

**DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS:
RETHINKING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND CHINA.**

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It is a time not of convergence but of divergence of ideas and ideologies.

- Robert Kagan, 2007¹

There is no objective reason that makes a U.S.-Chinese clash inevitable. But preparing for it, or even talking too much about it, actually makes it more possible.

- Gwynne Dyer, 2006²

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, foreign policy statements and speeches emanating from the Bush administration and their allies presented the world in starkly opposed terms. It was made clear that an apocalyptic battle against global terrorism was now underway, and that each person and each nation-state had to decide which side they would take in the struggle. There was to be no middle ground, no raising of critical questions or alternative solutions. In the early stages of the war on terror a good degree of international unity was maintained, with a large coalition participating in the invasion of Afghanistan and few objections raised to the lack of Security Council authorisation for that attack. With the onset of the Iraq War, however, the lines again became blurred, as many critical voices arose from many parts of the world opposing the violence that has been visited upon the people of Iraq and the false pretences by which it was justified. It now

¹ Robert Kagan, "The World Divides... and democracy is at bay," *The Sunday Times*, 2 September 2007.

² Gwynne Dyer, "The threat of a 'normal' Japan," *South China Morning Post*, 2 October 2006.

appears that the 'with us or against us' logic of the Bush Doctrine is fading and new divisions are emerging that will mark the near future of international politics.

With the re-emergence of China as an economic powerhouse and growing military presence in the Asia-Pacific, we are now beginning to see the re-inscription of boundaries between China and the United States, which have the potential to intensify a sense of fear about what the future holds. In this context, it is necessary to ask some critical questions about the nature of this relationship and the assumptions that underpin the dominant interpretations of it. It is also essential that we remain suspicious of any attempts to portray the relationship between these 'great powers' as one of intractable hostility and inevitable rivalry that can only be managed through the threat or exercise of military force. Any attempt to reconstruct the dynamics of the Cold War 'balance of terror' should, therefore, be resisted if we are serious about building a more secure and prosperous world. But the questions remain: How can mutual trust and understanding be built amid an anarchical international order? How can differences over political and social organisation be set aside in pursuit of a better future? Is there any coherent way of challenging the embedded norms of international relations in order to prevent the onset of yet another costly and violent battle between two great powers?

In order to more fruitfully explore these issues, this paper will give an overview of the critical challenges posed by new theories of discourse to the dominant paradigms of international relations. It will begin with an explanation of the key principles of contemporary discourse theory and conclude with some critical reflections on the current state of relations between China and the United States. In particular, it will seek to break down the sense of inevitability that figures in many analyses of the relationship between China and the United States and suggest that

there is a need for those in journalism and academia to resist easy conclusions about the nature of the 'other' that would only harden the boundaries between the people of the two countries and lead to an intensification of hostilities with the potential for military conflict.

INTRODUCING DISCOURSE THEORY

The first and most important element of discourse theory is the challenge that it poses to the foundationalist theories of knowledge that are inherent in both liberal and Realist theories of international relations. From a discourse theory perspective, knowledge is never fixed and stable, but is produced and reproduced through discursive activity. As a consequence, we might say that liberal claims about the universality of human rights, or Realist claims concerning the anarchy of the international system, should never be understood as incontrovertible 'truths', but rather as the contingent product of a complex history of competing social identities and power relationships. Hence, as Bradley Klein explains:

to be engaged in a discourse is to be engaged in the making and remaking of meaningful conditions of existence. A discourse, then, is not a way of learning 'about' something out there in the 'real world'; it is, rather, a way of producing that something as real, as identifiable, classifiable, knowable, and therefore, meaningful. Discourse creates the conditions of knowing.³

In these terms, discourse theory can be understood as a dispensation of the "realist claim concerning the existence of a world external to thought."⁴

The value of such an approach is that it raises questions about the modern obsession with scientific discovery and explanation of fixed and repetitive structures of political and social life. This, in turn, creates space for political and social change

³ Bradley Klein, "Strategic Discourse and Its Alternatives," in *Center on Violence and Human Survival Occasional Paper* (New York: 1987), 4.

⁴ Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek* (Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 94.

by denying the possibility of a scientifically observable, static ‘real world’ outside the realms of human imagination and interpretation. More specifically, in the analysis of dominant interpretations of the relations between China and the United States, discourse analysis allows a shift in emphasis away from discovering or explaining the incontrovertible ‘facts’ of that relationship, to how and why the social and political conditions supporting the dominant narrative arose, how it has come to be such key issue in the theory and practice of contemporary international relations, and who suffers as a result.

It is in this context that I will be utilising the theories of discourse stemming from the complex and challenging texts of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, notions of hegemony expounded in contemporary interpretations of the works of Italian socialist Antonio Gramsci, and the contemporary synthesis of these approaches in the theories of discourse and radical democracy advanced by, amongst others, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Jacob Torfing’s work, *New Theories of Discourse* provides an excellent basis for such an overview, as it focuses on the key interrelated concepts of discourse, hegemony, and social antagonism.⁵ I will follow the general contours of Torfing’s analysis in relating an outline of discourse theory, with particular emphasis on those elements which are pertinent for an analysis of humanitarian intervention.

