

Academic Terror: Ideology in Analysis

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The purpose of academic writing is to analyse. Although this is true of the form, there is still room within analysis to move into ideological veins, putting forward views alongside analysis or sometimes in place of it. Linguistics provide us with some of the tools to see these occurrences take place, yet literary theory opens up new doors and enables us to be critical of texts without being critical of authors. In this paper, linguistic and literary techniques are presented before being applied to three separate texts on 'terrorism', showing how it is defined and the processes by which the techniques avoid abjection, with extra texts being utilised where appropriate. It concludes that, although ideology does not make texts useless, there is a potential for influential issues to arise.

Linguistic and Literary Theory

Academic writing is a well established process by which situations are analysed so that they can be interpreted with greater clarity. There are established forms and processes that are in place in order to do such analysis. However, these forms can still lead to vastly differing results on the same subject as noted in the following:

... interpretation is not (as most people assume) an absolute value, a gesture of mind situated in some timeless realm of capabilities. Interpretation must itself be evaluated, within a historical view of human consciousness. In some contexts, interpretation is a liberating act. It is a means of revisiting, of transvaluing, of escaping the dead past. In other cultural contexts, it is reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling (Sontag 1964).

Given these two vastly differing results, it is important to find out which is occurring. To do this, there are two approaches. One is to track down and talk to the academic authors, asking them what their intentions were when they wrote a particular text. However, such a process would be rather difficult and time consuming were it to be done for each text. Even if it were possible, we would have only their word for their intent. There is no solid evidence in such an approach.

The other approach is to look at what the text itself is saying when it is read. The text is what is interacted with in order to gain an understanding. The primary interaction

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with a text is not between the author and the reader but rather, between the reader and the text (Barthes 1968; Culler 1980; Iser 1978). As a result of this, texts 'do not imitate reality; they create it' (Todorov 1980, p. 67-8).

This applies to all texts (including this one). Also, this is not to say that *authors* create realities. Creations take place in the reader, due to mimesis.

Mimesis is the process by which text is representative of reality (Auerbach 1953; Taussig 1993). Without something concrete to link text to, words would be nothing more than random marks on a page. However, what is conveyed by text is by no means universal. If the word 'chair' is written on a page, the mental vision of a chair will differ greatly from each person reading the word. Thus, if the term 'terrorism' evokes the image of an Irish gunman within the reader, the text itself cannot be said to hold that view. Without further limitations and descriptions, the reader is free to envision the created reality as they please, 'terrorism' being a fairly indefinite term (Kramsky 1972). What is of interest, then, is not a single word but the limitations and descriptions that are placed on it. In addition, there is the context of the use of the term within a text. To say 'Irish terrorist' is to push a reader towards envisioning the 'terrorist' as a certain type. This will be called *direct positioning*, and tends to be seen in operation at the level of a sentence (Kress et al. 1979). However, if the text is discussing Ireland and then mentions the term 'terrorist' without direct positioning, the image of an Irish gunman is still quite likely to form within the mind of a reader. If the text is mentioning the Middle East, however, then the image formed at the mention of the term 'terrorist' will be remarkably different. This is due to the term taking on transformative qualities due to context (Chomsky 1965, 1970; Jackendoff 1972) and as such, when 'terrorist' is mentioned it will be assumed to be from the area that is being discussed. This will be called *indirect positioning*.

As the majority of this paper will focus on indirect positioning, let us look at a clear example of direct positioning. A new and interesting development in the discussion of 'terrorism' is the use of the term 'terrorist suspect' (Fekete 2006; Levitt 2004; Rosenau 2005). The term has been popping up in analysis of late and interestingly it follows a pattern that is not true of any other label associated with crime. In no other crime is a noun-noun phrase utilised to describe someone under suspicion. There is no such thing as a murderer suspect or a rapist suspect. There is such a thing as a murder suspect or rape suspect where, in both cases, the arrangement is verb-noun. With 'suspect' taking up the concrete part of the phrase, it is inherently linked to the act. To say that someone is murder or rape would make

little sense, unless used symbolically. Therefore, the direct positioning has 'suspect' taking the primary focus.

