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Reacted to
9/11

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How the
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NEWS
MEDIA
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9/11

Essays from
Around the Globe

Edited by

TOMASZ
PLUDOWSKI

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

How the world's news media reacted to 9/11 : essays from around the globe / edited by Tomasz Pludowski.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-922993-66-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-922993-66-1 (pbk. : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-922993-73-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-922993-73-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)

1. September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001--Press coverage. 2. Terrorism--Press coverage. 3. Terrorism in mass media. I. Pludowski, Tomasz.

HV6432.7.H69 2007

070.4'49973931--dc22

2007000100

Marquette Books LLC
3107 East 62nd Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99223
509-443-7057 (voice) / 509-448-2191 (fax)
books@marquettebooks.com / www.MarquetteBooks.com

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my father, who always stressed the importance of education and instilled in me an interest in other cultures and languages.

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~~This is the title of the book that I am writing about the Palestinian Press.~~

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FOREWORD

Yahya R. Kamalipour

The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of subject is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this.

—John Stuart Mill

In 2007, America is not, nor is the world, the same as it was prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Suspicion and distrust of “others,” fear of the unknown, and unease about the role and status of the United States permeates the air. The so-called “War on Terrorism,” against a vague and undefined enemy, rages on in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The media hint at the possibility of another pre-emptive attack against Iran and its nuclear power plants which are reportedly intended for making atomic weapons.

The contemporary “Electronic Age,” as Marshall McLuhan envisioned in the 1960s, has interconnected the entire world, but this interconnectedness has not ostensibly contributed to improved intercultural communication and international relations or a cooperative “global village.” Rather, it has presented an array of previously inconceivable challenges and obstacles vis-à-vis media, culture, economy, and politics. “Increasingly removed from personal experience,” writes Mark Slouka (1995), “and over-dependent on the representations of reality that come to us through television and the print media, we seem more and more willing to put our trust in intermediaries who “re-present” the world to us” (1995, pp. 1-2). This situation is indeed intensified during conflicts and wars in which highly sophisticated propaganda campaigns and emotionally charged terms such as “fundamentalism,” “terrorism,” “jihad,” and “evil” are coined and used by

of the mass media in organizing the news and the role of mass media in the construction of a public agenda (Kamalipour, 2004). Regarding global media coverage, Douglas Kellner (2004) writes:

The 2003 Iraq War was a major global media event constructed very differently by varying broadcasting networks in different parts of the world. While the U.S. networks framed the event as “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (the Pentagon concept) or “War in Iraq,” the Canadian CBC used the logo “War on Iraq,” and various Arab networks presented it as an “invasion” and “occupation.” (p. 69)

In the aftermath of the first and second Persian Gulf Wars and 9/11, scores of books have been published in the United States and elsewhere about the role of mass media during wars and global conflicts, including: (1) media coverage of the 9/11 attack, (2) media coverage of the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, (3) media complicity with the U.S. administration, (4) media framing and debates, (5) media censorship and embedded reporting, (6) media construction of reality, (7) media manipulation of public opinion, (8) media and public diplomacy, (9) media and social-political responsibility, (10) media, patriotism and democracy, (11) media and objectivity, and (12) media and dehumanization of war.

The well-orchestrated 9/11 attacks shattered the perceived invincibility and invulnerability of America vis-à-vis foreign invasion and permanently altered the international and intercultural relations of this contemporary superpower with the rest of the world.

The information age has transformed everything in people’s lives, whether they live in a remote village in Africa, America, Asia, Australia, or Europe. Provided that they have some of the necessities of the modern life, such as electricity and a telephone and access to the electronic media, they unknowingly have become a member of the global village. In a global village where distant voices and images, transmitted via the electronic and print media, can be used as powerful means of psychological warfare and propaganda weapons, its inhabitants inevitably form their perceptions of “other” people and places — their thoughts, behavior, expectations, preferences, likes or dislikes — based on what they receive through the mass media. Furthermore, by acquiring skills in reading and writing and having access to a computer and a global network, such as the Internet, they can quickly become full-fledged participants, not just observers, of the world community in which they can interact with millions of people around the globe.

Global capitalism and global media have now penetrated the tribal way

of a few rich American corporations in 9/11. It is not as if the tribe has been taken to the elite's huts. Quite possibly, the members of the tribe may now dream of having a Pizza Hut, driving a Toyota, drinking a Budweiser beer, and owning other goods trumpeted on their TV sets.

We live in a world that is intensely information-driven, in which "knowledge is power," and in which mass media play a key role in our social, economic, and cultural affairs. With the concentration of global media in the hands of a few transnational corporations (i.e., Time Warner, Disney, Murdoch's News Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany, and Viacom), it is possible to use the media to provoke both positive or negative human emotions and create a divisive and polarized political and cultural environment within and without nations. In other words, we live in a media-induced global environment in which carefully manufactured and packaged images play a decisive role in our daily lives — images that can sell, as well as enhance, and images that can conjure hate and despair. Clearly, the communication-information-technology revolution continues to alter, redefine, and restructure human societies and lives throughout the world.

Apropos the above, this multifaceted book, *How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11*, examines the global media's reaction to the 9/11 attack. The editor, Tomasz Pludowski, has done a commendable job of bringing together an impressive cast of media experts, scholars, and professionals from throughout the world to assess global media reaction and coverage of 9/11. This book adds a fresh and welcome dimension to the existing literature on international communication, media and war.

The reader of this timely volume will note that the contributing authors have carefully studied and analyzed the global media's reactions to the 9/11 from a non-American perspective. In so doing, they have skillfully woven their personal insights and expertise into their research analysis of the media coverage of a given country and produced a series of critical essays that are easy to read, informative and thought-provoking.

Any meaningful step toward devising a better world requires shared goals and coordinated actions in reversing the current destructive, divisive, and anarchistic global trends. The first step in that direction must be based on education, awareness, and reliable information. Hence, this multi-faceted and multi-cultural volume makes a significant contribution by providing the reader with diverse perspectives that hopefully will provoke thoughtful analysis and discussions vis-à-vis human reactions to 9/11, media coverage, cultural interpretations, and global implications of war and violence.