As first step along this path, it is necessary to briefly explain some of the linguistic origins of contemporary discourse theory. The work of Roland Barthes, who heeded the call of Saussure in his enunciation of a ‘science’ of semiology, has been particularly influential in this respect.⁶ Accepting the Saussurean notion of

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ As Saussure commented: “when semiology becomes organized as a science, the question will arise whether or not it properly includes modes of expression based on completely natural signs, such as pantomime. Supposing that the new science welcomes them, its main concern will still be the whole

language as a differential system, but detaching it from the phonic and semantic forms which formed the basis of Saussure's studies,⁷ Barthes was able to apply these complex and challenging insights into human language and the process of 'signification' to a vast array of social subjects, such as film, advertising, food and cars.⁸ Language, from this perspective, was no longer to be understood solely as spoken words, but expanded to include "any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual: a photograph will be a kind of speech for us in the same way as a newspaper article; even objects will become speech, if they mean something."⁹ In his book *Mythologies*, Barthes emphasises the point that semiology is a science "dealing with values", which is "not content with meeting the facts," but which seeks to "define and explore them as tokens for something else."¹⁰ Thus, all meaning, attached to an array of 'signifiers', could now be understood as having been created by and through a complex nexus of power, knowledge, and identity in human societies, leading to a situation where, as Laclau has explained:

The way in which the speaker put sentences together could no longer be conceived as the expression of the whims of an entirely autonomous subject but, rather, as largely determined by the way in which institutions are structured, by what is 'sayable' in some context, etc.¹¹

Such theorising paved the way for the development of discourse analyses across the humanities. A 'discourse', in this sense, may be defined as "a differential ensemble

group of systems grounded on the arbitrariness of the sign. In fact, every means of expression used in society is based, in principle, on collective behaviour or – what amounts to the same thing – on convention. Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics," in *The structuralists: from Marx to Levi-Strauss*, ed. ed. Richard T. De George and Fernande M. De George (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 72. For a brief discussion on the significance of Saussure in discourse theory see Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 87-93.

⁷ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 89.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Cape, 1972), 110-11.

¹⁰ Ibid., 111.

¹¹ Ernesto Laclau, "Discourse," in *A Companion to contemporary political philosophy*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 433.

of signifying sequences in which meaning is constantly renegotiated.”¹² This, Torfing argues, is a definition which is arrived at “through the deconstruction of totalizing structures, or through the deconstruction of a notion of atomized social elements.”¹³

The mention of ‘deconstruction’ as a tool for achieving insights into discursive practices immediately implicates the ‘post-modern’ thought of Jacques Derrida who, while expressing some discomfort with the term ‘deconstruction’ itself,¹⁴ is prepared to concede that:

Perhaps, deconstruction would consist, if at least it did consist, in precisely that: deconstructing, dislocating, displacing, disarticulating, disjoining, putting ‘out of joint’ the authority of the ‘is’.¹⁵

The attempt to question the foundational nature of ‘truth’ – “the authority of the ‘is’” - in this manner is best achieved, according to Derrida, through a process of ‘double reading’. As Simon Critchley has explained:

If the first moment of reading is the rigorous, scholarly reconstruction of the dominant interpretation of a text, its intended meaning (*vouloir-dire*) in the guise of a commentary, then the second moment of reading, in virtue of which deconstruction obeys a double necessity, is the destabilization of the stability of the dominant interpretation.¹⁶

What is revealed through this deconstructive reading process is the complete dependence of the dominant approach on that which is excluded.¹⁷ This approach, therefore, reveals the impossibility of a transcendental signifier which has meaning in and of itself, placing all ‘text’ (which, it must be noted, involves more than just written texts and “implies all the structures called ‘real’, ‘economic’, ‘historical’,

¹² Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 85.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," in *Derrida and différance*, ed. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1-5.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, "The Time is Out of Joint," in *Deconstruction is/in America : a new sense of the political*, ed. Anselm Haverkamp (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 25.

¹⁶ Simon Critchley, *The ethics of deconstruction : Derrida and Levinas* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992), 26.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 21.

socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents”¹⁸) in necessary and inescapable relations, or hierarchies, of difference which are constantly being renegotiated and reconfigured.

In this way, Derrida has drawn attention to the absence of fixed centres, or eternal ‘truths’, in human knowledge. Accordingly, any apparent societal structures can never have a fixed and unchanging meaning, but rather are subject to “endless displacements and substitutions of the centre.”¹⁹ Or, as Torfing puts it:

In the absence of a complete totalization a structure only exists as a field of signification within which an ambiguous and temporary order is established by a multiplicity of mutually substituting centres.²⁰

These “mutually substituting centres” give temporary internal structure to discourses, leading to the construction of a theory of knowledge which “identifies truth with presence or *logos*.”²¹ From this basis, the dominant Western philosophies, with their structural and scientific biases, are recognisable as *logocentric*, privileging a dichotomised understanding of phenomena which leads to a designation of an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’, or a ‘real’ and an ‘unreal’ and, inevitably, the construction of temporary and contingent hierarchies of power dependent upon the imposition of disciplinary violence against the defective, the rogue, or ‘the other’. It is through this insight that the dominant Western approach – which may be described as one of “metaphysical closure”²² - can be questioned, from its Greek ‘origins’ to the post-Enlightenment search for fixed, scientific meaning. Logocentrism, in this sense, is

¹⁸ Ibid., 148.

¹⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge And Kegan Paul, 1978), 280, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 40.

²⁰ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 86.

²¹ Critchley, *The ethics of deconstruction : Derrida and Levinas*, 20.

