape the new global power structure?" (p. 17).

At this early point in the public debate the epochal struggle is understood as threatening to destroy a millenium of world peace that has already been achieved -- the world post "1989." Soon, however, the epochal struggle in the gulf established a more a more active role for itself in the salvation narrative. The new world, it turns out, is actually still in the making. World peace has not yet been achieved; it can be produced only via the unfolding, unprecedented cooperation of the Great Powers in the U.N.¹⁸

18. The distinction between pre and post-millennial thinking about salvation has been made by theologians and religious historians. It refers to whether decisive human action -- the reappearance of Jesus Christ -- is necessary to bring about the thousand year reign of peace on earth or whether Jesus will appear only after the millenium is already at hand. This conflict has been interpreted as allowing more versus less active human intervention in history, and it would appear that in a country characterized by this-worldly asceticism, like the U.S., the more active, pre-millennial

"The old geopolitical map was being redrawn," TIME observed. "China, the Soviet Union and the U.S. found themselves voting together on the Middle East, a subject that has bitterly divided them in the past" (8/13). The time is "ripe for realizing the lofty aims of the U.N. -- peace and responsibility for international law" (X). As TIME quotes a senior Bush Administration official: "The real significance of this crisis is that it is going to define the post-cold war world" (italics added).

The pre-crisis, routinized mood of American decline implied a cyclical narrative of imperial rise and fall. This has now been firmly displaced by a more transformative, millennial line of linear ascent. Is the U.S. "exhausted"? Will it have to "share global leadership"? "It may play that way. It may even be likely. But not just yet" (8/20/18). America can, and must, continue to remake the world; it is still the vehicle for salvation. The Gulf crisis reveals "a new role for America and the military power it commands" (22).

Leading the free world is less of a mission now that so many are free or on the way to becoming so. But someone is always going to have to lead the civilized world. Saddam Hussein isn't the last despot around.

situation would apply. The prominent appearance of this well-developed religious theme in the secular discourse of war gives further weight to our argument that war demands a narrative that reaches into the mythical, world-historical domain.

Once again, the U.S. has become the lead character in the story of world salvation. "The superstars of recent months, like Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl, will be swept to the side of the board," TIME predicts. In Henry Kissinger's words, "only America could have put together the diplomacy, the military power, and the economic measures to do this." For American allies on the Arab side, the crisis has also come to be seen in ultimate, world-historical terms. "The Arab world is never going to be the same," the Arab League ambassador to the U.S. asserted. "History will not be made just for us. It has to be made by us" (p. 27).

As we suggested earlier, the biblical eschatology of Judaism, Christianity and Islam often views salvation in violent, apocalyptic terms. If the line between good and evil is sharply drawn, and the outcome of the conflict between them earthshaking in its consequence, violence can be justified as the only means of ensuring the triumph of the good. Just as the Israeli prophets had evoked imminent violence and war, TIME evoked the prophets in turn. Its lead story quotes from The Book of Daniel (4:33) -- "Nebuchadnezzar ... was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen". Readers are reminded that Saddam himself identified with the Babylonian king, who had "made his name in history by destroying Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and driving its inhabitants into 70 years of captivity" (8/13/23). When the magazine concludes that this "is fair

warning," the prophetic injunction for defensive, purifying violence could not be more clear.

Sacred salvation can be achieved only via an epic quest. The main character in every quest tale is a great, heroic figure, upon whose moral and physical strength, and firm and courageous resolve, every turn of the plot depends. The question remains, then, will the leader of the Allied side be up to the job? President Bush may be a good man, leading a sacred cause against a leader from which the world must be saved. Is he capable, however, of also wielding a righteous sword? Again, in the early weeks of the Gulf crisis, there were scarcely any doubts. The genre of heroic quest seemed to provide an immediate and compelling format for the quickly unfolding events. There is, first of all, the helpless victim, which establishes the object to be saved.

Though the invaders had quickly seized Kuwait's radio and television station, a hidden transmitter continued to broadcast exhortations to resist the raiding foreigners and pleas for help from other Arab states. "O Arabs, Kuwait's blood and honor are eing violated. Rush to its rescue!" cried a voice thought to be the crown prince's. "The children, the women, the old men of Kuwait are calling on you." (8/13/19)

In the mythical time of this unfolding social drama, then, a savior had to be found. George Bush is described, indeed, as the perfect man to rectify this terrible deed.