How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11 should prove to be a valuable book for disciplines, such as international communication, international affairs, cultural studies, political science, journalism, and mass

analysis of news coverage of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, Serbia, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The book is a valuable resource for media professionals and policy makers.

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INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tomasz Pludowski

Hundreds of books on 9/11 have been published, covering global terrorism (e.g. Hoge and Rose, 2001), U.S. media coverage of September 11 (e.g., Chermak et al., 2003), media framing (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003), communicating terror (Tuman, 2003), U.S. journalism after 9/11 (Zelizer & Allan, 2002), understanding 9/11 (Calhoun, Price, & Timmer, 2002; Hershberg & Moore, 2002), U.S. hegemony (Chomsky, 2002; Chomsky, 2003), etc. However, nearly all of those provide the U.S. perspective. This study aims to bridge that gap by being more inclusive and representative of the world's scholarship.

The idea for this book grew out of a panel discussion at the 2002 convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in Miami Beach, to which I was invited by Debra Mason, director of the Religion Newswriters' Association. The discussion, titled "The World Watched Us", was thought-provoking but it covered only a handful of geographic areas. Moreover, virtually all perspectives presented were those of American scholars.

Afterward, I decided to continue the project and bring together a more diverse group of scholars to offer a wider range of views on the world's reactions to 9/11. Maria Marron and Zeny Sarabia-Panol were part of the original line-up. Brian McNair and I met during a 1997 conference on "The Images of Politics" organized by the University of Amsterdam, where we both spoke. He seemed a natural choice to offer an analysis of the British media reaction to the attack. The other authors included in this publication were either selected by me or suggested to me as possible contributors.

This volume is unique in its approach and scope. It bears some resemblance to *Communication and Terrorism* (Greenberg, 2002), but it clearly distinguishes itself by expanding on the non-American responses to the attacks. To that end, virtually all chapters that presented American scholars'

Health Studies, eds. M. B. Kroll (Eds.) (2003). *Stigma: Theory, Research, and Interventions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. doi:10.1086/37819

and appear elsewhere (Pludowski, 2006). While the other volume is intended to bring American perspectives on 9/11 and terrorism to European audiences, this collection serves the opposite purpose — namely, it brings non-American perspectives to the attention of mainly American audiences. In short, *How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11* fills a void in academic scholarship.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS STUDY

The working intention behind this project was to make this anthology:

- *International*. As noted before, the purpose is to fill a gap in global English-language scholarly literature by providing a volume on reactions to 9/11 in the mass media of communications around the world.
- *Interdisciplinary*. The perspectives presented include a variety of disciplines: journalism, political science, media and communication, and international relations. A multitude of research methods have been used ranging from personal interviews with journalists covering 9/11, discourse analysis of media coverage, content analysis, semiotic analysis, statistical analysis, and general informed commentary. While many authors provide succinct national overviews, a number of contributors offer detailed and more narrowly-focused analyses of select aspects of media coverage in a country or region of their choice.
- *Comparative*. A number of studies go beyond analysis of individual countries by making cross-national comparisons. That is most notably true of the chapters dealing with Latin America, the Far East, and Britain and Ireland.
- *A combination of scholarly theory and journalistic practice*. The authors represent some of the most accomplished media analysts in their home countries. While most of them are academic scholars, several are also, or primarily, journalists.
- *Cross-generational*. The authors range from established experts to junior faculty, in most cases working together to marry experience with a fresh view.
- *Native-like*. Every effort was made to ring true by including perspectives written by scholars native to the area under study, or at least ones with long-term, first-hand, near-native experience with that area and culture.
- *Accessible*. Given the all-encompassing nature of 9/11, this study is intended for the general reader as well as the academic community. One of the aims was to interest scholars, researchers, politicians, media executives, as well as the general reader. To this end, and for reasons of space and economy, discussions of theory and reviews of literature have been limited to the minimum and presented at any length only in several

Herf, Stephen, ed. *La Bonvicini, V. (Dir.)*. (2003). *Sabina Danal, Hughes, nativism*.
and for the purpose of some cases entirely omitted.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS VOLUME

The book begins with a Foreword by Yahya Kamalipour, an internationally noted scholar of international communication and executive editor of all national editions of *Global Media Journal*, including the Polish edition for which I am editor-in-chief.

The chapters are structured by continent, with the European analysis constituting the most numerous group and, thus, coming first. Individual chapters are devoted to British and Irish, French, German, Spanish, Norwegian, Polish, Slovene, and Russian media. Then analysis focuses respectively on Asia (a comparative study of the seven nations of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Philippines, followed by individual studies of China, a comparison of Japan and China, and a look at India). The remaining sections focus on Arab and Middle Eastern countries (Egypt, Palestine, and Turkey), Australia, South Africa, and the Americas (U.S., Canada, and an extensive comparison of Latin American data).

In the Afterword, Cees J. Hamelink, former president of the International Association for Mass Communication Research, faces the difficult, if not impossible, task of making sense of the extensive amount of information this volume provides. One cannot help but agree that this study bears out the flaws of the vision of journalism as a mirror of multi-faceted reality by showing how journalism falls victim to political and economic pressures, local cultural values, recent history, and the current state of international relations.

The text will appeal to the general reader and anyone interested in journalism, international media, global studies and current affairs. Also, by offering new information and filling a niche in American scholarly literature the volume will be interesting to researchers in those areas. The anthology can be used in classes in international journalism, international relations, media and terrorism, political communication, American Studies and sociology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In all likelihood, the idea for this book would not have occurred had it not been for Debra Mason of AEJMC, who invited me to a panel on world reactions to 9/11 back in 2002. I would like to thank her for that invitation

Hersf, Stephen and Marvin Kalb. (Eds.). (2003). *The media and the war on terrorism.*

Several individuals put me in touch with other scholars doing work in the area. Those helpful souls were: David Goodman and Stephanie Donald of the University of Technology Sydney, Janet Trewin of BBC, Robin Larsen and Ahlam al-Muhtassib of California State University San Bernardino, Richard Nelson of the Manship School of Mass Communication, Toby Miller of New York University, Marie Lienard of University de Paris 8, Ralph D. Berenger of the American University in Cairo, Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska of Wrocław University, and, last but not least, Lidija Herek of Slovenian Government. I would like to thank them all greatly.