²² Ibid., 20-21.

integral to a modernity which is founded upon the relentless pursuit of absolute truth and knowledge as the basis for the perfect society.²³

Adding even further difficulty to such a pursuit, Derrida argues that the act of partial closure, or fixing of a centre, within a finite language-based system of understanding, paradoxically produces an infinite and irreducible *play* of meaning outside the fixed centre. Thus:

If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infiniteness of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field – that is, language and a finite language – excludes totalization. This field is in effect that of *play*, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field... there is something missing from it: a centre which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions.²⁴

This then leads to a situation where, in Derrida's own words, "everything becomes discourse."²⁵ Truth, from this perspective, is not eternal or natural, but contingent, arbitrary, and subject to change at any time.²⁶ Thus it must be concluded that discourse, formed around a partially fixed centre, and moving amongst infinite possible substitutions, operates from a terrain of 'undecidability',²⁷ as there can never be any rational or factual basis which dictates the 'decision' necessary for the construction of determinate discourses. It is this approach to Western knowledge which, according to Critchley, constitutes "a crucial step in the subversion of

²³ For a brief comment on logocentrism in its relationship to International Relations see Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics : a critical (re)introduction to international relations* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 30.

²⁴ Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 289.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁶ The finite field within which these infinite substitutions take place is known as the field of 'discursivity', which has been defined by Laclau and Mouffe as a "theoretical horizon for the constitution of the being of every object." To put this another way, the field of discursivity represents that "irreducible surplus of meaning" which is constructed from the collection of signifiers which have been developed throughout human history and can be attached and reattached to form discourses. See E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, "Post-Marxism without Apologies," *New Left Review*, no. 166 (1987): 86.

²⁷ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 62-66.

dominant conceptions of society and the development of new political strategies.”²⁸

Such a subversion of dominant conceptions of society is, I will argue, necessary if we are to avoid the recourse to war in China-U.S. relations in the years ahead.

In addition to Derrida’s insights it is also useful to engage the works of Michel Foucault who, in adopting a Nietzschean ‘genealogical’ approach to the study of history, also comes to the conclusion that human knowledge is subject to ongoing discursive activity. His argument follows that of Nietzsche in the belief that:

Whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous ‘meaning’ and ‘purpose’ are necessarily obscured or even obliterated.²⁹

As is necessary in the development of a theory of discourse, Foucault, again following Nietzsche, offers a critique of singular, foundational ‘truth’ as being “undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history.”³⁰ In this context, the task of the historian is then to utilise the Nietzschean concept of “effective history” or genealogy, in order to record,

the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the stage of historical process.³¹

What is revealed by such a study is the highly constructed nature of human thought and practice. Everything becomes an event on “the stage of historical process,” doing

²⁸ Critchley, *The ethics of deconstruction : Derrida and Levinas*, 199.

²⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 77.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 79.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

away with the idea that an originating idea, event or principle lies behind human behaviour.

In undertaking such genealogical work, Foucault stresses the importance of “events,” particularly “war and battle,” as being formative of human knowledge and history. International politics, in a Foucauldian sense, should therefore be studied “in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics.”³² This systemic study of struggles, he argues, leads to a realisation that “Truth is already power... ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it.”³³ This power, in turn, “includes political structures, systems of rules and norms, techniques and apparatuses of government, dividing practices, and strategic relations between subjects who act upon each other.”³⁴ It is this theorisation of power and knowledge which, in concert with Derrida’s principles of deconstruction and undecidability, will set the scene for the analysis of China-U.S. relations that will follow.

In the context of this paper, therefore, it is necessary to raise questions as to how and why a discourse of rivalry or hostility between the U.S. and China has been constructed, who it serves, and how it relates to power in contemporary international society. A more complex and nuanced account of this relationship can then be approached through an examination of the language which has accompanied recent developments, problematising and throwing into doubt the claims that posit future conflict between the powers as a rational or inevitable consequence of international political life.

³² Michel Foucault, "Truth and power," in *Power/knowledge : selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York ; Brighton, Sussex: Harvester, 1980), 114.

³³ Michel Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, [1st American] ed. (New York,: Pantheon Books, 1972), 133.

³⁴ Jon Simons, *Foucault & the political, Thinking the political*. (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995), 30.

It is from this basis that we must then ask: how is such a ‘truth’ constructed? How are decisions taken in an ‘undecidable’ world? Who decides? In order to approach these issues, some account must be given of the way this ever-present political activity operates in the context of ‘undecidable’ social relations. This account is given by Laclau, Mouffe and others, through a ‘post-Marxist’ understanding of the Gramscian notion of hegemony, to which I will now turn my attention.

HEGEMONY

If, as described above, discourse analysis reveals the lack of fixed or closed meaning in society, hegemony, as understood by Laclau and Mouffe, aims to show the process by which the ‘empty space’ left by deconstructive or genealogical readings of history is ‘filled in’.³⁵ It aims, in short, to theorise the *constitutive* basis of all political activity. In this sense, politics may be simply construed as “the taking of *constitutive decisions* in an undecidable terrain.”³⁶ However, given the necessarily exclusive results of any such constitutive decision in a social environment, as discussed above, Torfing concludes that politics must be understood as “*simultaneously, a constitutive and subversive dimension of the social fabric.*”³⁷ It is such a definition, argues Torfing, which has led Laclau to assert the “primacy of politics over the social.”³⁸ For, according to Laclau:

³⁵ For Laclau’s explanation of hegemony as a process of ‘filling in’ the ‘empty signifier’ see E. Laclau, “Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?,” in *The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good*, ed. Jeffrey Weeks (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1994).

