

‘A Dismal and Dangerous Occupation’

An investigation into the discourses in the television news and documentary coverage of the British military in Iraq from 2004-2009, examining how the coverage plays out in the specific genres

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## Abstract

This study looks at the dominant discourses in the news and documentary coverage of the British military in the occupation of Iraq. It is in these discourses that the justification for the war and occupation rests and in this justification lies the interpretation of the function, efficacy and cost of the military. To do this I have examined the genres of news, news and current affairs documentaries and traditional documentaries to see how these genres favour certain discourses and circumstances which allow certain questions to be asked, but resist others. Evidence from the Chilcot Inquiry is used to illustrate what themes and questions have been silenced in the television coverage.

The dominant discourse of coverage is that of the suffering, heroic soldier, taking part in a 'humanitarian' war, although what this actually entails is not examined in depth. In this study it is the news and NCA documentaries and not traditional documentaries which provide a deeper context, a wider range of voices, and a more critical view of the military's role and strategy in Iraq. The nature of the occupation is confused, the junior nature of the British military's relationship with the Americans is not explained, the financial cost of the occupation is ignored in the elision with the moral cost of death, and the political and governing role of a military occupation is not considered. Although all genres describe the soldiers' role as humanitarian, there is little visual evidence to illustrate it, and the paradox of soldiers who fight, but can have no enemy as they are there to 'help' the Iraqis becomes apparent. The footage of fighting soldiers therefore becomes a representation of soldiers, and where the footage is specific, individual soldiers talk about their betrayal or suffering where the enemy is the British government. The emotional discourse of the suffering soldier inhabits this space between the represented and the reproduced and represses any questions about the military's responsibility for their actions in Iraq, and hence curtails the civic function of documentary and news to inform.

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An investigation into the discourses in the television news and documentary coverage of the British military in Iraq from 2004-2009, examining how the coverage plays out in the specific genres.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

The main narrative of the British military occupation in Iraq in broadcast media has been one of emotion, of valiant fighters, and underfunded victims betrayed by politicians, but whose strategy, purpose and effect is rarely questioned. The journalist Christopher Booker, writes ‘Even today few people in Britain realise the extent to which our intervention in south-eastern Iraq was an abject failure’ (North, 2009: 1). Ledwidge (2011) states that it is now almost unthinkable to criticise the army in the media or in public. The media has constructed the war in Iraq in such a specific way that there seems to be only one view: a bravely fought, under-funded battle betrayed by politicians and forgotten by the public. This depiction of events has silenced any other version. This research looks at this version, and at alternative versions and endeavours to explain why this has happened.

The subject of Britain’s defeat has been briefly touched on in the TV media. When it has been mentioned it is by using the distancing mechanism of citing an opinion, not conducting a journalistic analysis. Thus, it was an American General who made the claim that ‘Britain has lost in Basra’ *The Telegraph* 8/8/2007: ‘Britain suffered defeat in Iraq, says US General’ *BBC News* 29/9/2010: *Secret Iraq* BBC2 29/9/2010. There have been books written by journalists (North 2009: Steele 2008: Ledwidge 2011) stating that Britain was defeated in Iraq, but the silence surrounding any analysis of the British military’s performance in Iraq in the television media is marked. It has now been three years since the British military left Iraq, but there has been no documentary which has addressed this question<sup>1</sup>. As a documentary film maker I am interested in why this is so, and this research is undertaken in part to find out why these questions are still not asked.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Norma Percy will be directing one for the BBC for the 10th anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq.

As an embedded documentary film maker with the British Army for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, I was very aware that we could only report on that which we saw and that our understanding of what we did see was limited, so I went back to Iraq later that year, but this time to film with Iraqis in Baghdad to make a documentary about what life had been like under Saddam. I then returned to Iraq in late 2004 to make a series for the BBC, again as an embed with the occupying British army. In 2009 I returned to Iraq and was confronted with an entirely different version of the occupation by the British in Iraq, that of an American and Iraq version of the British military having failed in the south. From being in Iraq at different times and places and with different people, I heard very different versions of the events of the British military occupation and back in the UK I became interested in yet another version, that is the one constructed by the British television media.