Tal Azran of Melbourne University, a fellow NYU visiting scholar, should be thanked for drawing my attention to Marquette Books, an energetic and open-minded publisher interested in international communication, which resulted in a contract. From the day I approached him with this project, Marquette Books' *spiritus movens*, David Demers has been a very supporting and encouraging editor to work with. When I was adopting his book, *Global Media: Menace or Messiah?*, for my seminar in late nineties, I never suspected he would be my editor and publisher several years later.

This is the longest-running project I have ever worked on—it took several years to complete. Consequently, over that period many individuals have helped in a number of ways and their help and contribution are gratefully acknowledged.

Tomasz Pludowski
Kolumna, Winter 2007

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September 11 was Pearl Harbor and Guernica rolled into one — an

Part I

EUROPEAN MEDIA

Slips about the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11

UK MEDIA COVERAGE OF SEPTEMBER 11

Brian McNair

More than twenty years ago, French philosopher Jean Baudrillard referred to terrorism as the “theatre of cruelty” (1983, p. 143). He meant that in so far as its perpetrators set out to fill news media with horrifying, attention-grabbing images of bodies and buildings blown apart, (post)modern terrorism can be understood as staged spectacle, intended to command the political agenda and fill the enemy’s hearts with disgust and fear. The British public saw the tactic in action over some 30 years in Northern Ireland, where it contributed to the decision of the UK government to enter into negotiations with the various armed factions and, eventually, the Good Friday agreement of 1998. The Spanish have seen it in their cities and coastal resorts, where, at the height of the holiday season in 2002, an ETA bomb killed a child and the resulting publicity seriously damaged the local tourism industry. But the spectacular, theatrical quality of terrorism has never been more skillfully deployed than on September 11, 2001, when Osama bin Laden used the immediacy and global reach of 24-hour real-time news to send his defiant message to the United States and its allies, and to rally his own supporters across the world. On that day in New York, in the most obscene snuff movie of all time, the transnational television audience watched nearly 3,000 people die.

The event triggered military attacks — first on Afghanistan, then on Iraq — and led to controversial policy developments, such as the Patriot Act in the United States and a proposal to introduce identity cards in the United Kingdom. It was a devastating first strike in what quickly became known as the “war on terror,” sharpening and making visible to all what Samuel Huntington had already called “the clash of civilisations” in his 1996 book of that name. Islamic fundamentalism and Osama bin Laden, in particular, in interviews with CNN and other media, had declared holy war — *jibad* — on non-Islamic civilizations and values in the 1990s. In that context,

audacious, ruthless, hitherto unimaginably violent act designed to decapitate and demoralize. As John Gray's 2003 essay on globalization and terrorism put it: "The attack on the Twin Towers demonstrates that Al Qaida understands that twenty-first century wars are spectacular encounters in which the dissemination of media images is a core strategy" (2003, p. 76).

Dissemination of those particular images was immediate and all-encompassing. Real-time news media such as CNN and Fox News, network news organizations such as NBC and the BBC, Internet news sites and bloggers, and radio and print outlets all were given over to blanket coverage of events in New York and Washington for several days and weeks. The story commanded the global news agenda, bringing into being a transnational public united in consumption of information about its significance and impacts.

I was on sabbatical study leave in the far north east of Australia, twelve thousand miles from my home in Scotland, when the first plane hit the World Trade Center.¹ It was approximately 10:45 p.m. in that geographically isolated part of the world, and my wife and I were eating pizza with a friend at a local restaurant. When we got home just after 11 p.m., I switched on CNN, as I often did at that time of night while down under, to enable me to keep up with events on the other side of the world. Like all those who were not in the immediate vicinity of the twin towers, I missed the first strike, tuning in to the live TV coverage at a point when the north tower was already burning, but nobody as yet knew why. CNN's correspondents were speculating about the possible causes of the fire clearly visible on camera, but without firm information. Along with the hundreds of millions of people by now following CNN and other broadcasters, I witnessed the second strike as it happened a few moments later. I stayed with CNN throughout a night of journalistic confusion, panic and disbelief.

From that remote outpost in tropical Queensland, I joined a global audience of spectators to an act of mass murder that would shape the course of world events for the foreseeable future. The sense of connection between my location in Australia, my home in Scotland, and events occurring 15,000 miles and fourteen time zones away on the east coast of the United States was both exhilarating and unsettling. My feelings of anger, incapacity and impotence in the face of such an act were similar, I imagine, to those experienced by CNN correspondents narrating the drama from their Manhattan offices, although we were half a world apart.

For all that it was global in impact, however, the news media of different countries reported the events of September 11 in different ways, reflecting the relationships to and perceptions of their media and political

photos, video, and other information. The British and American media coverage of the 9/11 attacks, the Middle East conflict. This essay assesses coverage in the United Kingdom, the United States' closest ally on September 11, 2001, as it has remained in the ensuing period. It notes that British news media shared many of the premises and assumptions of U.S. journalists as they sought to make sense of the attacks. While dissenting views as to the meaning of 9/11 were reported in the UK media, British journalists tended to respond, as did their colleagues in the USA, to the event as the inauguration of a new era — an era of war on global Islamic terror.

SEPTEMBER 11 IN THE BRITISH MEDIA

There is general consensus among observers of Western media that on September 11, 2001, the conventional rules of newsgathering and reportage ceased to apply. As Zelizer and Allan put it in their introduction to *Journalism After September 11*, “shaken to their foundation have been familiar notions of what it means to be a journalist, how best to practice journalism, and what different publics can reasonably expect of journalists in the name of democracy” (2002, p. 1). September 11 meant “the death of detachment” (Ibid., p. 16). While long-standing critics of liberal journalism bemoaned the fact that “the media system” on this occasion proved to be, as it had been in the past, “a superior propaganda organ for militarism and war” (McChesney, 2002, p. 93), the majority of journalists and their audiences recognized that September 11 was different, both in scale and intent, from the terrorist atrocities of, say the IRA.