Only the U.S., most everyone acknowledges, has the capacity to muster the international effort required to stop the powergrab of a vain, amoral crusader like Saddam Hussein. It appears that George Bush has the will and skill to do so. (8/20/20).

A description of the nation's power is followed by an assertion of an individual's prowess: it is not a country or a social system that must be identified, but a human figure of superhuman qualities. Like Arthur in the legend of old, Bush's heroic role is surprising but preordained: he "has spent a lifetime preparing for the kind of crisis he faces in the Persian Gulf" (19). Not only was the younger Bush trained in the arts of espionage and war, but more recently he tasted blood in a battle that foreshadowed the one presently at hand.

When he made the decision to sent Americans to the Persian Gulf, Bush did so in a conference room at Camp David ... Not far away, in a long hallway, a showcase of war mementos greets passers-by. Dominating the scene is a life-size photograph of Bush [which] has a dozen-odd bullet holes in its head. It was retrieved from the private pistol range of Manuel Noriega. Nearby are

the original police mug shots of Noriega, face front and silhouette. Does the President enshrine these images as prehistoric men wore totems from which to derive strength? Or is this the beginning of a Terrorist Trophy Room, where the President, who often trains a double-barreled shotgun on Texas quail, \x can display what he has bagged in the way of bigger game? (22)

Beneath the veneer of civilized control, in the dark recesses of his secret and mysterious redoubt, the President is a savage hunter who fights mano-a-mano against the enemies of the good. The criminal actions of Saddam are said to have "provoked anger" and "indignation" in this normally calm and reasonable man. In response, he announces, "this will not stand," and is said to be "ready for action." Then, in a ritual that proceeds violence in every national myth, Bush "draws a line in the sand" and begins the specifically American task of "rounding up a posse." (20). King Arthur or the sheriff in the white hat -- the salvation narrative has found its man. The decision to invoke force seems not to have been a decision at all. It appears as an action etched in mythical fate.

V

This meshing of symbolic forms into the schema for Perfect War saturated public rhetoric for nearly three weeks after the invasion, well into late August. Even in this heady early stage of full support, however, potential

problems could be seen. Before August, Bush's domestic image had been anything but heroic, and Kuwait had seemed anything but a prostrate victim in need of outside help. Saddam himself had not only been an ally in realpolitik but a symbol of the Arab's progressive side. These images lurked behind early mobilization discourse like ghosts from the past and, to the war planners, like unnerving premonitions of what the future might hold.

Paradoxically, it was the very success at war mobilization that began to undermine the power of the images that legitimated it. As tens of thousands of grimly determined Allied troops poured into Saudi Arabia, the imminent danger of Iraqi invasion began to disappear. TIME put it this way: "As the pace of the buildup continues, anxiety abated" (9/10). This abatement in anxiety was not simply psychological: it signaled the dissolution of the symbolic framework that had helped to create the initial anxiety and, hence, the justification for violent counterattack. In the early weeks of mobilization, war leaders and citizens had been willing to risk the lives of thousands of hostages; in fact, the Perfect War scenario was so powerful that the hostages' terrible fate, in the event of war, had hardly been thematized in public at all. Now, as August turned into September and October, many Americans expressed doubts about putting even the lives of professional soldiers at risk.

While events in the social world triggered this deflationary spiral, it could proceed only along the tracks provided by symbolic frames. This movement was facilitated by earlier understandings that had, it now seemed, only temporarily been displaced. The nature of these understandings, and the increasing frequency of their representation during the autumn mobilization for war, will be the subjects of the present section. Their effects on the cultural mobilization itself will be the subject of the next.

One must begin with the obvious tentativeness in the symbolization of George Bush, in terms both of sacred code and heroic genre. Until the Gulf crisis, the President had been famously identified with visceral caution. In the lead to their national story on Supreme Court nominee, David Souter -- only the week preceding the invasion -- TIME exemplified this earlier understanding, speaking about the President in terms that deftly combined satire with profanation: "If there is anything George Bush dislikes more than eating broccoli, it is taking risks" (8/6). Real heroes eat spinach, not broccoli, and they live on a proverbial diet of risk. Only the week before this report on timorous Bush, TIME described how conservatives had skewered him for going back on his no-tax pledge. Bush was said to lack not only courage but conviction, two essential qualities of the discourse of the good. In contrast with this pollution, it was believed, stood the purity of Reagan, who continued to