The head 'suspect' requires an argument, or context, in order to make sense. An individual cannot simply be a 'suspect' without context but must, instead, be suspected of something. If a murder trial were taking place, and the suspect was called forward, then it would be implied that the suspect was suspected of murder, which is indirect positioning. Another way of saying someone is suspected of murder is to simply call them a 'murder suspect'. Such a term applies to just about any crime that can be mentioned: for example, 'rape suspect', 'assault suspect', 'treason suspect' to name a few. In all of these examples, the head of the phrase is clearly 'suspect', with the argument providing context.

This is not so with the term 'terrorist suspect'. The term 'terrorist' is not a crime or offence. It is defined as 'One that engages in acts or an act of terrorism' (American Heritage Dictionary 2000). Although the act of 'terrorism', which could be an argument for 'suspect', is inherent to the term 'terrorist', it is imbedded in the term. As such, someone who is a 'terrorist' conducts acts of 'terrorism' by definition, removing all suspicion. Thus, 'terrorist' cannot be seen as an argument for 'suspect'. Since this is so, 'terrorist' must therefore be interpreted as either head (i.e. a terrorist that is also a suspect for some other crime) or modifier (i.e. a suspect who is a terrorist). As a 'terrorist suspect', an individual is a 'terrorist' first and foremost and a 'suspect' of something else second. The implication of such a statement is that the due process of being innocent before proved guilty is lost to someone who is accused of 'terrorism'.

Even the manner in which it is spoken places undue focus on the word 'terrorist', as 'terrorist' ends in a plosive sound, 't', and 'suspect' begins with a fricative, 's'. These factors force the speaker to pause between the two sounds, and this pause gives the momentary impression that the statement has ended with the utterance of 'terrorist'. There is also a higher tone on the word 'terrorist' than there is on 'suspect' when uttered, which again forces 'terrorist' to the front of the mind rather than 'suspect'.

When looking at how the term is actually utilised in texts, it can be seen that the idea of suspicion is entirely removed:

The fact that this foreign terrorist suspect was exposed and apprehended in Somalia despite the absence of a functional police force reinforces the argument (Menkhaus 2003).

One cannot be 'exposed' of being a suspect. Suspicion revolves around not having all the details at hand and thus, once a suspect is exposed, they are no longer a suspect, as they have been caught doing whatever it is they were exposed doing. In this case, they were exposed of being a 'terrorist suspect'. As we can see, the word 'suspect' is entirely redundant in this example.

... media coverage has frequently mentioned the name of Osama bin Laden as the number one terrorist suspect and mastermind (Niva 2001).

Once again, one cannot be suspected of being a 'terrorist', yet be a mastermind at the same time. To be a mastermind is also to be a 'terrorist' and as such, the word 'suspect' is once again entirely redundant.

Both of the above examples show how the term operates as a replacement for the word 'terrorist'. It is even more surprising, then, to see the term being utilised by groups that are opposed to how it operates linguistically:

At a time when the media prominently reports the latest arrests of alleged terrorist suspects (Human Rights Watch 2003).

As we can see, although Human Rights Watch is arguing for the rights of suspects, it also utilises the term 'terrorist suspect' in a curious fashion. 'Alleged terrorist suspects' depicts someone who is either being alleged to be a suspect or alleged to be a 'terrorist'. As being alleged of being a suspect makes little sense, as being a suspect is itself a form of allegation, the latter is what is meant. Thus, the term 'terrorist suspect' has been 'swallowed' by those who would argue against it.

Yet, what is 'terrorism'? Due to the focus of this text being on how 'terrorism' is defined by others, this paper will not fall into a set definition. Although there is an inherent history in the word, as in all language (Derrida 1980), there is no room for such an argument in this paper. Also, the weight of ideology in a single word is secondary to the direct and indirect positioning surrounding its use. Such positioning often serves to delegitimise the opposite voice in these works (Sprinzak 1990, 1991, 1995). Delegitimation can occur through a variety of ways, but this paper will primarily focus on how subjective terms and concepts are utilised in order to position groups defined as 'terrorist' in a negative manner. This can be seen in texts discussing bin Ladin:

Usama is Satanic. That is, he draws upon sacred forces for evil ends (Carroll 2002, p. 8).