IRA terrorism always had a political objective, holding out the possibility of negotiation and resolution. Thus, it was that even American right-wingers and Republicans could support it with money and resources. Al Qaida's declaration of war, on the other hand, was non-negotiable, an act of pure violence designed to destabilize and, if possible, begin the process of bringing down global capitalism itself. Just as objectivity was not expected of the Western news media toward the Nazis in 1939-45, it would not be forthcoming in coverage of September 11. This was manifest in the tears shed by usually detached anchors as they sought to make sense in their own minds and for their audiences the scale of the atrocity. It also generated the kind of uncritical journalistic solidarity with government normally associated with wars of national survival, which is precisely how the attacks quickly came to be perceived — as a declaration of war. It was understood from an early stage in the drama that this was a new kind of war, fought by nonstate

plunged into a chaotic and uncontrolled firestorm. The September 11 attacks in the United States did not include “historical assessment of the structural violence that went into building [New York and Washington]” (Karim, 2002, p. 104). Indeed, it did not, although it seems naïve in the extreme to think that journalists reporting such an event would pause to consider the “structural violence” involved in the construction of a modern city as a causal factor in a terrorist attack upon that city and its working people. Noam Chomsky, while accepting that the September 11 attacks were “major atrocities,” qualified this statement by asserting that “in terms of number of victims, they don’t reach the level of many others, for example, Clinton’s bombing of the Sudan with few credible pretense.”³ Seen from the purely human perspective, however, it is difficult to imagine in what ways the response of U.S. media to this unprecedented event could have been other than what unfolded — shock, confusion, anger and grief.

⁴ For the United States, the identification with the events in New York and Washington was not so predictable. It was present, however, especially in the media of the country traditionally closest to the United States politically. In Britain, too, after the initial confusion about what exactly was happening at the World Trade

Center building had been clarified, September 11 was reported as an act of real-time satellite news stations and a growing online journalism sector had, by late 2001, already created a substantially different media environment from that which accompanied the UK’s “On America” public September 12 headlines in the British press included: Broadcasting Standards and Independent Television Commissions (Michalski and Preston, 2002) notes that public knowledge of events such as the September 11 attacks is formed not merely by UK print and TV news media. “For an increasingly large number of viewers satellite news channels have offered a broader range of views and sometimes, when originated outside the UK, a different sensibility and analysis of these events.” Their research found that Muslim and Arab language television and radio coverage to be biased in favor of the Israelis and against the Americans (Al-Jazeera and other Arab-language channels, although the researchers found no evidence of actual bias (as opposed to the perception of it) in their analyses.

As in the United States, there were a few exceptions to this pattern. In an article written for the *Guardian* two days after 9/11, UK-based journalist Seamus Milne blamed the American people themselves, including those killed in the World Trade Center buildings that morning, for the atrocity. By their “unabashed national egotism and arrogance,” argued Milne, and their failure to address “the injustices and inequalities” that, in his view, motivated the bombers, they had gotten more or less what they deserved, “once again reaping a dragon’s teeth harvest they themselves sowed.”⁴ A contributor to the *London Review of Books* declared in an essay a few days later that “however tactfully you dress it up, the United States had it coming. World bullies, even if their heart is in the right place, will in the end pay the price.”⁵ The September 13 edition of the BBC’s public participation current affairs

Huntington, 2001). The *Guardian* carried a front-page headline on 9/11 that read: "The U.S. ambassador (who had appeared as a panel member on the show) from some members of its studio audience (the BBC later apologized for the incident). Such dissent from the overwhelming consensus that September 11 was an attack without justification or excuse was rare, however.

To a greater extent than was true of the American media, British coverage of September 11 focused not just on the events in the United States but on the global response. International solidarity with the American people and their government was reported as almost universal, while rare expressions of support for the attacks, *Casualties* displayed by *West and Brook* *Palestinians* filmed on 9/11 celebrating and cheering, were highlighted by *Independent Television News Channel 5 News* and other outlets. BBC World reported that "in the Palestinian refugee camps all over the Middle East there has been jubilation — chanting, cheering, celebratory gunfire, people have been handing out sweets; they're ecstatically happy. They're saying, now, at last, America is having a taste of the same sort of suffering that we, the Palestinians, have had."⁶ *London Review of Books*, September 20, 2001.

Such coverage has arguably had lasting effects on global perceptions of the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause. Just as Yasser Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait in 1990 was at the time and British-based media did not minimize coverage of the 9/11 events in the UK. The rise of real-time satellite news stations and a growing online journalism sector had, by late 2001, already continued to be seen as a major strategic error, so coverage of apparent Palestinian pleasure at the deaths of so many innocent civilians — including *Brook* several hundred Muslims who had been in the World Trade Center at the moment of the attacks — had a complex but pronounced impact on global public opinion, especially as the tactic of suicide bombing became more popular among Palestinian militants during the second Intifada. Muslim and Arab residents of the UK perceived UK media coverage to be biased in favor of the Israelis and against the Palestinians as compared with that of Al-Jazeera and other Arab-language channels, although the researchers found no evidence of actual bias as opposed to the *site* above, they were read by the British media, as they had been in the United States, as a declaration of war — an unprovoked and mystifying assault upon ordinary people going about their daily business in downtown New York, and an event that fully warranted a military response by the American government. This consensus would not survive the build-up to and execution of war on Iraq 18 months later, coverage of which was often critical of the Blair government's WMD-focused rationale for war (Tumber and Palmer, 2004), but on September 11 and in the days and weeks that followed, including the invasion of Afghanistan and the ousting of the Taliban from power, few beyond the ranks of the anti-American left challenged this reading.⁷

In Britain, as in the United States, media coverage of the September 11 attacks was dominated by journalists' genuine feelings of horror and outrage. Expressions of dissent, such as the *Guardian* article quoted above by Seamus Milne, were the exception to the rule and tended to reflect the long-standing anti-Americanism of many on the British left, including the view that "they had it coming." Such dissent was not typical, however. Certainly, the British media were somewhat freer to speculate on the underlying roots and causes of the attacks, simply because they had occurred on British territory, but Tony Blair's early declarations of solidarity and sympathy with the American people, as well as the fact that several hundred British citizens died in the Twin Towers, defined the event as an assault on "us" as much as "them."