be more easily identified with the fictional and historical heroes of old: "With the tax switch clinging to their cheeks like the remnants of a burst globe of bubble gum, [Republicans] must be asking themselves, Would the Gipper even have got into such a mess?" (7/30/72) The answer to this rhetorical question can only be no: Bush has "no lifelong, strongly held principles". This coding slippage of the President produces problems for the genre of war. TIME reports that, in contrast with the leaders of truly heroic plots, both fictional and real, the President "is in danger of losing the character." Significantly, this domestic profanation and downward genre deflation continued even into the first week of post-invasion discourse. "A Deficit of Guts," headlined TIME after the breakdown of the budget summit (8/13/32). Criticizing the Administration's "inept handling" of its own budget plan, the magazine quotes an unnamed official admitting defeat: "We got suckered." Heroes fool others; they are too clever to be fooled themselves.

This negative coding on the domestic front recalls some of the very epithets that were employed on the war front to pollute Saddam Hussein. In the midst of an unfolding crisis, Americans were "splitting" their social representations, a process that allows two different lines of symbolization to avoid confronting one another in an explicit way.¹⁹ What

19. For the general notion of "social representations" and their role in creating social polarization of self and other, see the very interesting series of studies by

would happen if this classic mechanism of defense broke down? If symbolization about domestic politics ever intruded into the foreign policy frame, it could push toward the kind of equalization of protagonists that signals comedy and farce, threatening the code and genre necessary for war. This possibility, indeed, was foreshadowed in the week preceding Saddam's invasion, when the future Iraqi enemy is fleetingly coded in terms that suggest grudging respect. His claim to Kuwaiti oil is constructed as a response to "quota cheaters," and his order for troops to occupy the Kuwait-Iraq border is characterized as assuming "the tough-cop role" (8/6/46). Saddam may be "one of the scariest figures on the world stage," but he is so in a "wickedly brilliant" way. Wars of international salvation are difficult to make against brilliant, law-enforcing men.

Indeed, if deflationary renderings of code and genre were suggested even during the heady early weeks of the crisis, so were shifts in narrative. The most significant challenge to the salvation frame derived from weakness in the symbolization of Kuwait, which was, after all, the object upon whose rescue the heroic genre depended. In contrast with Europe or Israel, America achieves salvation, not by saving itself, but by rescuing others who are identified with the sacred cause. Kuwait, however, did not

sit easily in Czechoslovakia's seat. The problem was money, and the luxury that flows from it, commodities that the "Republican" roots of the discourse of liberty can never easily accept.

TIME's early magazine reports on the invasion speak of Iraqi soldiers "angrily ripp[ing] out car phones" from Kuwaiti cars, of their tanks rolling down Kuwait's luxurious superhighways, and of Kuwait's Emir and his family fleeing to safety by helicopter. The media talked about Kuwait in terms like "fat and ripe" and as having "enormous reserves of cash." These phrases are symbolically polluting, and they rest upon long-standing Western profanation of Arab luxury and unearned wealth. They suggest that the U.S. and Kuwait are, in fact, on opposing sides, a possibility that affects the formulation even of formally rational acts. During its report on Iraq's border build-up the week before the invasion began, for example, TIME explained that "Kuwait and the U.A.E. ... tend to favor lower prices as a way of discouraging Western countries from pursuing alternative energy sources" (8/6/46). These coding problems were exacerbated by the long-standing opposition between Arab nations and the Israeli state. By entering the discourse of liberty, Kuwait became logically homologous with Israel, an analogy that pushed against the symbolic force of this earlier opposition. This tension created

an imminent strain.²⁰ If a symbolic struggle for victimhood emerged, it would certainly be the Jewish, not the Arab state that would sustain the rescue narrative: Kuwait would be pushed to the negative side.

Money symbolism also posed problems to the virtuous construction of President Bush, not only because of long-standing American misgivings about his upper class background but because of representations about the Savings and Loans crisis which had dominated public discourse in the months before the invasion. "It was not thugs in ski masks who drained billions and billions of dollars from the nation's S&L's," TIME wrote in mid-July, "it was hundreds of (mostly) respected citizens in pinstripes" (7/23/22). This analogy between terrorists -- a symbol that itself recalls Arab fighters in the American mind -- and upper class big shots pushed even closer to home when the President's own son became implicated in the S&L scandal. When Bush felt compelled to "express a certain confidence" in the "honor" of his son, he seemed, in spite of himself, to suggest an identification between himself and the profane side of the cultural divide.