³⁶ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 67.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 69. Author’s emphasis

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Not only are social relations shaped and reshaped ultimately by political decisions; but these decisions do not realize some pre-given social reality, and politics will, therefore, take the form of a radical construction.³⁹

This “radical construction,” according to Laclau, is best defined in terms of Gramscian hegemony, in which political power is denoted by the ability of a certain political group to “direct and dominate” the affairs of citizens within the state.⁴⁰ What is most crucial for a theory of discourse, however, is that having established his basic concept of hegemony, Gramsci set about describing the society, or ‘terrain’, from which ethico-political changes may emerge. This was, as Susan Golding suggests, “*precisely a discursive terrain*, a terrain that entailed a variety of effective power relations, limits, and possibilities, each nuanced by social crisis and, as well, by force or consent.”⁴¹ Competing ideologies could rise to hegemony from this terrain if they effectively articulated an ethico-political ideal in a way which would garner the requisite support from within society, but always operating from within the confines of the incumbent political discourse. In this sense, we might say that the hegemon is the representative of the contingent ‘truth’ of any given moment, of the particular as a universal.⁴² It is via this notion of hegemony that we can understand the lack of fixed political or social structures, and the manner in which political activity determines and shapes new structures of knowledge in a fluid discursive environment of ‘ideological moments’.⁴³ Thus, according to Gramsci:

³⁹ Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London ; New York: Verso, 1990), 31.

⁴⁰ Sue Golding, *Gramsci's democratic theory : contributions to a post-liberal democracy* (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 106-20, Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 110-18.

⁴¹ Golding, *Gramsci's democratic theory : contributions to a post-liberal democracy*, 108. Author's emphasis.

⁴² E. Laclau, "Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logics," in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, ed. Judith Butler, E. Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2000), 56-59.

⁴³ Golding, *Gramsci's democratic theory : contributions to a post-liberal democracy*, 108.

The realisation of a hegemonic apparatus, in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain, determines a reform of consciousness and of methods of knowledge: it is a fact of knowledge, a philosophical fact.⁴⁴

This represents the key element of the notion of hegemony employed by Laclau and Mouffe, who see hegemony and discourse as being “*mutually conditioned* in the sense that hegemonic practice shapes and reshapes discourse, which in turn provides the conditions of possibility for hegemonic articulation.”⁴⁵ Rather than representing a static power bloc, hegemony comes to represent the interminable *movement* of power which occurs through changing discursive formations. Or, in other words, hegemony “is no longer defined as an alliance of preconstituted identities, but rather a process of production of a new collective identity.”⁴⁶

It is for these reasons that Gramsci underscored the role of what he termed the “organic intellectuals,” those in positions of educational and administrative influence who could ultimately shape the ideological concerns of any given society, bringing about political and social transformation and the development of new hegemonies.⁴⁷ The production of collective identities in this manner is achieved, according to Foucault, through “enunciative regularity,” which is vital in the formation of concrete discourses. Or, to put it slightly differently, the coherence of discourses is “given only in the shape of a regularity in dispersion.”⁴⁸ Laclau and Mouffe concur with this simple explanation, suggesting that discourses are formed and reformed through a process of ‘articulation’, which may be defined as “a practice establishing relations

⁴⁴ Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, [1st] ed. (New York,: International Publishers, 1971), 355-56.

⁴⁵ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 43. Author’s emphasis.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁴⁷ For a brief discussion see Stanley Aronowitz, “On Intellectuals,” in *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 10-12.

⁴⁸ Foucault, *The archaeology of knowledge*, 21-39, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 99.

among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice.”⁴⁹

Such modifications, in a political sense, are generally associated with the rise and fall of competing ‘ideologies’, which, Laclau argues, represent “the non-recognition of the precarious character of any positivity, of the impossibility of any ultimate suture” or “the ‘will’ to totality of any totalizing discourse.”⁵⁰ Ideology, in this sense, represents what Laclau sees as a simultaneously “impossible but necessary” condition of the Western discursive environment, establishing the terms of the constitutive decision in an undecidable terrain, which is an essential element in the production and maintenance of any hegemony.⁵¹ The hegemonic or ideological agent, therefore, acts both within and without the partially fixed discourse of a given time, unifying elements from the ‘field of discursivity’⁵² in order to alter relations of power in a given society.⁵³

Thus, this paper aims to demonstrate the role and effect of hostility toward China within the hegemonic order of a broadly-defined Western international system.

⁴⁹ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), 105. Again, we can see the significance of the role of Gramsci’s “organic intellectuals” in the success or failure of a changed political society. In the contemporary world, the global mass media obviously have a huge role in the process, bearing an influence which is in turn shaped by economic power and the relationship between politics and ownership. I do not have time in this thesis to enter into a complex analysis of this relationship between the media, the international political economy, and hegemony, suffice it to say that the role of the media in the articulation of a humanitarian discourse is evident throughout the work.

⁵⁰ Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, 92.

⁵¹ E. Laclau, “The death and resurrection of the theory of ideology,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, no. 3 (1996): 205, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 114.

⁵² Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 90-93.

⁵³ Zizek has expanded on this notion of ideology, arguing that the necessary failure of all ideologies, brought about by their inability to construct a complete social closure from an undecidable terrain, is masked by an “ideological fantasy.” This fantasy, he suggests, allows subjects in a discursively constructed society to “overlook” or “misrecognize not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity... The illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship to reality.” See Slavoj Zizek, *The sublime object of ideology* (London ; New York: Verso, 1989), 32-33. This illusion then frees us from facing up to the fundamental impossibility of metaphysical (or logocentric) closure and the associated irreducible struggles and antagonisms which that generates in our societies. It leads, in other words, to a persistence of belief (or faith) in the transcendental nature of Western principles of social organisation and, in turn, a faith in those who claim to be representing or expanding such principles. See Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 116-17.