Then, and later in Afghanistan and Iraq, British media coverage reflected the degree of political consensus around the meaning of the events being reported. September 11 was reported as an act of homicidal terror not just in the United States but in the present civilized humanity of September 11, which no response but journalistic outrage was justified. The attack on Afghanistan

some weeks later was reported as a legitimate response to 9/11, validated by the United Nations and carried out by a broad coalition of countries. The real-time satellite news stations and a growing online journalism sector had, by late 2001, already created a substantially different media environment from that which accompanied the Iraq attack on Iraq was less consensual and was fiercely opposed both inside and out of the leading Coalition countries, and the British media reflected this in Broadcasting Standards and Independent Television Commissions (Michalski and Preston 2002) notes that public knowledge of events such as the September 11 attacks is formed not merely by UK print and TV news media. "For an increasingly large number of viewers satellite analyses show that the UK media were often critical of the Blair government in the run-up to and then the actual invasion of Iraq. They were even more so in the occupation phase, as the Andrew Gilligan affair and other stories exposed the evidential flaws (some called them lies) in the case for war against Saddam in their analyses.

Since those interventions, and especially since the London bombings of July 2005, the British media have been heavily focused on the issue of Islamic fundamentalism within the country (its capacity to inspire terrorist attacks such as the July 7 bombings) and the policy challenges associated with integrating Muslims into British society. As this essay went to press, the British media were covering the trial of Abu Hamza, the radical cleric accused of inciting racial hatred and murder in speeches delivered at public meetings and religious services in London. Because of September 11 and its aftermath, the present and future status of such individuals, and of the Muslim community in general, had become a much more newsworthy and contentious issue for Britain's journalists than ever before. News media were

Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Random House. The British media's coverage of the 9/11 attacks was criticised for activities as "glorifying terrorism," and on the merits of identity cards, phone-tapping and other security measures deemed necessary by the Labour government post-September 11. In all these ways, the impact of that day on the British media has continued to be felt by journalists and their audiences.

CHAPTER ENDNOTES

¹ This paragraph is an extract from McNair, B. (2006). *Cultural Chaos: Journalism, News and Power in a Globalised World*. London: Routledge.

² Sontag, S., 'A Mature Democracy', *New Yorker*, September 24, 2001.

³ Chomsky, N., 'A quick reaction', *Counterpunch*, September 12, 2001.

⁴ For the full text of the article see www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,551036,00.html.

⁵ Beard, M., 'Reflections on the present crisis', *London Review of Books*, September 20, 2001.

⁶ Reported in Michalski and Preston, 2002, p. 11.

⁷ British-based media did not monopolize coverage of the 9/11 events in the UK. The rise of real-time satellite news stations and a growing online journalism sector had, by late 2001, already created a substantially different media environment from that which accompanied the IRA's bombing campaign of the 1970s and 1980s. A study conducted under the joint auspices of the Broadcasting Standards and Independent Television Commissions (Michalski and Preston, 2002) notes that public knowledge of events such as the September 11 attacks is formed not merely by UK print and TV news media. "For an increasingly large number of viewers satellite news channels have offered a broader range of views and sometimes, when originated outside the UK, a different sensibility and analysis of these events." Their research found that Muslim and Arab residents of the UK perceived UK media coverage to be biased in favor of the Israelis and against the Palestinians as compared with that of Al-Jazeera and other Arab-language channels, although the researchers found no evidence of actual bias (as opposed to the perception of it) in their analyses.

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ELITE BRITISH AND IRISH NEWSPAPERS REFLECT IDEOLOGY IN FRAMING THE 9/11 CATASTROPHE

Maria B. Marron

Much has been written about media coverage of 9/11. The winter 2003 edition of *Newspaper Research Journal*, for example, devoted the entire issue to studies of 9/11 media coverage under the title, "Reflections on an American Tragedy: Media Studies of September 11, 2001." Writing in that edition, Guido H. Stempel and Thomas Hargrove noted: "Much has been written and said about television's coverage of the terrorist attack Sept. 11, 2001, but a national survey by Ohio University and the Scripps Howard News Service shows that newspapers also played an important role" (Stempel and Hargrove, 2003, p. 55). In the same edition, Dominic Larosa concludes that on September 11, 2001, and on subsequent days, "The news media appear to have fulfilled the surveillance function reasonably well" (Larosa, 2003, p. 18). A study by Xigen Li and Ralph Izard found that "broadcast and print media focused coverage of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on facts" (Li and Izard, 2003, p. 204), but differences were manifest in frames and use of sources.

What is missing from this volume and, indeed, from much of the scholarship on 9/11 media coverage is a focus on international media coverage. This study will attempt to narrow that gap, specifically by exploring content from three key newspapers in England and Ireland, namely, the *Times* and *Sunday Times* (London, referred to hereafter collectively as the *Times*), the *Guardian* (Manchester/London), and the *Irish Times* (Dublin). These newspapers were selected for their "elite" status and because they are newspapers of record.

The Newspapers

England and Ireland have a long history of print media (Oram, 1983). There is a proliferation of media — print, broadcast and electronic — in both England and Ireland, and the media continue to play a powerful role in national life. In England, for example, the BBC last year broke a story about alleged malfeasance by Prime Minister Tony Blair’s government in relation to the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The story, which led to the apparent suicide of one of its sources, prompted “the worst crisis in the corporation’s 80-year history” in 2004 (Plunkett, 2004). The story was responsible for the launch of the Hutton Inquiry and ultimately led to the resignation of BBC chairman Greg Dyke and reporter Andrew Gilligan. Also in 2004, Piers Morgan, editor of the *Daily Mirror*, resigned his job when photos of alleged Iraqi prisoners were deemed false. But aside from the BBC and the *Mirror*, other important media include Channel 4, ITV, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Independent*, the *Sun*, and Rupert Murdoch’s Sky News satellite channel.