20. See Sahlins 1981 for an illuminating investigation of the tensions that are produced when even a single item in a series of binary relationships becomes inverted in its association with good or bad. This tension might be considered a "logical" problem in the purely cognitive framework of semiotic structuralism, but it is a moral, emotional, and even metaphysical problem in the framework suggested here. These strains are the stuff of cultural shifts.

In the American collective conscience, it is hard to ally money and honor, just as it is hard to become interested in saving a helpless rich kid who gets beaten up or rallying behind a leader who has broken his word. It is just as difficult to mobilize against an enemy if he can be portrayed as a wickedly brilliant Robin Hood. In the prehistory and even during the early glory weeks of the Gulf crisis, then, there were signs of trouble ahead. The perfect fit between war-makers' actions and citizen response showed signs of possible strain. If the dominant metaphor for the Perfect War scenario was "World War II," there was another, deflationary metaphor that sometimes emerged. For Americans, "Vietnam" symbolizes deflationary movement; representing value inversion and antiwar themes, it has richly coded genres and narratives of its own. In the Reagan era, this metaphor had blocked war-making in a significant way. Before the airwar began against Iraq, the symbolic frame, "Vietnam," would become powerful again.

VII

By early September, in the very same issue in which TIME reported that America's initial anxiety had abated, Bush's domestic problems assumed center stage. They began, for the first time, to impinge on his image in the field of war. It may well have been Bush himself who first establish the connection, hoping perhaps to purify his domestic image with his warmaker's gleam. In the second week of September,

he announced that the Congressional and White House budget summit would meet at the officers' club at Matthews Air Force Base. The media dramatized this symbolic analogy between war and peace leadership, and seemed to suggest that the momentum was now on Bush's side. "At the very height of the military airlift to Saudi Arabia," TIME reported, "Bush cleared his Kennebunkport table and for 2 and 1/2 hours pondered whether a recession could be prevented" (9/10/28). When TIME noted that Bush's hopes for a strong Republican showing in the November elections "are now also tied to the shifting sands of the Middle East," it concluded optimistically, "so far, Bush's balancing act has been masterly."

This linkage, however, could also work the other way. In seeking to symbolically align two previously antagonistic elements, coding can go either way, from positive to negative or from negative to positive. Bush hoped, of course, that his positive representation as war President would purify his negative symbolisation as domestic leader. The danger was that the contact he had engineered between these two symbols would work in reverse, and that the war President would be polluted by the domestic one. This attempt at linkage, moreover, not only reached to connect two coding regimes but contrasting genres and narratives as well. The significance of domestic political fights became inflated when connected to the war party's other symbolic forms. "It is no longer just a session on a budget formula," TIME

observed; "it is an antidote to chaos." The budget stakes suddenly seem much higher than before; they involve the fundamentals of social order itself. These new high stakes linkages, and the possibilities for humiliating inversion they create, are underscored by TIME's headline the following week: "Bush's Other Summit: The President has skillfully mobilized the battle against Saddam Hussein. Now can he lead the fight against the U.S. deficit?" (9/17/24). The report which follows pivots upon a series of symbolic antitheses, between the sacredness of the President at war and the profanity of the President at peace: "willing to take huge risks, make tough decisions, spend money quickly" versus "low profile, low risk and largely ineffectual"; "experienced and confident" versus "lost his policy compass".

Three weeks later, by mid-October, it was apparant that Bush had failed to negotiate a reduction in the budget deficit. The negative possibilities of linkage threatened to become a reality. In press stories about the domestic President, juxtapositions with the war President became significantly less symmetrical, with much more space devoted to the domestic, polluted half. The President is said to "lack confidence," unable to draw a line in the domestic sand: "Bush shrinks from framing options in a stark and persuasive manner than can force people to make a choice" (10/22/27). With "weakness," "blink" and "zig-zag" the operative codings, the genre that frames the domestic

scene dips dangerously downward, to satire and comedy. "Read My Lips," TIME's headline satirizes Bush's response to a domestic inquiry, suggesting that the origins of the President's split between war and peace personnas "is perhaps best left to psychiatrists".²¹ By early November, when polls showed that Republicans were about to suffer a mid-term electoral defeat, public symbolization of the domestic President had become deflationary in a savage way. TIME calls Bush "the perfect spy," a "deep-cover agent" whose inept activities can only be understood as "covert operations" to benefit the Democratic Party. This satirical fantasy goes beyond pollution and comedy, constructing Bush himself as the enemy who must be fought.²² In the week following, indeed, TIME ridiculed the domestic President's "flounder flops on taxes," called him belligerent, and accused him of playing "fast and loose with the facts" (11/12/38).