The premise of this study is that the construction of war in the media justifies it (Zelizer 2004): that the narrative of suffering heroes betrayed by politicians, excludes alternative coverage which might lead to a different analysis of the role of the military in Iraq. Hoskins and O'Loughlin comment that the 1990-1 Gulf War was an object produced by the news and that in 2003 the news effectively participated in the constitution of the Iraq war (2007), so part of this study will be to examine how television news and documentaries created a similar object, the British military occupation. Former US Assistant Secretary for Defense, Joseph P Nye writes 'success not only depends on whose army wins, but also on whose story wins' (Nye 2005). I therefore look at the story told by the media, but also examine evidence from the Chilcot Inquiry to discover an alternative interpretation and thus identify the themes which construct this version, and which silence a more comprehensive analysis of the role of the British military in Iraq. I examine key events in the occupation to see how documentaries differ from news in their portrayal of the British military in Iraq, and in this examination identify how the genres both affect and are affected by the coverage of the British military in the Iraq war.

Documentaries claim to be purveyors of the real (Winston 1995), they lie rooted in social reality (Chanan 2007), but they are also representations of the world (Barnouw 1983; Renov 1993). The authority of news rests with its claims to be a



reproduction of the world, and an examination of the programmes looks at how far these claims are still specific to the genres. If the media does not now merely transmit information and represent reality, but fundamentally constitutes a reality which is diametrically opposed to that realised through another medium, it has serious repercussions not only for the media's role in communicating to the public, but also repercussions in the means by which it communicates. Nichols writes that the power and responsibility of documentaries lies in the knowledge of the world based on rational analysis, whereas others argue (Beattie 2008) that the vehicle of cognition and knowledge in documentaries is now by sensation. By looking at the documentary coverage of the occupation and comparing that to the evidence from the Chilcot Inquiry, I also test this connection to this world, and argue that if they lose this ability to know rather than to feel, they lose their authority to claim to be part of this world of the real.

Lynn states 'if one's definition of a discourse on war is an expectation of what war should be, Clausewitz would argue that it almost necessarily will be overturned by the forces implicit in real war' (Lynn, 2003: 365). It is by examining the discourse that we see the media expectation of what war should be, but also have to compare it and overturn it to see what else was happening. I examine events which offer a different construction of the occupation and overturn the media's expectations of war. These events also provide opportunities to investigate the implicit sites of power in the discourses of the occupation.

Taking the premise that 'war journalists are thought to do what all journalists do, only in a more heightened, vibrantly important fashion' (Allan & Zelizer 2004:4) I look at the literature on reporting war to try and explain what these 'heightened' effects were that influenced this type of journalism. Authors such as Keeble (2004) suggest that the limitations on war reporting are an out of control militarism<sup>2</sup>, embedding<sup>3</sup>, Fleet Street consensus<sup>4</sup>; the manufacture of humanitarian and heroic

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<sup>2</sup> See section 2.5 & Der Derian (2009) p.20 below

<sup>3</sup> See section 2.9

<sup>4</sup> See section 3.4

war<sup>5</sup>. Allan & Zelizer (2004:5) comment on the ‘weave of limitations’ that bind the reporter. These are political, military and economic.

These bindings are a major factor influencing the reporting of war, but the complexity of the subject matter favours a Foucauldian analysis where I conduct a genealogical or archaeological investigation to examine the discourses contained in the broadcast news and documentaries. Foucault writes that this method applies to military history and warfare, saying:

‘it is a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or non-legitimized knowledges off against the unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organise them into a hierarchy, organise them in the name of a true body of knowledge’ (2003:9).

I have chosen Foucault’s genealogical method because of its location within a field of ‘discontinuities’ rather than in hierarchical or organised structures. I was not looking primarily at what shaped the discourses, the political, economic and technological fields, but at how they were manifested, so have chosen to examine these manifested themes in the literature on war reporting, rather than the literature on politics and economics of war reporting.