In Ireland, the *Irish Times*, traditionally considered the newspaper of the management and professional classes (Oliver, 2004, p. 17, and Ashdown, 1991, pp. 56, 46) continues to be so with some 79 percent of senior business executives reading the paper every day (Oliver, 2004, p. 17). The average readership of the *Irish Times* was 319,000 in 2003, an increase of 14,000 readers or 4.6 percent over the previous year (Oliver, 2004, p. 3). The *Irish Independent* had 532,000 readers in 2003; the *Sunday Independent*, 1,064,000 readers; the *Sunday World*, 827,000 readers; the *Sunday Tribune*, 219,000; the *Sunday Business Post*, 158,000; the *Examiner*, 206,000; and the *Star*, 437,000. In circulation terms, the *Irish Independent* has a circulation of about 168,000; the *Irish Times*, about 119,000, and the *Evening Herald*, about 104,000, with these figures representing an overall increase in daily newspaper readership attributable to Ireland’s economic boom, according to Lianne Fridriksson in *Global Journalism* (Fridriksson, 2004, p. 198). Furthermore, “About one out of every four dailies sold in Ireland is British, as British newspapers are widely available throughout the country,” Fridriksson notes (p. 198).

In England, the London press has become the national news source over the years. The BBC and the *Times* are preeminent, with the *Guardian*, Manchester and London, having a prominent role. The book, *The Function of Newspapers in Society*, notes that “in England, the London press became increasingly the national news source (augmented, of course, by the British Broadcasting Corporation) along with some provincial additions, most

doi:10.1177/0891246408319184
characteristics and traits that tell us more about it. The media emphasize some, give less attention to others and none at all to more.

Chyi and McCombs note that while the first level of agenda-setting research focuses “on the transfer of object salience from the media agenda to the public agenda, the second level deals with attribute salience in the media and its impact on both object salience and attribute salience among the public” (Chyi and McCombs, 2004, p. 23). The selection of key attributes is regarded as framing. As different attributes of an event are recorded over time, “frame-changing” occurs (Chyi and McCombs, 2004, p. 22). Given that space and time are two of the most important dimensions of news coverage, frames may be grounded in those dimensions; i.e., coverage moves across levels from the micro to the macro, from the individual, community, regional, and societal to the international.

Stephen Reese has suggested that framing is the way in which media, media professionals and their audiences organize and make sense of events and issues (Reese, 2001, pp. 7-31). Unlike Entman, Goffman and Bateson, all credited with introducing framing, Gamson focused on the construction of issues, the structuring of discourse and the development of meaning (Reese, 2001). Shah et al. have suggested that the norms of newsworthiness, along with “the routines of media production, encourage journalists to organize — to frame — their reports in predictable ways” (Shah, Domke and Wackman, 2001, p. 227). What Shah et al. term the “episodic and strategic framing” (p. 227) of news influences information processing and political judgments.

Focusing on the measurement of frames, James Tankard suggested that framing is a multidimensional concept (Tankard, 2001, pp. 95-107). Pan and Kosicki explore the “discursive community” and show that framing involves “defining and redefining the actors-speakers” (Pan and Kosicki, 2001, p. 43). Kosicki does not regard framing as an extension of agenda-setting “because framing begins from an explicit cognitive perspective” (Maher, 2001, p. 83). Michael Maher has noted that despite their differences, both agenda-setting and framing have converged in recent years (Maher, 2001, p. 83).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This framing analysis of coverage of 9/11 in its immediate aftermath in three international newspapers will attempt to answer five questions: (1) What type of coverage existed in these newspapers from Sept. 12-19, 2001? (2) Were any particular frames or themes manifest during that week, and, if so, what

is published in 36 News World's Five newspapers but focused on the 2001 9/11 (i.e., in what sort of tone and language)? (4) Were the newspapers similar or different in their coverage? (5) Did the newspapers reflect their traditional identity or affiliation?

NEWS MEDIA DATA

News stories were drawn from the *Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Irish Times* in the Lexis Nexis database and the newspapers' own archives from Sept. 12-19, 2001, inclusive. Stories were identified as relevant if they contained any of these words in relation to the World Trade Towers: "crash," "WTC," "World Trade Center," "tragedy," "terrorist," "terror," "September 11," "New York," "Osama bin Laden," and "attack."

The search produced a total of 93 stories. Of these, 28 came from the *Times/Sunday Times*; 52 came from the *Guardian*; and 13 came from the *Irish Times*. The most intense day for coverage in the *Guardian* was Sept. 12, with 44 of the 52 stories; the *Times* carried five stories on Sept. 12. The *Times/Sunday Times* coverage was most intense on Saturday, Sept. 15, with 11 stories. The *Irish Times* carried five 9/11-related stories on Sept. 12 and four on Saturday, Sept. 15, which were its days of most intense coverage.

Clearly, each of these newspapers devoted significant coverage to the 9/11 attacks. This study focuses only on narrative coverage (stories and opinion pieces) from a framing analysis perspective.

ANALYSIS OF COVERAGE

Narrative of the 9/11 catastrophe can be explored from a framing perspective with the major theme or frame being that of the terrorist attack and the minor theme that of the global implications of the disaster (i.e., the superpower "brought low," the effect on international trade, on security and the aviation industry, on the perpetrator and his reasons for causing the tragedy, and ultimately, on the superiority of the Western powers over others).

The actor-speakers in the 9/11 drama form a discursive community in so far that the key political leaders — President Bush and Prime Minister Blair — are involved directly from the first frames as the statesmen who will bring the terrorist perpetrator to justice and who will form an international alliance to fight evil. Juxtaposed with the framing of these two political actor-

hasp... of New York's... bin Laden... mastermind of the attack. bin Laden and his al-Qaeda counterparts immediately acquire the image of terrorists, of evildoers, of non-Western, Islamic radicals bent on jihad.

The key political player, however, was that of the United States itself, the superpower “brought low,” the behemoth framed as a now-vulnerable entity.