In this vein, it may be said that the body of ideas which may in future be used to justify the use of violence are the ideological product of a temporary hegemonic order and, as such, are devoid of the certainties and truths upon which they base their claims. Moreover, I would argue that the ‘demonisation’ of China is some current international relations literature is integral to the maintenance of a hegemony of Western liberal democracies within the international system. Commentary that focuses on intractable differences or unavoidable rivalries, in short, perpetuates discourses of superiority and inferiority which sustain the conditions of political power, or the ‘hegemonic apparatus’, of our time. What I seek to do is expose the hegemonic logic that motivates such divisive representations of U.S.-China relations and show that other paths may be followed.

SOCIAL ANTAGONISM AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

One further element of discourse theory needs to be explained. In order to fully understand the current failings of humanitarian intervention, particularly through an explanation of the violence that it entails, it is necessary to focus upon the divisions and exclusions that are invoked in the discourses which surround it. All logocentric knowledge, as described above, is dependent upon the creation of violent and easily recognisable divisions that reinforce the hegemonic status of the most powerful group or individual at any given time. Torfing brings this connection between hegemony, discourse, and identity into sharper focus, arguing that:

We can define hegemony as the expansion of a discourse, or set of discourses, into a dominant horizon of social orientation and action by means of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments *in a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces*.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*, 101, emphasis added.

Having already noted the logocentric social structures of human societies as being dependent on that which is repressed and excluded, it follows that those identities which exist outside of a closed discourse may be referred to as the ‘constitutive outside’ of that which is included.⁵⁵ The defining relationship between discourse and identity politics thus becomes clear as:

discourse, or discursive formation, establishes its limits by means of excluding a radical otherness that has no common measure with the differential system from which it is excluded, and that therefore poses a constant threat to that very system.⁵⁶

This ‘constitutive threat’ relationship, which necessarily involves acts of violent exclusion or repression,⁵⁷ can also be clearly observed at the level of international theory and practice, as I will discuss below by reference to the work of David Campbell and Michael Shapiro.

However, it is first necessary to recognise how such a threat is designated and comes to have such a divisive effect. In this respect, Laclau and Mouffe have conceived of all social identities as being “crossing points between the logic of difference and the logic of equivalence.”⁵⁸ As such, identities are not formed as collisions of complete polar opposites, but through the presence of an external threat which leads to a response where “a certain sameness of the differential moments [within a given society] will be established.”⁵⁹ It is, in other words, the constant fear of some kind of ‘exterior Other’, always defined through the articulation of the hegemon, that unites societies that would otherwise find no common cause. It is the

⁵⁵ Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*, 17.

⁵⁶ E. Laclau, "Subject of politics, politics of the subject," *Differences* 7, no. 1 (1995): 151, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 124.

⁵⁷ Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 120.

⁵⁸ Laclau, "Subject of politics, politics of the subject," 152, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 125.

⁵⁹ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 128, Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Zizek*, 125.

identification of this political process that has led to analyses of domestic and international societies in terms of a politics of identity.

In order to more fully appreciate the role of identity politics in the theory and practice of international relations, I will now turn to some of the contemporary work that has linked the two fields. Firstly, to David Campbell, who, in a wide ranging critique of US foreign policy, sets out his philosophical basis with the comment that:

Identity is an inescapable dimension of being. No body could be without it. Inescapable as it is, identity – whether personal or collective – is not fixed by nature, given by God, or planned by intentional behaviour. Rather, identity is constituted in relation to difference... the constitution of identity is achieved through the inscription of boundaries which serve to demarcate an ‘inside’ from an ‘outside’, a ‘self’ from an ‘other’, a ‘domestic’ from a foreign’.⁶⁰

Having already noted the role of hegemonic logic in deciding what is included and excluded from the discursively constructed ‘real’, the addition of this concept of identity brings in to sharper focus the very power of hegemonic status: it is precisely the power to *decide* who or what constitutes the ‘we’ by reference to “who/what ‘we’ are not and who/what ‘we’ fear.”⁶¹ This, as we shall see, is a power which is often expressed through the infliction of terrible violence under a certain national or ideological banner.

In this context, identity politics analyses in international relations have, unsurprisingly, largely focussed on the construction and maintenance of state (sovereign) power. As Jim George points out:

The concept of sovereignty in International Relations is commonly (Traditionally) perceived as synonymous with that of state power, the legitimate use of state violence, legal/territorial legitimacy, and, in Hobbesian terms, a supreme and necessary authority

⁶⁰ David Campbell, *Writing security : United States foreign policy and the politics of identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 8.

⁶¹ David Campbell, *Politics without principle : sovereignty, ethics, and the narratives of the Gulf War* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 26.

in a leviathan-less world. For those articulating their Realism in more explicitly systematic terms (e.g., neo-Realism), the sovereign rational actor (the state) engaged in an analogized politics of the market is the primary focus of attention.⁶²

The sovereign state, in discursive terms, acts as the staging ground for the expression of hegemonic power and as a space of inclusion and exclusion, acting “in opposition to a world of anarchy ‘out there’, always threatening to undermine rationality and truth, with its false beliefs and counterpractices.”⁶³ Indeed, Richard Ashley has argued that it is in “the modern *fusion* of sovereign man and the sovereign state... that the modern ‘will to knowledge’ and ‘will to power’ are connected, most powerfully, in an institutionalized form.”⁶⁴ This being the case, it is fair to say that the modern sovereign state, in expressing the ‘will to knowledge’ and the ‘will to power’ has also, sadly, institutionalised the ‘call to arms’.