Within these themes studied, I mention other controlling factors which also impact on war reporting, such as military constraint, feelings of patriotism; the broadcaster’s own regulations and self-censorship. However, many of these controlling factors did not impact on all journalists and reporters to the same degree<sup>6</sup>, and without interviews of journalists it is difficult to establish with empirical evidence how their reporting might have been influenced by such things as patriotism, self-censorship or acquiescence to military minds. I therefore exclude an indepth study of these factors in the literature review.

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<sup>5</sup> See section 2.3

<sup>6</sup> Lewis writes that in the Iraq War, most correspondents recalled no attempts at censorship, apart from the journalist Romilly Weeks who wanted to cover a failed aid drop in Al Zubayr (Lewis 2006:95). My supposition would be that that was more to do with the whim of the unit commander than official policy, as we covered two water drops in Al Zubayr.

Foucault defines a discourse as ‘practices which obey certain rules’ (Foucault, 1985: 138). These rules construct the topic, define and produce the objects of our knowledge and also define how we talk about a topic and who can talk about the topic. The power of the discourse carries with it presumptions of truth, which disallow alternative analyses. This study therefore looks at how the discourse is constructed which defines *how* the media justifies the war in Iraq, *who* it allows to speak and of *what*.

I am interested in identifying the discourses which dominated and allowed questions to be asked, and others to remain silent. Allan & Zelizer write that that the role of the war reporter is also beset by an array of problems associated with ‘allegiance, responsibility, truth and balance’ (2004:3), and it is the identification of the ‘truth’ that the power of the of the discourse lies. To conduct this search for an identification of the discourse and at how the power is manifested I turn to Foucault for explanation. Foucault’s writing about power and truth have a relevance to the examination of the truth claims seen to be so important in war reporting. I begin by looking at the literature of how wars have been dealt with by the media, examining how legitimacy for war has been presented. The literature also examines the media’s depiction of the role of the military in past wars. Major themes which emerge in the literature include the emotional and scientific discourse of war, embedding and the coverage of death. The third chapter looks at the specific media genres, that of news and the genre of documentaries, examining their different formats and features which are pertinent to their formation, such as the role of the reporter and the issue of the live coverage of events. Discourse has a material affect so the practice of live reporting and embedding affect the discourse to be examined.

Chapter 4 looks at Foucault’s writing, at his theory of the discourse and his concept of ‘archaeology’<sup>7</sup> and ‘genealogy’<sup>8</sup> which will inform the methodology. From an understanding of the working of discourses, Foucault’s theory of power and truth

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7 Archaeology tries to define not the thoughts, representations, images, themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourses; but those discourses themselves, those discourses as practices obeying certain rules’ (Foucault 1985 :138)

<sup>8</sup> The relationships between discursive and non-discursive practices and between forms of knowledge and power.

will be examined. Foucault himself questioned his methodology, so I draw more practically on the study by John Corner et al (1990) to structure the research, looking at the framing and the communicative design of the programmes (Chapter 5).

I then look at the account of the British military's occupation of Iraq in Chapter 6, using the Chilcot Inquiry as a source of evidence from an alternative discourse to examine what was understood to be the occupation, and from this what the role of the British military was, as seen by the senior officer and ministers. An analysis of the role of the military will be undertaken looking at such topics as the British military's strategy, and their relationship with the Americans as these contribute to the definition of their role. Clausewitz believed war was an extension of politics, and the war in Iraq cannot be examined without some understanding of the subsequent politics in Britain and in Iraq as these contribute to the violence that engulfed the country and involved the actions the military.

Chapter 7 is an examination of the content of news, and documentaries to find the dominant discourses. These findings are then compared to the alternative representation of the British military gathered from the Chilcot Inquiry to identify the silences in the coverage. As stated, the findings from the different genres are also compared to establish how they affect the coverage, and how they in turn are affected by the coverage. Chapters 8 and 9, look at the findings under Corner et al's (1990) methodological headings of Communicative design and aesthetic design.