As the first week’s coverage unfolded, other political players entered the drama as did ordinary people and the media themselves. Again, the narrative of good versus evil, of West versus East, of pro-United States versus anti-US played out. Ordinary people, those who witnessed the tragedy as innocent bystanders and those who became victims of it, are framed as individuals and as social groups whose lives have been altered by the attack. The media themselves became embroiled in the drama, framed as being pro-U.S. or anti-U.S., radical and left or moderate and right.

Times

The *Times* immediately focused on the hijacked airplanes and their doomed flights, on “the inferno” of the World Trade Center and on the “many surreal sights” on the streets of Lower Manhattan (Ayres, 2001). The newspaper’s diplomatic editor, Richard Beeston, attributed the attack to Osama bin Laden, reporting that “several extremist Middle Eastern groups and governments have the motivation to launch devastating attacks against the United States, but only one man has the experience and audacity to cause so much bloodshed” (Beeston, 2001, p. 5). The newspaper provided a profile of bin Laden, discussing his public appearances at his son’s wedding, his poetry reading, his al-Qaeda training camps and his videotape in which he is shown with a Yemeni dagger. Bin Laden was bestialized with the emphasis on seizing him from his lair. The suspected terrorist was depicted as the enemy of the free world, and there was a call for a coalition to prevail against this evil.

The Taleban (the *Times*’ spelling) was mentioned in the context of the United States seeking retaliation against the regime for housing bin Laden. Stories focused on the immensity of the disaster, comparing it with Pearl Harbor and paralleling the hijackings with the Northern Ireland strife of the 1970s. The leading article (editorial) on Sept. 12, titled “Terror for All,” noted: “The United States, its allies and the civilised world are at war today against an enemy which, while undeclared is as well organised and as ruthless as any that a modern state has confronted” (Leading Article, 2001, p. 13). In a prescient sentence, the editorial commented that the world would feel the

impairing of New York's infrastructure in the London, Saturday, Sept. 13, 2001

Personal first-hand accounts of what it was like to be in the World Trade Center at the time of the strikes appeared on Sept. 13. The Trade Center's magnitude was portrayed and the leaping of people from this tower of steel and glass to their deaths was unwound as if through the movie, "Inferno." The image of the disaster was that of a bad movie, so surreal that its dimensions were hardly understood.

The following day, the *Times* ran more on bin Laden, Mullah Omar and Ayman Al-Zawari, immediately identifying those responsible for the attacks. On Sept. 15, the newspaper's coverage of the three minutes of silence observed around the world the previous day reflected on the attacks as "the worst terrorist outrage in history" (MacIntyre, 2001). That same day, the *Times*' Michael Gove lambasted his journalistic colleagues in the *Guardian* for their left-wing comment and analysis of the week's events. Dubbing them the Guardianistas, Gove argued, "The radical Left retains an antipathy to our common Western values which still finds its expression in anti-Americanism, anti-Zionism and the romanticism of revolutionary violence" (Gove, 2001).

Roland Watson and Damian Whitworth in Washington covered President Bush's walkabout among rescue workers in New York and his address at the memorial service in the National Cathedral. James Bone in New York reported on the president's "first visit to the first battlefield of what he has called 'the first war of the 21st century'" (Bone, 2001, p. 1). The president at Ground Zero was paralleled to Dwight Eisenhower after World War II and Winston Churchill after the Blitz.

In "A Time to Mourn," Hugh McIlvanney on Sept. 16 suggested the prospective world-class golf tournament, the Ryder Cup, which was to be held at the end of September, would resemble the 1972 Olympic Games when eleven Israelis were killed by Arab death squads. Holding the golf competition in the United States at a time of global catastrophe would be like having "a circus in a graveyard" (McIlvanney, 2001). Every newspaper page devoted to the tragedy chronicled the worst days in history, a time of unabashed grief when the world was in mourning.

Guardian

The *Guardian* focused immediately on bin Laden, on the air strikes and on those killed in the tragedy, among them "Frasier" creator David Angell and CNN commentator Barbara Olson, wife of the U.S. solicitor general Theodore Olson. It described the Pentagon, the world's largest building, and talked about the shift of banking operations from New York to London. It looked at the National Missile Defense system into which the United States

has a long history of large-scale terrorism in the Middle East. It also has an expert's calling on the United States to abide by international law in this game of Star Wars. It explored aviation security, the employment of baggage screeners, and the differences between the government-run screening in Europe and the private company-contracted screening in the United States and concluded that the former is superior to that of the United States. It talked about the world's greatest superpower being "laid low" and called on President Bush to resist the clamor for retaliation and to think long-term.

"The hijacking heralded the start of a series of appalling attacks which reduced America's two most important cities to war zone-like scenes of carnage and threw the entire nation into a panic-fueled state of siege," reported the *Guardian* on Sept. 12 (Borger, Campbell, Porter and Millar, 2001). Bystanders were quoted on the kamikaze nature of the hijacking, including Joe Trachtenberg, who watched the disaster from his building; Omar Campo, a Salvadorean; Afework Hagos, a computer programmer; Tim Timmerman, a pilot; Mike Smith, a fire marshal; Navy Commander Tom O'Loughlin; Tom O'Riordan, an elderly man; Paul Begala, Democratic consultant; AP reporter, Dave Winslow; and Tom Seibert, a network engineer.

Writer Simon Tisdall predicted in the immediate aftermath that the implications of the tragedy would be dramatic (Tisdall, 2001), and Polly Toynbee hit out at the United States, commenting:

The nation that is the world's great fount of technological, financial, artistic and intellectual brilliance is fatally burdened by a primitive and unsophisticated political culture. Its warped political institutions, its leaders' debilitated and febrile dependence on hour-by-hour polling, its constitutionally split powers, reliance on big business and its perpetual cycle of elections all add up to a politics unfit to bear such responsibility (Toynbee, 2001).

Derek Brown noted that Anti-Americanism was becoming a new world power, that the agenda of the hijackers was "driven chiefly by an insensate hatred of America and all things American" (Brown, 2001). He noted that innumerable people shared such antipathy.