Using the imagery of 'evil', bin Ladin is directly positioned as a 'Satan', completely delegitimising any views that he holds or actions that he undertakes. Satan is a cosmic evil and by its very definition' is one in the same with evil. There is no rhyme or reason to its evil and there is no need to understand the context of such evil. Theologically speaking, all that is to be done when confronted with Satan is to resist it. Thus, to link bin Ladin to Satan is to say, 'He is to be resisted unconditionally'. This, in turn, is delegitimation, removing all legitimacy from any of his actions by removing the context by which these reactions have evolved. In turn, this limits the capacity for readers to understand and empathise with those reasons, even if they do not agree with them. This requires little intellectualisation, as to be evil is a fairly simple concept. That which is evil is unquestionably bad. If more complex imagery were to be utilised, bin Ladin would go through a different process where it would be hard to discount his actions as pure evil. Instead, similarities would be identified. Bin Ladin is, after all, human and has reasons behind his actions, reasons that can be understood by most people were they explained to them. For example, the process by which bin Ladin became militarised is very similar to the way in which the character Harry Potter became militarised in the series of the same name. Audiences throughout the world, in 65 different languages, have little trouble identifying with Harry and understand why he takes part in the actions he does take part in. Such understanding is not attempted in regard to bin Ladin, as this would clash with the outright disgust that many Westerners feel toward the actions for which he has claimed credit. To understand his actions and to identify with him on the same level that audiences do with Harry would have bin Ladin become the *abject*. The abject is the process by which we recognise that something is in some way familiar to us, but the way in which it exists is confronting. To see blood, outside of the body, is confronting as we know it should be inside. To see a corpse is also confronting, as we know that the person should be up and moving around. On a more personal level, to have a family member who is a paedophile would be to experience abjection. On one hand, the family member is close to us but on the other hand, the family member engages in acts that most would find utterly repellent (Kristeva 1982).

It should be noted that when something is abject it can still be a position that is considered wrong. In fact, it is essentially a position that would be perceived as such. For our own blood to be outside of our bodies is disagreeable to most people, rather than something to take pleasure in. Thus, when it is stated that bin Ladin is positioned outside of abject, what is meant is that our capacity to identify with him is removed. If he were positioned with abjection none of his actions would have changed, they would just be placed within a more personal context. If readers were

to understand how bin Ladin came to the point where he felt the need to undertake militant actions, and were able to empathise with the decision and place themselves in his position, abjection then occurs. To realise that there is similarity between those who undertake distasteful acts and those who do not is essentially a confronting revelation. This is abjection.

If abjection is completely removed without providing replacement context, there is no reasoning for actions at all. Thus, to directly position bin Ladin as 'Satanic' rather than providing a step-by-step description of the series of events that led to his actions is to place him outside our capacity to identify with him. Without having to personally identify with him, we encounter the *avoidance of abjection*.

Although this is an extreme example, utilising a reference to a cosmic evil (i.e. Satan) is the inevitable outcome of avoiding abjection. When the reader is led away from identifying with a figure within a text that undertakes actions that would be considered negative, they are, in turn, being led towards pigeon holing them in a simplistic category. Without information being provided that can add depth and reasoning to such actions, there is no other choice but to pigeon hole.

This can be seen in other responses not nearly as loaded as calling bin Ladin 'Satanic'. For example, after stating in detail why bin Ladin shows few signs of narcissism, one text states:

This is by no means to support or condone bin Ladin, his beliefs or his actions in any way (Frost 2005, p. 44).