Sturken believes that the way a nation remembers a war and constructs its history is directly related to how that nation further propagates war (1997: 122), so it is important to try to determine why a certain portrayal of the British army in Iraq became dominant, and why there are silences in the story of its occupation. This is not only important in this research, but as the war in Afghanistan comes under similar scrutiny, it would seem that lessons have not been learned from Iraq.

Michalski and Gow state that success in modern war is now only possible with legitimacy (2007) and the media's role is to debate and confer legitimacy on wars. The notion of success in war is discussed in section 2:10, and is important to consider that like games, much of the coverage of war contains an element of victory or defeat. However, in war the stakes are very high. With public spending cuts, and

a bitterly contested defence budget, it is important that the media can contribute to the debate about whether the military is fit for purpose, and more importantly what this purpose is, so it can fulfil two of its major functions in a democracy, that is to educate citizens and to act as a 'watchdog' (McNair, 2011: 19). It is also important to examine the changing nature of the genres of documentaries and news at a time when television journalism is accused of dumbing down, and the future of journalism in television is itself being questioned.

Wars primarily involve killing, and since the writing of the first wars the killing has to be justified to make sense and legitimise an act that would otherwise be outside civil and moral laws. Walzer writes 'It is important to stress that the moral reality of war is not fixed by the actual behaviour of soldiers but by the opinions of mankind' (2006: 15), and the opinions of mankind are informed by the media. Thus how the media presents the war is of enormous importance not only to media studies but to society. In the next section I look at the literature of how wars have been justified by the media.

## **Chapter 2 – Key themes in the media’s coverage of War:**

Britain has been involved in over seventy military campaigns of varying sizes since the second world war (Ledwidge, 2011: 153), perhaps more than any other country in the world (Human Security Report 2005). It has become so familiar that the military’s role is not questioned fundamentally. Yet their role has changed as wars and the coverage of these wars have changed. Eighteen of the seventy wars may be classified as ‘counterinsurgency’ actions (Ledwidge, 2011: 153), including the Iraq campaign.

I consider the major media narratives encompassing the reasons for invasion, but the geo-political and economic significance of Iraq which may have contributed to the occupation is worth mentioning, if only to flag up its presence or absence in the television coverage of the military’s occupation of Iraq. Mesopotamia has been a strategic focal point of the region for thousands of years. It was fought over by the Persian and Ottoman empires from the 1500’s and was a balance between the two Islamic empires, dominance for which is still being fought today. The British imperial aspirations also have their legacy. To protect British India the British expanded their interest in the region, becoming directly involved in Iraq in the First World War as part of their offensive against the Ottoman. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 divided the Arab provinces of Ottoman dominion between France and Britain, betraying pledges given to Faisal Hussein ibn Ali, the Hashemite leader, later to become Faisal 1<sup>st</sup> of Iraq. Western involvement in Iraq is thus long term, and by 2003 Iraq had become the ‘key to the Middle East’ (Buchanan 2003: 307). If the US controlled Iraq it would be the hegemonic power in the region. Syria would be virtually surrounded by hostile powers, Iran would also be encircled, and Israel would be free to deal with Lebanon in its support of Hezbollah. The fact that in the long term Iraq could also be the world’s largest oil producer (Sanford 2003: 17) also holds some significance in the arguments surrounding the causes for the invasion of Iraq.

Geo-political explanations for modern war seem largely absent in the reporting of war. Different wars require different justifications and in this chapter I look at the major themes and justifications examined in the literature to establish how these play into and affect the media discourse of the Iraq occupation.