The logic of discipline and punishment which emanates from this sovereign entity is intensified through the fetishised belief in an anarchical international order, an idea which is crucial to the construction of ‘danger’ in Realist political thought. In explaining the effect of this belief in international relations, Michael Shapiro has demonstrated the way in which the tiny Central American state of Guatemala was represented as being “part of that threatening realm of Otherness intrinsic to U.S. security discourse” in U.S. government foreign policy material throughout the 1980s.⁶⁵ The implausible notion that the state of Guatemala could somehow represent a danger to the interests of a giant like the U.S., Shapiro argues, is made possible, and perhaps necessary, through the Realist notion of anarchy, which suggests that ‘the international’ is an arena without rules and, as such, is inhabited by an array of threats

⁶² George, *Discourses of Global Politics : a critical (re)introduction to international relations*, 200.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁶⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See “The Constitution of the Central American Other: The Case of Guatemala” in Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

to national security and sovereignty which must be effectively disciplined, domesticated, assimilated or annihilated before a secure nation-state environment can be established. The problem, as Shapiro sees it, is that the whole practice of foreign policy in the modern state system “is one that sharpens boundaries,”⁶⁶ firmly defining an inside from an outside and, as a consequence:

there exists a powerful impetus to violence in the form of armed interference by the modern state, and, as was the case with Rome, its ideational supports can be linked to foreign policy, to the ways in which self and Other are constituted and estrangements between the two are effected.⁶⁷

The obvious problem here, motivating the production of such statements and representations, is that an ongoing belief in ‘anarchy’ and ‘danger’ generates a perpetual insecurity which brings violent challenges between nations. In essence, the crude politics of identity which is at the core of the dominant theories of international relations *requires* the continual representation of a dangerous world of Otherness in order to maintain the need for the nation-state as a social body. As David Campbell puts it:

Should the state project of security be successful in the terms in which it is articulated, the state would cease to exist. Security as the absence of movement would result in death via stasis. Ironically, then, the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state’s continued success as an impelling identity.⁶⁸

In other words, the belief in international relations circles that sovereignty, anarchy and danger are objectively observable and unchangeable facts leads to a case of theory as practice *par excellence*. It is a fearful, confrontational and ultimately violent view of the world which must be challenged if we are to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 98.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 101.

⁶⁸ Campbell, *Writing security : United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, 12.

*DISCOURSES OF WESTERN HEGEMONY:
HUMANITARIANISM AND ANTI-TERRORISM*

There is no doubt that we currently live in a Western-dominated international order. The break-up of the Soviet Union put an end to the bipolarity of the Cold War era and generated much discussion over the final triumph of liberal-democracy as the last viable type of social organisation.⁶⁹ Such optimism was soon reflected in the enthusiasm for carrying out military interventions in places such as Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, Serbia, and East Timor, most often justified as actions to protect and restore human rights and democracy for those who had been abused by their own leaders. From a discourse analysis perspective, the most interesting theme to re-emerge in the 1990s was that of ‘civilisation’ fighting the final battles against ‘barbarism’ in the quest for a democratic and peaceful world order.

The clearest example of the discourses of humanitarianism came with the NATO attack on Serbia in 1999. According to Tony Blair, this conflict represented the humanitarian dimension of post-Cold War globalisation, where the suffering of people under the policies of their own governments should no longer be tolerated.⁷⁰ Thus, as Javier Solana argued at the 1999 Washington Summit:

50 years ago, the signatories of the Washington Treaty vowed ‘to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.’ These values are as relevant today as they were in 1949... Today, they have to be defended against a brutal political leader, a leader whose policies of deliberately engineered hatred seems to come from an era long believed behind us. If Europe is to enter the 21st Century as a community of democracy,

⁶⁹ The most famous example of this was Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

⁷⁰ See Tony Blair, *The Doctrine of the International Community* (Institute of International Affairs, Saint Petersburg, 1999 [cited 27th November 2003]); available from <http://data.cirp.info/intervention/blair-chicago.html>.

pluralism, and human rights, we simply cannot tolerate this carnage at its centre... Now, as in 1949, we are called upon to demonstrate that values are not only something to be preached, but upheld.⁷¹

What we can see, therefore, are discourses that demarcate a boundary between the democratic, human rights-respecting West, and the tyrannical, authoritarian, human rights-abusers, exemplified in the figure of Slobodan Milosevic. This upholds a sense of Western global power as *virtuous* power and validates the use of military force against those who are not seen to be living up to the required standards of civilised life in the post-Cold War era. In the process, it becomes legitimate to bomb all parts of Serbia, kill hundreds of civilians, and destroy vital public infrastructure even in the absence of clear international legal authority. Notions of ‘just war’ and the ‘responsibility to protect’ supported such claims, leading many to believe that an unprecedented era of co-operation on human rights and universal justice was at hand.