This statement is a complete deviation from the style of text up to this point. Before this, it was a breakdown of clinical narcissism and a discussion of how these traits do not seem to be presented by bin Ladin. This is a completely subjective value judgement, thrown into an analytical breakdown of a personality. To state that one does not 'support or condone' actions without stating that one also does not completely reject them leaves complete rejection as an option. Neutrality comes from rejecting both support and opposition to a point of view and, as such, this is not neutral. This statement is added to the text after the reader is challenged to look at bin Ladin as something other than a crazy psychopath and therefore the reader's perception of him has the potential to move towards abjection. If he is not a psychotic, then he has reasons. To prevent the reader from questioning their stance on bin Ladin, a value judgement is inserted. This is an attempt to avoid abjection.

Subtlety can be merged with blatant positioning. This can be seen where parallels are drawn between certain things, indirectly positioning them as the same thing; for example, Islamic movements and the Nazis, the latter of which is one of the clearest symbols of 'evil' in Western history. I place 'evil' in quotation marks here, as it is a subjective term when not being applied to a cosmic evil such as 'Satan', who is evil by definition. Often, what is considered 'evil' by one group of people would be considered otherwise by another, typically those who are undertaking the 'evil'. In any case, the view of the Nazis as 'evil' is expressed quite clearly on the internet by the creation of Godwin's (1994) Law and, in academia, by a vast number of articles that link Nazis directly with the label of 'evil' (Brustein 1996; Lifton 1986; Segev et al. 1990). With a clear 'evil' present, that which opposes it is a clear 'good' and, as such, a comparison is highly loaded:

Where Islamists succeed in gaining power – as in Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan – the result is not the reign of peace and piety promised by the Prophet, but murder and persecution on a scale matched in our time only by the Nazis and Communists (Scruton 2002, p.127).

And it is applied equally on both sides of the political spectrum, with the exact same process of abjection being avoided:

Documents in National Archives Prove George W. Bush's Grandfather Traded with Nazis - Even After Pearl Harbour (Buchanan 2003)

Once again, similarities are highlighted and positioning takes place. This process is exactly the same as the one that occurs in the above example, with a different subject as the focus. In both examples, one group is linked to an agreed upon 'evil' by pointing out similarities that are shared with it, and are then tarred with the same brush. By doing this, abjection is avoided.

But this is a very simple example of ideology taking place. *Anxiety of Influence* (Bloom 1973), although primarily directed at poetry, is also highly applicable to the way in which academic texts are established. This has been shown to be present in texts on marketing (Brown 1999). The key focus of Anxiety Theory is that a text has an Oedipal relationship with the texts it was influenced by, a need to improve upon and destroy the old. Although these past influences are admired, they are also imagined to be incomplete and that a new approach is needed to fill the gaps.

The trickledown effect of this can be quite profound. Statements that contain some ideological notes, such as:

A new variant of the old golden-age myth placed it in the Third World, where the innocence of the non-Western Adam and Eve was ruined by the Western serpent. This view took as axiomatic the goodness and purity of the East and the wickedness of the West, expanding in an exponential curve of evil from Western Europe to the United States. These ideas, too, fell on fertile ground, and won widespread support (Lewis 2001, p. 21).

can end with sounding much more focussed when used as a reference elsewhere:

Muslims fear and resent Western power and the threat which this poses to their society and beliefs. They see Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, decadent, and immoral. They also see it as seductive, and hence stress all the more the need to resist its impact on their way of life (Huntington 1996, p. 213).

The first statement is referenced by the second statement to become a more extreme version of the views originally presented. The first statement did not state that anti-Western views were true of all Muslims but instead, stated that such views won widespread support. The second statement expands upon this, to make the anti-Western sentiment universal for all Muslims. This is the Anxiety Theory in action, as one view is seen to be incomplete and thus expanded upon in later works by other authors.

Yet, this is not only true of right-wing discourse. Open ended United States (U.S.) definitions of what constitutes 'terrorism' can be applied to the U.S. itself:

Another problem with the official definitions of terror is that it follows from them that the U.S. is a leading terrorist state (Chomsky 2003, p.189).