## **2.1 Justification for War.**

The main justification for wars is that they are fought to protect the nation; it is a battle against evil or an evil character (Carpentier 2007: Kellner 1992), it is for humanitarian purposes (Beck 2002: Chomsky 1999; Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007), war gives purpose to those fighting (Hammond 2007) and war is fought as a pre-emptive war again for the safety of the nation (Bhuta 2005: Owens 2007). From these themes I then look at *how* the wars are justified, that is by presenting war as a 'science', and thus part of a rational discourse which cannot be questioned (Foucault 2004), but also as an emotional discourse where reason is swamped by emotion (Chouliaraki 2007). Some of the arguments cited might seem at odds with each other, but as Markham states 'it is arguable that conflict and suffering have significance in the contexts of particular cultures, that they emerge as meaningful objects in relation to the specific discourses by which we make sense of the world' (2011:1). So different wars are made sense of and justified in the context of the culture and the particular discourses of their time.

Plato, Cicero and later Christian theologians wrote about the 'just war', where a war has to be fought for the 'right' reasons, otherwise it is seen as being illegal. Walzer (2006: x) writes 'It is a feature of just war theory in its classic formulations that aggression is regarded as the criminal policy of a government, not as the policy of a criminal government'. The 'jus ad bellum' (right to war) debate on the Iraq war is not within the scope of this thesis, but the 'jus in bellum' (right in war) and perhaps the 'jus post bellum' (right after war) has a profound effect on the presentation of the occupation of Iraq.

In the past, conquests made by the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies were justified in the name of liberation (Stirk, 2009: 12). In other major wars justification for war was implied as resistance to threats to the nation as in the two World Wars. With the rise of globalism, the changing nature of wars and the establishment of 'post national' war (Beck, 2002: 61) nationalism which once served as a legitimating mechanism for binding individuals together to send them off to war, no longer apply to such a great extent.

## **2: 2 - The Manichean struggle**

The Manichean struggle between good and evil is a discourse going back to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, where the hero Gilgamesh and Enkidu journey to the Cedar mountain to defeat Humbaba, its guardian who breathed fire and had the face of death.

Carpentier refers to the elementary dichotomies which transform an adversary into an enemy (2007: 105). These are good/evil; just/unjust; innocent/guilty. According to him, a second layer of dichotomies structures the meaning attributed to the violent practices of both warring parties which include 'necessary/unnecessary; last resort/provocative; limited effects/major effects; focused/indiscriminate; purposeful/senseless; legitimate/illegitimate and legal/criminal. These dichotomies are re-articulated before, during and after the conflict.

The First Gulf war (1990-91) was articulated as a struggle between two fundamental forces. 'From the outset of the crisis in the Gulf, the media employed the frame of popular culture that portrays conflict as a battle between good and evil' states Kellner (1992: 62). Saddam was frequently linked to Hitler, in both Gulf wars, and according to Kellner, the Bush administration and the media played on sexual and racial fears in constructing their image of Saddam, with the rhetoric of Iraqi 'rape' and 'penetration'. He notes that throughout US history, vengeance of rape, especially the rape of white women by men of colour has been used to legitimate US imperialist adventures and military action' (ibid: 66). This might have been one reason why the Jessica Lynch story<sup>9</sup> was manipulated and used to such effect in the Iraq war.

The war in the Balkans also became a war between good and evil, between the victim and the oppressor, and events which did not fit the black and white narrative structure, for example the Croatian siege of Mostar, were 'virtually unreported'

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<sup>9</sup> Jessica Lynch was part of a unit, the 507th Maintenance Company which was at the end of a convoy when it missed a turn and drove into an ambush in Nasiriyah. 11 of the 33 soldiers were killed, 9 wounded and 7 captured. Lynch was rescued and an account of her bravery and heroic escape became a major story in the war. The BBC later broadcast a version closer to the truth, that she had in fact been treated by Iraqi medics, had not been wounded and the hospital was deserted when she was rescued.



(Hammond, 2004: 182). Likewise the equation between the Serbs and the Nazis invoked moral absolutes in a way that ‘resonated powerfully with contemporary sensibilities’ (ibid: 182).