This mood of optimism and triumphalism came to an abrupt end with the September 11, 2001 attacks. At this time, many proponents of humanitarian intervention predicted that a new era of national self-interest would emerge and the progressive human rights agenda of the 1990s would fall by the wayside.⁷² What has transpired since then, however, does not necessarily support such a conclusion. If we examine the language used by Tony Blair and George W. Bush, we can see that the humanitarian logic that drove the intervention in Serbia in 1999 has remained very

⁷¹ Solana went on to claim that “The Washington Summit reaffirms our commitment to work towards a Euro-Atlantic security environment based on our common values – peace, democracy and human rights.” Javier Solana, *NATO: The Defence of Our Values* (21 May 1999 1999 [cited 29 March 2005]); available from <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/articles/a990521c.htm>. A similar statement on NATO values was made by Tony Blair: “NATO actually defends these values. That is why we had a responsibility to act in Kosovo and that is why we have done so.” *Press Conference Given by the NATO Secretary General, Mr Javier Solana, and the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair* (NATO HQ, 1999 [cited 29 March 2005]); available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1999/s990420a.htm>.

⁷² For discussion on this issue see Tom J. Farer, “Humanitarian Intervention Before and After 9/11: Legality and Legitimacy,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J Holzgrefe and R. O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action* (New York: Polity Press, 2007), 119.

much alive and well in the context of the war on terror. References to the spread of democracy, the protection of human rights, and the eventual achievement of a stable and peaceful world order have been common.⁷³

The United States, in particular, has continued to justify its aggressive approach to Afghanistan and Iraq in terms of human rights promotion and democratisation. In this sense, many of the neo-conservatives who were instrumental in the development of the Bush Doctrine following the September 11 attacks have continued to claim that an American 'benevolent hegemony' is the only path to securing a peaceful international order, and that a massive military budget is required to back up that commitment with force.⁷⁴ Whether or not their humanitarian motives are sincere, we must understand the way in which the apparently positive ideals of democracy and human rights have come to support the disastrous war in Iraq and the related instances of torture and abuse that the world has witnessed over the past five years.

The argument being made here, of course, is that the very clear divide that has been drawn between Islam and the West in the context of the war on terror has very clear political effects, insofar as it justifies and reinforces a Western (U.S.-led) hegemony in international affairs. More worrying, from the discourse theory perspective, is the recognition that such interventions against 'rogues' and 'tyrants' must continually occur if the major Western powers, led by the United States, were to

⁷³ Tony Smith's excellent critique of these developments illustrates the extent of the humanitarian logic in the war on terror: Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's bid for world supremacy and the betrayal of the American promise* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁷⁴ The most prominent neo-conservatives in this regard are William Kristol and Robert Kagan, both of whom have argued that the difficulties in Iraq should be met with more force, and that the spread of liberty and democracy must be the centrepiece of a hegemonic U.S. foreign policy. See, for example, Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The Right War for the Right Reasons," *The Weekly Standard* 2004.

sustain their own identity as the centres of virtuous global power.⁷⁵ In the absence of a Slobodan Milosevic or a Saddam Hussein, for example, the logic of Western hegemony becomes far less clear and the exercise of force becomes less justifiable and meaningful. It is in this context that U.S. relations with China become of even greater concern, as a number of U.S. commentators and policy makers, including many of the neo-conservative persuasion, have begun to turn their attention to the emerging 'threat' that China is said to represent, painting U.S.-China relations in the same divisive manner.

DISCOURSES OF CHINA IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

For many commentators on international affairs the gradual transformation of the Chinese economy since the 1980s to a more market-based, capitalist style has been a very positive development. From this perspective, these economic transformations signalled a departure from a more hardline communism that was understood by many to be indicative of a broader political and social transformation.⁷⁶ As a consequence, many neo-liberals have encouraged and applauded these market reforms in the belief that China represents an unparalleled economic 'opportunity' that should be grasped by corporate actors around the world and, more importantly, that through such reforms China will become a country more in tune with Western standards and interests and therefore, less of a threat. Such an attitude on the part of scholars and policy-makers was prevalent throughout the Clinton presidency and – after a difficult start under the Bush presidency – in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. It is through this discourse, which views China as an economic 'opportunity' and as a

⁷⁵ For a discussion, see Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 178-80.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Larry Diamond, "Forward," in *China and Democracy: The Prospect for a Democratic China*, ed. Suisheng Zao (New York: Routledge, 2000), Harry Harding, "Breaking the Impasse over Human Rights," in *Living with China: U.S./China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ezra Vogel (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

potential ally in the war on terror, that much of the hardline rhetoric representing China as a 'threat' to international peace and security has been tempered.

Yet despite the generally positive economic sentiments that have emerged over recent decades, many in Washington continue to speak in terms of an irreducible gap between the liberal-democratic United States and the Communist and authoritarian China. This is where the 'threat discourse' becomes more unsettling, as it seeks to place China in a subordinate position in relation to U.S. standards and insists that the differences between the countries are likely to be a source of future conflict. As a consequence, we see simplistic divisions being drawn that characterise China as autocratic, non-transparent, and abusive of human rights, always in contrast to the democratic, open, human rights-respecting United States. These simple dichotomies are problematic for a number of reasons, not least because they "result in skewed impressions of the ordinary Chinese as an aggressive people and race" and create an atmosphere that "holds out very little hope for those seeking a stable process by which the PRC is able to negotiate its place in the current world order."⁷⁷ These narratives of China as threat generally emerge from two perspectives: the geo-strategic, neo-realist view which sees China as a potential imbalancer in future international affairs; and the more clearly ideological neo-conservative view, which focuses on the undemocratic nature of the Chinese regime and seeks a more aggressive U.S. policy in response.