The *Guardian's* saturation coverage on Sept. 12 included a look at how the tabloid media reported the event, how Palestinians displayed their joy at the attack; how Prime Minister Blair responded; how America would hunt down the perpetrators; how the United States was on a war footing; how the financial markets coped with the disaster; how Hollywood closed down; how Arab journalists reported that bin Laden had warned only weeks before that

Berger, J., Campbell, D., Reardon, G., and Millar, S. (2001). *September 11: The Irish on* tragedy epitomized “the sum of all our fears” (Leader, 2001).

Irish Times

Like its British counterparts, the *Irish Times* immediately covered the airplane-directed devastation of the World Trade Center, the victims, the survivors, the impact on financial markets, and the likelihood that Osama bin Laden masterminded the tragedy. Writer Fintan O’Toole predicted that the consequences of the attack would be “huge, ubiquitous and long-lasting” (O’Toole, 2001). In tone and sentiment similar to that of Polly Toynbee in the *Guardian*, O’Toole wrote:

The scale of the loss will evoke a Blitz spirit, a determination to rebuild, not just Lower Manhattan, but the fragile sense of community and solidarity that may emerge ... But there will almost certainly be a dark side. For there is in American culture a fundamentalism no less strong than that of those who may have plotted yesterday’s carnage. The tendency to divide the world between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, the elect and the damned, is, ironically one of the things that America shares with its most ferocious enemies (O’Toole, 2001).

Jonathan Eyal, director of studies at the Royal United Services Institute in London, discussed how the missile defense program would not provide refuge against acts of terrorism. He reported that “Washington knew for a few days that something was afoot; its embassies in Asia and Europe were warned of an impending attack” (Eyal, 2001), but it had failed to penetrate the terrorist organization thought responsible. Frank Millar, London editor, focused on Prime Minister Tony Blair’s commitment to stand “shoulder to shoulder” (Millar, 2001) with the United States and looked at the cessation of trading at the Stock Exchange and the evacuation of the City of London.

Subsequent coverage in the *Irish Times* included the story of Martin Price, an Irishman who escaped “from the fortieth floor of hell” (Price, 2001); e-mails to the newspaper about the experiences of the Irish writers on the day of the attack in New York (Cremin, 2001); a focus on the Irish and Irish-Americans killed in the catastrophe, particularly on Ruth Clifford McCourt and her four-year-old daughter Juliana and Fr. Mychal Judge of the New York Fire Department; the candle-lit prayer ceremonies throughout Ireland for victims of the disaster and for global peace; and New York correspondent Conor O’Clery’s insight into the effect of the tragedy on the global economy (O’Clery, 2001).

All three newspapers under scrutiny in this study shared frames or themes in the aftermath of 9/11. They immediately identified the perpetrator of the attack on New York on 9/11, focused on the enormity of the tragedy, the victims – including the personified United States, and the response of key political figures. Horror-laden terms such as “carnage,” “terror,” “tragedy,” “apocalypse,” “sum of all fears,” and “catastrophe” were used to describe the devastation. Parallels were drawn to Pearl Harbor and to bad and surreal movies. In secondary frames or minor themes, the global implications of the disaster were explored; the implications for stock markets, currency exchange, trade, security, and the aviation industry were examined; and the partnership of bin Laden and al-Qaeda was chronicled.

Throughout its narratives, the *Times* displayed greater objectivity, perhaps a more tempered treatment of the tragedy than did the *Guardian* and the *Irish Times*. The *Times* did not display any anti-American sentiment, a matter that is not surprising given its Murdoch/News Corp. ownership. Both the *Guardian* and the *Irish Times* did, pointing to the tragedy almost as the result of the great hubris of America. Both newspapers, in broad sweeps, painted the United States as an isolationist country that thought it could use money and technology to protect itself, a bastion of capitalism too mean to pay baggage screeners a decent wage to do the job properly, a populist continent where people hop on an airplane as though it were a bus. In chronicling such differences, both the *Guardian* and the *Irish Times* pointed to the weakness of the American system, of the American mindset, and in so doing, juxtaposed elitist Europe with populist America. Through tone and context, both the *Guardian* and the *Irish Times* framed Europe as superior to the United States. What all three newspapers shared, however, was the framing of the World Trade Center strike as a tragedy, a disaster, a catastrophe, thus aligning themselves with Western values versus Middle Eastern jihad.

In what can be regarded as a struggle between discursive communities — political figures versus terrorists, ordinary people, West versus East, and even the media themselves — the tragedy of 9/11 played out from a disarticulation of normalcy and everyday reality to a rearticulation of the bizarre and the surreal or unreal. After 9/11, the world awakened to a new reality, a new dawning — the realization that rogue states (such as Iraq) are not all that is to be feared but that terrorists who pass as regular citizens in our midst may present the greatest threat.

Ideologically, the dominant capitalist, powerful Western nations were

Borge-Mulholland, D., Porter, G. and Millar, S. (2001, September 12). Five and unknown Middle Eastern terrorists, individual and collective. The *Guardian* and the *Irish Times* framed British culture as superior to American, and with the *Times*, posited that a new ideology involving an international alliance of world powers, including the Saudis, might be one of the consequences of the tragedy.

CONCLUSION

This study of 9/11, through framing analysis, shows how the media frame an event, focusing initially on the key elements of the event — who, what, where, and when — and later digressing to the how, the why and future implications. It delineates how the media change frames or focus over time and how major and minor themes emerge from the narrative.

Coverage of 9/11 in the British media as exemplified by the *Guardian* and the *Times* and the Irish media through the *Irish Times* demonstrates that these newspapers, long-established as they are, continue to reflect certain political ideologies: the *Times*, right wing; the *Guardian*, left; and the *Irish Times*, usually moderate, more left of center in this particular case.

This examination of 9/11 is a snapshot of one week's coverage in the aftermath of the disaster, as opposed to an in-depth longitudinal analysis of the tragedy and its evolution through the drama of the invasion or preemptive strike on Iraq, dubbed the "Fight for Freedom" by the Bush administration. Further study could be undertaken on how the evolution has been framed in terms of Chyi and McComb's space-time continuum. It also would be worthwhile from a scholarly perspective to explore how coverage in the British and Irish media of the post-9/11 reality compares with that of the Arab media, perhaps that of the Gulf's former "Trucial States," once an outreach of the British Empire.

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