This can later be expanded upon in turn:

The 2004 U.S. election must have caused hearts to sink everywhere in the Third World. The bloody insurgency in Iraq only strengthened the position of the "War President," giving him greater license to continue his campaign of terror (Buchanan, 2006 p. 152).

From these examples we can see that small ideological leanings in one text can lead to larger ones down the line, due to the Anxiety Theory. That which hints at an ideological statement can be used to openly make such a statement by other works down the line.

However, to state that this is occurring without showing how ideological hints are given in the original texts is pointless. Thus, three works shall be unpacked that discuss 'terrorism' in a manner that is loaded.

Hegemony or Survival (Chomsky 2003)

What constitutes terrorism? How does it differ from aggression or resistance? The operative answers are revealing, but the questions never entered the arena of public discussion. A convenient definition was adopted: terrorism is what our leaders declare it to be. Period (p. 109-10).

This definition allows the text to completely bypass actual militant agency. Instead of groups being defined as 'terrorist' due to any action on their part, they are instead defined as such due to the actions of their 'leaders', who are indirectly positioned as being the US government and Israel. As such, the label of 'terrorism' is, in itself, completely delegitimised, removing much of its 'evil' status as a result. To avoid abjection there is a reversal of the typical positioning. In this framework, 'terrorists' are victims of the West.

Further definitions of 'terrorism' are supplied at a later point in the text, which have the capacity to put this positioning in a completely different light:

A U.S. Army manual defined terrorism as "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature... through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear." The official U.S. Code gave a more elaborate definition, essentially along the same lines. The British government's definition is similar" (p. 188)

The text then goes on to detail a group that fits into its category of 'terrorism':

Another problem with the official definitions of terror is that it follows from them that the U.S. is a leading terrorist state. That much is hardly controversial, at least among those who believe that we should pay some attention to such institutions as the International Court of Justice or the UN Security Council, or mainstream scholarship, as the examples of Nicaragua and Cuba unequivocally reveal. But that conclusion won't do either. So we are left with no sensible definition of terrorism - unless we decide to break ranks and use the official definitions that have been abandoned because of their unacceptable consequences (p. 189).

First, the direct positioning of the U.S. as the 'leading terrorist state' shows them taking up that role with complete authority. There is complete agency, as to be 'leading' implies that one is conscious of what one is doing. To then state that such a definition is 'hardly controversial' is to belittle a reader who feels otherwise. Backup for the position is given by listing groups that would, within the context of this text, agree with such a categorisation entirely. The 'International Court of Justice' implies a global consensus on what is justice, as does the 'UN Security Council', despite the fact that both were primarily founded by Westerners. To say that 'mainstream scholarship' would also agree is to imply that to find such a definition 'controversial' would be to go against the main tide of researched and informed opinion. Thus, these examples detail a situation in which disagreeing with such a definition is essentially foolish and, unjust. It also challenges the legitimacy of global consensus and 'official definitions'. Although it could be seen that the text is pouring scorn over what is considered an official definition of 'terrorism', the text is more than happy to accept such a definition of 'terrorism' as true:

The official U.S. definitions are the ones I have been using in writing about the topic since the Reagan administration came into office in 1981, declaring that a war on terror would be a centrepiece of its foreign policy (p. 189).

Although the definition is accepted as being true, there is little mention of other actors who could fall into the category of 'terrorists', with the primary focus being given to 'state' actors. Although the definition is wide enough to take into account a vast number of groups, the focus is limited to those the text wishes to indirectly position with the term. When talking about the voting down of a UN resolution that would redefine some 'terrorist' actions to 'resistance', the text details the two States that voted against it and gives reasons:

The phrase "colonial and racist regimes" was understood to refer to their ally, apartheid South Africa. Evidently the U.S. and Israel could not condone resistance to the apartheid regime, particularly when it was led by Mandela's African National Congress, one of the world's "more notorious terrorist groups," as Washington determined at the time. The other phrase, "foreign occupation," was understood to refer to Israel's military occupation, then in its twentieth year. Evidently, resistance could not be condoned in that case either (p. 190).