Indeed, the question of democracy has become central to the portrayals of China as a threat that have emerged in recent years. Following the discourses of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s and the war on terror more recently, such

⁷⁷ Deepak Nair, "The 'China Threat' - Trapped in a flawed discourse," *The Straits Times*, 27 May 2006. For a broad-ranging discussion on these discourses of difference in Western approaches to China see Chengxin Pan, "Discourses of 'China' in International Relations: A study in Western Theory as (IR) Practice" (Australian National University, 2004), Chapter 6.

critiques of China work to reinforce impressions that China is a 'backward' society that is not to be trusted at the higher levels of international life. From this perspective, neo-conservative scholar Robert Kagan has recently argued in favour of the formation of new international institutions that *only* represent democratic countries, in order to counter what he sees as the new threat of an 'autocratic' alliance led by China and Russia.⁷⁸ Such a development will be necessary, argues Kagan, as the world again divides into a Cold War-style conflict between the liberal-democratic West and the 'autocratic' states of China and Russia. He goes on to argue that such a divide will be necessary if the Western nations want to continue to carry out humanitarian interventions that "autocratic nations refuse to countenance"⁷⁹ in places such as Sudan. This discourse, which seeks to generate and sustain a new division in international politics on the grounds that this is the 'normal' state of affairs, must be closely watched, particularly considering the devastating effects that such commentators have had in the post-September 11 world.

Another way in which the democratic/autocratic divide comes into U.S. foreign policy-making in relation to China is through the impression of China as a 'closed' or 'non-transparent' society. This discourse is evident in the recent Annual Report to Congress on the "Military Power of the People's Republic of China," as well as in the comments that have accompanied this report. As the 2007 report argues:

The outside world has limited knowledge of the motivations, decision-making, and key capabilities supporting China's military modernization... This lack of transparency in

⁷⁸ Kagan, "The World Divides... and democracy is at bay." For a very similar argument from a liberal perspective see Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity: The struggle for global justice* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 447.

⁷⁹ Kagan, "The World Divides... and democracy is at bay."

China's military affairs will naturally and understandably prompt international responses that hedge against the unknown.⁸⁰

Once again, the idea is that policy-makers in the United States cannot be sure what military capabilities China has obtained or may obtain due to the secretive and undemocratic nature of the regime. Hence, an argument is made that it is prudent to increase U.S. military readiness for a conflict by assuming the worst. As many Chinese commentators and political leaders have argued, this appears to represent a re-emergence of the "cold war mentality" which pits the virtuous and democratic United States against the autocratic image of China.⁸¹

This attitude has also led to the apparent re-emergence of a 'containment' policy toward China, as the U.S. continues to build and upgrade defence pacts with nations such as Japan, Australia, and India. As Tony Pratt has pointed out:

As justification for this [contain China] policy choice there's 'code talk' of common democratic values, China's extensive and secretive development of its military power, rogue states, the ubiquitous terrorist threat, the need to contribute to regional security etc.⁸²

Here again the significance of the democratic/autocratic discourse becomes evident, as military policy seems to be determined in accordance with the political principles that each country adopts. The danger, as pointed out in a 2005 *New York Times* editorial is that "this neo-containment policy would become a self-fulfilling prophecy, leading China to start throwing its own military and economic weight around to break out of the containment trap."

⁸⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Military Power of the People's Republic of China," (Washington DC: United States Department of Defense, 2007), 1.

⁸¹ See, for example, Qin Jize, "Pentagon Paper shows 'Cold War Mentality'," *China Daily*, 25 May 2006.

⁸² Tony Pratt, "Australia has good reason not to join the 'contain China club'," *The Canberra Times*, 15 June 2007.

Overall, a sense is being generated by many that China cannot fit into a modern international order unless it follows a path of ‘westernisation’ in *both* economic and political terms.⁸³ This approach has the effect of not only justifying the intensification of military build-up between the two major powers, but also of masking the sheer complexity of political and social life in both China and the United States. In other words, simplistic ‘china threat’ discourses actually serve to diminish our knowledge of the world, leading only to a greater sense of fear and insecurity and reducing the possibilities for peaceful co-existence. There are far too many potential ‘triggers’ that could ignite this fear into full-scale conflict – including the Taiwan issue, the remilitarisation of Japan, and the North Korean nuclear issue – to allow these divisive discourses to take hold of international politics. As journalists and academics it is, therefore, important that we take some responsibility for the way in which we speak and write about the China-U.S. relationship. It would be dangerous, in these circumstances, to accept and promote a naïve and simplistic understanding of China, including an uncritical acceptance of the moral claims made by many critics of the current Chinese administration. Likewise, it is necessary not to avoid simple portrayals of the United States and their Western allies as imperialist aggressors with whom no common cause can be found. If such simplistic images of these vast and complex societies are allowed to dominate, then we will surely end up on a road toward rivalry and conflict that would have negative consequences for many millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region. Working toward mutual accommodation and peaceful interaction also involves a continuing critique of the dominant theories of international relations that rest upon assumptions about the violence of human nature

⁸³ As Will Hutton has recently argued, “If the next century is going to be Chinese, it will be only because China embraces the economic and political pluralism of the West in general, and our Enlightenment institutions in particular.” Will Hutton, “China under threat,” *The Canberra Times*, 26 May 2007.

and the anarchy of the international order. The drawing of strict boundaries and the attempt to establish unchallengeable 'truths' about the hidden intentions of one side or the other should, in this context, be avoided. It is through the application of discourse theory that such critiques become possible.

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