21. "Read My Lips" was a statement that Bush had repeated throughout his successful campaign for President in 1988 in response to inquiries about the seriousness of his commitment not to raise taxes. After Bush agreed to raise taxes during this critical domestic period, the phrase would haunt him as a satirical comment on his lack of sincerity.

22. Again we see what we earlier referred to as the crucial role of metaphor as "shifter" between rows and columns on the cultural map. The ironical term, "the perfect spy," had only recently been introduced into public discourse by John LeCarre, whose best-selling book by that title seemed to crown his career as the spy novelist who to accept the tripartite legitimation of the Cold War, at the level of code, narrative, or genre. See pg. XXX, above.

As we will demonstrate in some detail in the section following, this sharpening of the antiBush domestic frame, and its increasing tendency to intertwine with the symbolism of war, had a cumulative, deflationary effect on cultural mobilization. At an early point in the domestic/war front mix, Bush aides were quoted as insisting there was a "firewall" between the President's images in these different fields. Yet, with each deflationary movement, there was the equalization between protagonists that marks comedy off from both tragedy and quest, a genre shift, in turn, that makes the wall between sacred and profane coding more difficult to sustain. By early September, TIME had already begun to cast American and Iraqi initiatives under the same symbolic net: "Both sides are looking for an exit, but neither gives way on its basic -- and irreconcilable demands" (9/10). Six weeks later, during the height of Bush's budget problems, a photo caption asked, in effect, whether this domestic leader was really capable of mobilizing the nation for war: "How could the man who confronted Saddam be so indecisive?" (10/22/26). When TIME announced in its November election issue that George Bush was "the biggest casualty" (11/19/30) of the Republican's defeat, the metaphor seemed to indicate that a war had been fought, not against Saddam Hussein, but against the American President himself.

The same process of deflated representation can be seen in public discourse about Kuwait. Here, too, pre-invasion frameworks began to insert themselves on the war-making

frame. Once again, however, the downward spiral began only after the easing of heightened anxiety allowed the possibility of a shift to different kinds of frames. By early September, disparaging references to Kuwaiti wealth had given way to questions about their actual injury at Saddam's hands. "Tales of destruction and rape abound," TIME acknowledges, but claims that these are "hard-to-confirm" (9/3/42). If the victim is not injured, it is difficult to assume the rescuer role. This role is undermined further, of course, if the victim itself is not coded in a sacred way. Kuwaitis are not only often described as corrupt but as incompetent. There "is a Kuwaiti resistance," TIME writes, "but its effectiveness is difficult to assess."

When, in late November, TIME headlined "Time for Doubt" in a story devoted to American war policy, the deflation of trust was symbolically linked to this profanation of Kuwait: "To many Americans, it sounded as though Bush were planning to lead the U.S. into a war to oust Iraq from the conquered oil sheikdom of Kuwait" (11/26/30). Yes, Kuwait was conquered; but was it worth saving? Polls showed that less than half the American public now viewed the liberation of Kuwait as worth the fight; just over forty per cent suggested it was not. Fully half of those surveyed agreed that protecting the oil supply -- a realistic, mundane, and thoroughly deflated goal -- was the actual motivation for military intervention. "Deterring

aggression," a theme that captures the high rhetoric of salvation, sacralization, and quest, was accepted by only one-third of the American people.

When, in late December, human rights organizations engaged in a degrading public dispute over whether the Kuwaiti government-in-exile had falsified reports on Iraqi atrocities (12/31), a clear symbolic inversion had begun to take place. This further facilitated equalization of the warring parties. Because Kuwait was not pure, it could not be rescued. If it could not be rescued, America could not be engaged on a heroic quest. The entire string of sacred associations begins to break down. Insofar as Kuwait cannot be seen as a legitimate victim, its analogy with sacred Israel is threatened, a strain that for Israel could go either way. In late October, after the Temple Mount killings, the analogy with Israel held but, this time, in a polluting way. TIME announced that "Israel Is like Iraq" (10/29/50). Likud's talk of Greater Israel "is as ominous for the prospects of there ever being real and lasting peace in the region as Saddam's military nostalgia for Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire."