Here it can be seen that a group defined as 'terrorist' by the U.S. is shown to be a group that was led by Nelson Mandela, one of the most celebrated humanitarians of our time (Brink 1998). On top of that, the allies that both the U.S. and Israel are said

to be protecting is apartheid South Africa, largely considered one of the most oppressive and racist regimes of our time (Massey 1990). By drawing these comparisons, the U.S. and Israel are both directly positioned as opponents of humanitarian causes and liberation and, in so doing, they are being positioned outside of abjection. This is done through direct positioning that has them associated with known 'evils', and indirect positioning that, in turn, has them take on the characteristics of these 'evils'. What the U.S. and Israel consider 'terrorist' is, in turn, linked to a movement considered exceptionally progressive in today's liberal mentality. Thus, by directly positioning them alongside humanitarian causes they are indirectly positioning them as holding the same views and mannerisms.

The Clash of Civilizations (Huntington 2003)

Strong definitions of 'terrorism' with a focus on certain groups are not the only way in which the reader is positioned, directly and indirectly, to think about the term. Often analysis fails to define what it means by 'terrorism', considering the point moot to begin with. As such, indirect positioning takes the central role. The moot point is the linking of the term to 'evil'. As such, the definition of the term comes through the way it is utilised within the text:

... it is a quasi war because... it has been fought with limited means: terrorism on one side and air power, covert action, and economic sanctions on the other (p. 216).

In this statement, the only means of resistance that are defined as being utilised by what the text terms 'Islamic' societies is 'terrorism'. Here we can see that the term has been focused to separate 'terrorism' from the actions of the other side; i.e. the 'West'. 'Air power, covert action, and economic sanctions' can therefore be removed from actions that are applicable to 'terrorism' in this context.

'Covert action' is the most interesting removal. Many of the acts that are associated with 'terrorism' in the public eye can easily be defined as 'covert action'. An assassination is a 'covert action'. So too, is planting explosive devices to later explode and kill people. Due to the open ended nature of the term, we are backed into an intellectual corner. Does this juxtaposition mean that 'terrorism' and 'covert action' are two completely separate acts? Although this could certainly be one interpretation of the statement, if we look at the history of the area that is being

discussed we can see that there are too many actions taken by Islam that are covered under the wide classification of 'covert action' (Ray 2003).

The other interpretation of the juxtaposition is that it directly positions all actions of Islam that oppose the West into the category of 'terrorism'. Any anti-Western action is therefore delegitimised by the use of this term, abjection is avoided and they are positioned as 'evil'.

For example, if the U.S. planned to assassinate a leading Islamic figure, such as was the intention of the Beirut car bombing of March 8, 1985, which was said to be planned by the CIA with Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah as the target, such an action would be defined as 'covert action' and thus given an air of legitimacy (Blum 2003). If Islamic forces were to do something similar, such as the suicide attack on Cheney in 2007 (Karl 2007), the action is immediately classified as 'terrorism' due to Islamic involvement and stripped of all legitimacy. Essentially, both actions are the same in every way other than classification, but such a comparison would bring forth abjection. Thus, it is avoided.

This is not to state that both sides act in the same manner. Suicide bombings are not undertaken by U.S. forces and although they could be classified under the proviso of 'covert action', the term is not typically utilised in such a fashion. Likewise, Islamic forces do not drop cluster bombs on villages. Both sides, however, capture civilians, torture them and put the evidence for such acts online (World of Death 2004, Antiwar.com 2006). Giving the actions of Islamic forces a sense of legitimacy by linking their actions in kind to those of the West does not occur in this statement. Likewise, the Western actions are not delegitimised by linking them with 'terrorism'. Despite strong links between the actions of each group, a vast cavern is opened up between them by utilising these classifications.

Therefore, we can see another implication of this juxtaposition in the following: 'Terrorists' are not Western. From this we are led into another line of thinking: 'Terrorism' is typically seen as an illegitimate form of conflict and, once something is defined as such, it loses a great deal of credibility in the eyes of the West. Thus, a further unpacking of this implication is the following: Islamic resistance to the West is illegitimate and thus 'evil'.

An extension of this line of thought can be seen in the following statement:

The Islamic participants plot the assassination of prominent Westerners; the United States plots the overthrow of extremist Islamic regimes (p. 217).

Assassination is the act of killing someone. The concept itself revolves around death and, as such, carries with it negative connotations. An assassin is hard to sympathise with, as it is their goal to end life. In this case, the life being ended would be that of a prominent Westerner, a subject that would arouse sympathy in the primary readership of this text. To 'overthrow' is something else. It is to remove something and carries no connotation of death in itself. In practice, both of these acts end up being about the same thing, much as 'covert action' and 'terrorism' are. It is highly unlikely that the U.S. is able to overthrow a regime without killing people. However, much of this killing is delegitimised by referring to the targets as 'extremist Islamic regimes'. The use of the word 'regimes' colours the leadership as something that is essentially negative and illegitimate. Saddam was said to run a 'regime' by critics of his government (Office of the Press Secretary 2003) and Bush was said to run a 'regime' by critics of his government (Cloughley 2004; worldcantwait.org 2007).

On top of this, the phrase 'extremist Islamic' is placed before it. Although there would be opposition to the idea of overthrowing an 'Islamic regime', there would not be nearly as much concern about the overthrow of an 'extremist' one. It is yet another positioning. Most readers of this text will have trouble identifying with an 'extremist regime' and therefore, abjection is avoided.

The Radical Group in Context (Post et al. 2002)

The first two examples were linked with Anxiety Theory, being earlier cited as inspirations for it. This text provides a more general unpacking. In this example, ideology is clearly present within the title itself. The groups are 'radical' and they are at 'risk' of terrorism. Both of these terms are highly negative. The term 'radical' is said to be 'Characterised by independence of, or departure from, what is usual or traditional; progressive, unorthodox, or revolutionary (in outlook, conception, design, etc.) (OED 1989)'. As such, from the very outset, the groups are being positioned as an 'evil'. This is reinforced by the second term highlighted, 'risk', which is something negative that may occur due to certain actions. Throughout the entire article, this term is evoked in relation to factors that could lead a group toward what it calls 'terrorism', which is:

Terrorism is defined in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f (d) as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." (p. 72)

To say that such actions are entirely negative sets up a value judgement from the outset that colours the entire article. The value judgement is reinforced by the continual use of the term 'risk' and extensions of it; 112 times throughout the article. To say that people were at 'risk' of attacking noncombatant targets could be seen as a valid statement. Yet the definition of 'terrorism' can also become confused in the text. Although violence, political violence and 'terrorism' are from time to time shown as separate occurrences:

... to increasing levels of violence or terrorism (p.75).

there is a tendency for the article to shift from references to violence and references to 'terrorism' within a few sentences:

The framework offers a conceptualisation of the radicalisation process that takes into account critical variables—internal and external, as well as interactions between them and the group under examinations—that are understood to increase risk for escalation toward political violence. The framework, with its four macrocategories and numerous subcategories, attempts to present the most complete picture of risk-variables to give an analyst sufficient guide points to assess the risk of terrorism (pp. 77-8).

What is, in the first sentence, 'political violence' is, in the next sentence, 'terrorism'. This is an ongoing process throughout the article and the constant linking of 'terrorism' to violence has the effect of placing two negative terms into the one. As such, what these groups are at 'risk' of is not 'terrorism' as it is defined alone, but also 'political violence'. As such, many of these groups could be at 'risk' of actions that would be seen as legitimate under a different focus. Instead of terrorism being just what is defined, it also encompasses all forms of violence, regardless of context. This results in the text including some groups in its examples that do not fit into the category of 'terrorist':

In a closed religious cult, such as Aum Shinrikyo, its messianic leader, Shoko Asahara, is of preeminent importance. Other examples are the Reverend Jim Jones, David Koresh, and Bagwan Shree Rajneesh, as well as the revered Velupillai Prabhakaran of the Tamil Tigers (p. 87).