If America's principal ally in the Middle East is being shifted to the polluted side, and the nation towards which its salvatory practice is directed is being proven unworthy of further sacrifice, doubts about the juxtaposition of America and Iraq's cannot be far behind. Was it merely gratuitous that, in a mid-October report on

child abuse, TIME insisted the "the U.S. is only of only four countries -- with Iran, Iraq and Bangladesh -- that still executive juvenile offenders"? (10/8/41). Such doubts first produce delegitimacy, then inversion and anti-war mobilization. TIME ran its first major story on the antiwar movement in early September, on the emergence of a dovish Republican right-wing (9/10/27). In late November, the magazine announced that "a new antiwar movement is mobilizing" (11/26/33) and, even while cautioning against facile Vietnam analogies, headlined their story, "Giving Peace a Chance," connecting the fledgling movement not only to the *communitas* of the 1960's but to the sacrality of the martyred John Lennon's famous pop song. Vis-a-vis the "earnest" antiwar Americans who were trying to "calculate" the war's human costs in a fair and balanced way, TIME juxtaposes the unpredictable actions and "very cloudy reasons" of the war-makers themselves.

In this section we have shown how pre-invasion symbolic frameworks resurfaced after the initial weeks of perfect war. As these lingering identifications intensified, they produced associations that ran counter to war mobilization, creating the context for deflationary movements in the code, genre, and narrative frames. As time went on, these background variables profoundly shifted the identities of the war-makers and the frames they could successfully evoke. In the period from early September to late November, these processes deflated the public support for war.

VII

Steve -- These are Notes for future development:

A. On the ethnography thus far:

1. First, obviously, we need to give evidence of a number of sources other than TIME, although of course we love it and we have that article, undoubtedly written by a TIME reporter, justifying TIME as reality. You can begin working on this now, if you have time. What I want you to do is to do research around the points and themes I have already established on the basis of the write up (which was itself based on your notes).

We need two newspapers, the NY TIMES and Wall Street Journal, and perhaps also USA Today. We need a left-wing magazine, like the Nation, and a more conservative journal, perhaps National Review or US News.

2. The Hostages episode should get more attention than we give it, perhaps become a vignette in itself. It was touch and go, in the sense that the theme that the war might be sacrificing the innocent hostages should have been an available theme for people to pick up on. It had always been very popular with single hostages and Palestinian terrorists: when Americans and others argued that terrorism was so dangerous that the hostage lives must be sacrificed this gained only grudgingly accepted. Here, there were thousands of lives at risk, but as far as I remember nobody publically suggested that the war process should be stopped because of them. (this had been Saddam's idea, of course). We must study in some detail the metaphorical process of how this happened. I think the evil coding of Saddam interfered in the genre of the slaughter of the innocents, which was to get set up and create distance from the war plot. E.g., the famous example when Saddam patted the little boy's head, instead of showing the boy as an innocent victim of Allied war-making, it made Saddam look like the evil threat. On this incident, we should look especially at left-wing media which may well have been swayed.

3. The contrast between Bush relaxing in Kennebunkport during the early days of the war, the picture of perfect control and mastery, with the dark, harried, and hassled Iraqi leader. Was this important?

B. The transition between the depths of unpopularity of warmakers and the rise back to the Perfect War scenario of Jan. 16th:

This seems to have been mediated by a major ritual event, namely the Senate Debates. This can be studied as important in and of itself, and should obviously be compared to other televised hearings. (Can you do a search and find out if others have looked at it? Look in Dissertation index). During the debate, Senators committed themselves to support the outcome, no matter what happened, and thus this had the effect of eliminating opposition during the air war period. This agreement seemed to reinforce the democratic character of the debate. Note references to the deepness and moving quality of the debate, etc. How generalized it was. It cleansed Bush's domestic symbolisation.

The second ritual here was the Baker-Assiz meeting which was forced, once again, on grounds that U.S. wasn't democratic, open to negotiations, in other words wasn't D1. See how this ended.

C. On the post-January 16th Perfect War discourse:

1. During the air war period, we should focus on a couple of culturally complex issues that reveal the stability of the issues we identified for the earlier period:

a. Vignette on the shot down pilots. How they had to be reconstructed as victims of D2 to explain their decline from heroism, etc.

b. The issue of bombing of civilians and the accuracy of statements about it. Focus on reporting on the bunker bombing.

c. The issue of the openness of the U.S. government towards reporters. This was an underlying conflict throughout the war and for long after. It aroused the self-interest of this important elite and posed a major potential trigger for antiwar feeling.

d. The issue of being open to peace feelers. Here note the handling of Russians and their efforts to broker the peace: couldn't be rejected out of hand without D2ing our side, warmakers and allies. (Note my earlier discussion of the internal and external environments involved).

e. Also note the role of "Saddam's" allies, particularly Hussein, who was portrayed as a "trickster" or "fool" (see Orin Klapp, Heros, Villains, and Fools). This was the best way to deal with an apparently sincere and once and future friend of the U.S.

2. Ground War:

a. First, the issue of the timing of the ground war and whether it was necessary: This rehearsed the entire process. It involved issues of the construction of the enemy, of whether we were heroes or not, of how world-historical the drama was (we could continue the airwar for a while if it wasn't).

b. Finish Perfect War scenario off with the drums and whistles of the first 24 hours of the ground war. We should then switch to the long-term delegitimation of the war, for reasons we will see.

D. Deflating Discourse: How the Perfect War was Won and became unpopular. Or: The Cunning of History as it is culturally understood.

1. The lopsided victory.

After the initial period of euphoria, it is possible to argue, with some perhaps tortured evidence, that the amazing success and asymmetrical character of the Ground War had the opposite effect of what any rationalistic, common sense theory of legitimation would suggest (e.g., Lipset on legitimacy being respect and effectiveness).

The weakness of the Iraqis made things seem lighter, much less apocalyptic or world-historical because the enemy suddenly seemed very weak. If he was this weak, how bad of a threat could he have posed? Was this contradiction noted at the time? The asymmetry also made us seem like a bully and not as a savior. The objective facts of the situation, in other words, challenged the symbolic constructions. They even made it seem to some that there had been some duplicity on Bush's part, that e.g., Americans had known there weren't all these troops, etc, but had not told anybody because then the ground war might not have been allowed. There were also the rumors, never proved, that Allies had killed tens of thousands of Iraqi troops as they retreated.

These considerations did not, in fact, change the symbolization of the war, although they did have an effect, in turned out, on the long term "seriousness" of the memory of the war -- I think the fact that there was no sacrifice (more people killed by friendly fire) meant that it simply was not a major incident. BUT the lightness of the war had a more significant effect on the actual contingent plot, for it made it impossible for Bush to pursue Saddam and probably to support the Kurds. This proved enormously important.

2. Bush refused to pursue Saddam.

He cited Realpolitik and humanitarian grounds. The former were potentially weakening. The latter certainly supported the genre of hero but not the apocalyptic narrative. (It may have been forced on Bush by the lopsided victory, which made us seem bullying.)

Objectively the war's end was a now win situation. If US had gone into Iraq there would have been many deaths, and the problem with the fast victory (as compared with WWII) was that there was a lightening and even comedic quality once the ground war started, with no sacrificial themes. To cause great American death at this point would have seemed inappropriate and perhaps callous and evil. In other words, for ideological reasons Bush may then not have been able to do it. Not pursuing Saddam, however, left the problem of evil unpurged and raised doubts, retrospectively, about the entire symbolic rationale of the war, in terms of all three levels.

3. Bush didn't support Kurds.

Extraordinary blunder, at first articulated in heroic and deferential terms of letting them conduct their own national liberation, etc., but as they got creamed and we still didn't go in the rhetoric became more realpolitik-- the kurds were dangerous, not holy, because their victory would draw in Turkey and Iran. It then seemed that Bush wanted Saddam to stay in power, as long as he had not been defeated! Again, very deflationary. See the interviews here, especially. Here I would look especially at right-wing newspapers or magazines.

4. The postscript:

The predicted long-term scenario was that the symbolic pollution and silence of those who had not supported the war, combined with Bush's lionization, would mean his unbeatability and the continued great prestige of the war itself. Instead, the symbolic meaning of the war in part prevailed: Saddam and Iraq even more evil than before, particularly with the crushing of Kurds and the discovery of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, lying to the U.N., etc. And the war, qua war, remained heroic and possibly even salvationary. Thus, afterwards, the antiwar party (mostly Democrats) could never state publically that the war was bad, never accepted responsibility for actually opposing the War before the debate.