Due to context, Koresh is indirectly positioned as a 'terrorist'. Thus, there is an implication that the Branch Davidians targeted noncombatants, despite a wealth of research that shows that the U.S. government was the first to open fire on the Mt Carmel compound, and that Koresh and his followers defended themselves (Moore

1994; Reavis 1995; Tabor 1995). As such, what is meant by 'terrorism' becomes foggier still. Thus, the early explanations of what 'terrorism' is become synonymous with any violent act that is described later. Earlier unpacking in the text is also heavily loaded:

Symbolic in intent, the terrorist act is designed to influence an audience beyond the immediate victims, including members of the victims' class, the government, and society. Terrorism falls into the spectrum of low intensity conflict, relying on the methods and strategies of unconventional warfare in targeting businessmen, tourists, and other noncombatants to gain exposure, pressure governments, and extort concessions, such as the release of prisoners or changes in domestic or foreign policies (p.72).

The use of the term 'victims' provides another ideological stance. A 'victim' is always somewhat undeserving of their fate, which is again reinforced by the examples given. 'Businessmen, tourists, and other noncombatants' places all noncombatants in the same category as the first two examples. Businessmen and tourists are not recognised as valid targets to many people, being synonymous with the day-to-day people seen walking down the street in Western society. As such, 'other noncombatants' hides other, more valid, targets. Politicians, for example, could be a target that is deemed valid, depending on their actions. The same could also be said of businessmen, yet they do not carry with them the same degree of distrust that politicians tend to carry in Western perceptions of them. The choice of examples therefore obfuscates any perceived legitimacy to these actions, which, in turn, obfuscates any rationality to these actions. Also, the actions that are undertaken with these targets points out examples of illegitimacy. To 'extort' is '*literally*, to wrest or wring (something) from a person; to extract by torture' (OED 1989) and to try to bring about 'the release of prisoners' is to reverse the process by which these people became prisoners, which is typically seen as legitimate.

Thus, the message of the entire description is one that espouses the illegitimacy of an act it decrees as 'terrorist'. As such, when the text does make links between the similarity of the military and some 'terrorist' organisations, it is also quick to point out the difference:

Armies are the model for many terrorist organisations as reflected in their organisational titles, such as the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army Faction, and the Provisional Irish Republican Army. In terrorist organisations, because of the inherent tension between organisational control and the security requirement for secrecy and reduced communication, there is rather more

autonomy at the lower level of the organisation than the military model might suggest (p. 88).

The focus on difference and the avoidance of similarities once again side-step the positioning of a 'terrorist' as the abject, indirectly positioning 'terrorists' as something 'Other'.

Conclusion

This is not to say that all research on 'terrorism' is loaded with ideology rather than analysis. Many academics manage to refrain from utilising positioning rhetoric and attempt to think in a critical manner, not afraid to stumble into the territory of the abject. Also, this is not to say that there are no useful tools within studies that reflect ideology. The three major works that have been unpacked here are all useful in their own right, otherwise they would not be targeted. The issue is the process of influence and the way in which this form of discussion can lead to problems further on down the line. The three works can all be shown to say something more extreme than they are saying in and of themselves. Once this is done, the more extreme works are given more legitimacy than they would otherwise have. These statements can also be expressed in a manner that is free of ideology. The last example in particular, *The Radical Group in Context*, follows a very similar pattern to the process of social revitalisation (Wallace 1963), which is detailed as a process without 'evil' or 'good' positions. Although difficult to achieve when it comes to subjects as highly loaded as 'terrorism', the avoidance of abjection seeks only to give the reader something that they will be able to take in easily, without much reflection. Academic writing, in my opinion, is most useful when it does confront the reader, when it is hard to accept. The tendency for actual analytical research into terrorism to be replaced with ideology is disturbing. As such, this text will end with a quote from Juvenal (120CE) who said, 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?' This was translated much more recently and popularised by Alan Moore (1995, p. 9) in his dark reflection of our world: *Who watches the watchmen?*

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