What did happen, however, is a kind of shadow symbolism developed, opposed to but not displacing (because could not without delegitimizing itself) the Perfect War. In this construction, Saddam was definitely vilified and the fighting of the war remained a world-historical event. BUT:

a. Something comedic enters into the entire construction. So many exposes on fact that U.S. had supported him all the time. Really makes Bush look stupid, instead of farsighted. Also suggests that the war may not have been need for salvation, since were dealing with them so much right before. But this tends not to be the interpretation.

b. More generally, the Domestically Polluted Bush is brought back to the center of symbolic politics and his prestige as war leader dissipates. First, the failure to spill blood undermines the apocalyptic quality of the event. (It has become a legend: sacred coding, heroic genre, but no salvation or apocalypse. This is a new column a new row on the diagram.) Second, the Demos used prowar symbolism to fight Bush domestically, e.g., the attack on him for not having noticed and fought against the threat of Saddam earlier, for having compromised with evil, etc. And many attacks, earlier, for not coming to aid of the Kurds.

Some more miscellaneous thoughts before wrapping this up:

1. The use of media as data. Two extremes. One is that provides simply info about society. The other is that provides only reflection of itself as an institution. We are somewhere inbetween. Here the issue of social differentiation is essential in allowing us to use certain texts without political polarization, as compared to Europe.

2. Deal more directly in a note with postmodernism. Not only with the theory of the end of grand narratives (steve's articles) but with the methodological implications, derived from Derrida in particular, that there are only texts and no text. Argument here is that one studies merely "many voices" but no single voice. Goes along with the notion of end of ethnographic authority. Our response is that we look at as many different voices as there are empirically: the actual degree of difference is sociologically variable, indeed to study that is the main problem of an empirical cultural science. CAN't simply assume difference in and of itself. Also, there is a "society," we can see this from the symbolic constructions to which people refer when they speak.

3. In conclusion go into a little more the formal properties of model in the paper. Cultural sociology is too often considered simply as descriptive and or as idealist, in the sense that concerned only with patterns of meaning, and not with institutions or, most importantly, with causal relationships, proof, etc. We do assert different kind of validity here. Instead of statistical, there is plausibility, etc. But really this isn't different from most sociology, indeed even statistics (see Berk). Weber showed that even cultural understandings, moreover, were causal,

and we have established a number of internal causal relationships. We have also demonstrated the relation between meaning structures and actions of individuals and groups: shown time and time again how constraining dominant interpretations were on war party and peace party. Demonstrated that history would be a lot different if these interpretive frames were different.

The diagram. In general, we have developed a clear explanation of the long-standing issue about the legitimacy of war. We have done this by converting legitimacy from a black-box independent variable into a dependent variable which in turn is explained by newly discovered things. These are, in the first instance, cultural things, which we have identified -- coding, narrative, genre -- and explained the relationship inbetween. (War Legitimacy can be independently recognized by polling, etc., so this is not a circular definition) This is the most important "finding" at a gross level.

Second, and more interestingly, we have investigated the details of these cultural variables by showing them to be part of a cultural model of some complexity. We have shown, in effect, the constraint of the columns -- the constraint of "threes" -- and the significance of the rows. There is a natural desire for equilibrium, for consistency, congruence, along the columns.

Second, however, if one item is pushed further in either direction -- along the row -- it sets off bells and there's intense strain until a re-equilibration is completed at some other column. The complexity of this model has allowed us to say with certainty that the dependent variable, war legitimacy, is significantly more complex than previously thought: Perfect War and Tragic War can both be thought to be legitimate, and there are a range of less legitimate options.

Third, by using this model we have been able to describe typical paths of variation, which we would describe and deflation and inflation of the symbolic code of war. While columns may be skipped, this is empirically unlikely, i.e., moving from perfect war to evil war. It is also unlikely that wars will only be delegitimate or evil.

4. How is it possible, as a philosopher at SCASSS observed, that the word "war" could be taken out of the diagram on p. 14 but that everything else would hold good? Either this destroys the entire essay or it makes it even more widely applicable, e.g., it works for love, for sex, for football matches, for political fights, etc.

5. Finally, please look at the two recent books that have been published about this war. One is about Bush as

president, his style, etc., written by a political scientists. The other is by a British intellectual and it's called something like: Uncritical Theory. It's mostly about Baudrillard, who is reputed to have said that the War never existed!