Characters appear to become part of the master narrative of the binary myths of good and evil, hero and villain. One pole of the binary is usually the dominant one, and there is always a relation of power between the poles. Hall quotes Saussure’s theory that difference matters because it is essential to meaning. For example, we know what black is because of whiteness (Hall, 1997: 234). Likewise, we need the barbarian to define and give purpose to civilisation. Foucault writes that the barbarian can only be understood, characterised and defined in relation to a civilisation and by the fact that he lives outside it: ‘The barbarian cannot exist without the civilisation he is trying to destroy and appropriate... the barbarian is essentially the vector for domination’ (Foucault, 2004: 195).

Nichols argues that the ‘post-structural critique of Western humanist thought ... relegates all discourses to the category of master narrative... accounts that subsume all that they survey to one controlling story line, leaving little if any room for anomaly, difference of otherness’ (Nichols, 1991: 207). In films about war this ‘master narrative’ leaves little room for an exploration of the other, and perhaps contributes to lack of a satisfactory portrayal of ‘the enemy’, or of events outside the teleological structure of the ‘hero’ achieving his goal. The narrative momentum means that the motives, actions, traits and impulses of the other become drawn into the centripetal field of the hero as organising principal (ibid: 206). This binary opposition diminishes the need for explanatory context and perhaps contributes to the confusion in the representation of the soldier in post-war Iraq. Is he a killer or peace-keeper? Hall, argues that what really disturbs cultural order is when things turn up in the wrong category, or fail to fit any category (Hall, 1997: 136), thus perhaps because of the confusion around the justification of the occupation in Iraq, and the conduct of the war, the soldier’s category is not clear.

Lewis (2001) states that public support for war depends heavily on a powerful mythic frame that dominates media coverage. The mythic structure is not just of good and evil, but of issues which are seen to be forces of good. The presentation of

American foreign policy is one that sees it as informed by the desire to promote the principles of peace, democracy and human rights, and ‘It is achieved by a form of acute selectivity, focusing on those instances when the economic and political interests of the US elites happen to coincide with notions of democracy and human rights’ (Lewis, 2001: 131). Lewis also argues that the construction of various narratives in which the use of military force is seen as necessary to deter the advance of dangerous dictators, has become the political *raison-d’etre* of the military industrial complex (ibid. 203).

The narrative frame of good against and overcoming evil is a fundamental justification for war, familiar to all cultures and not just presented by the media. A corollary to being good is to be seen to *do* good, which constructs the humanitarian discourse.

### **2: 3 Humanitarian War**

As wars have changed (Smith 2005) so the dominant discourse of war coverage has changed. War is now seen to be presented primarily as a humanitarian endeavour, protecting civilians against an evil protagonist and fought to make the world a better place. It has become one of the major justifications both for the initiation of war and for its extension. It is pertinent to this research as it is in the claims made in the name of humanitarian intervention that the success or failure of the British military in Iraq can be measured, and in the silence of this judgement that the dominance of the discourse found. Beck argues that Kosovo was a post national war because it was neither waged in a national interest, nor seen in the context of older rivalries, but was executed in the belief in the morality of ‘human rights as a source of civility’ (Beck, 2002: 61). The protection of global human rights, rather than the protection by the nation of the nation’s citizens is seen to be a justification for war.<sup>10</sup> Chomsky also presents the war in this template. He refers to the ‘emerging norms of justified intervention’ by states or alliances that do not seek authorization from the international community, but use force because they ‘believe it to be just’, calling it ‘the new military humanism’ (1999: 11), and cites the statements of Clinton and

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<sup>10</sup> This has implications on the duties of citizens to the state, and perhaps implications on the military contract, but is not of major relevance here.

Blair calling for a 'just and necessary war' and a war to 'promote democracy' where in fact the 'new generation' is the old generation, and that the new internationalism 'replays old and unpleasant records' (Chomsky, 1999: 14). Chomsky argues that NATO's bombing in Operation Agricola in the war in Kosovo was not in response to ethnic cleansing, but actually lead to a radical escalation and other 'deleterious effects', and that the evidence for the crimes allegedly leading to the bombing were in fact perpetrated after the bombing (ibid: 20). He also points to the framing of the conflict as 'them and us', that is, the 'humanitarian democratic West' against the 'barbarous inhumanity of the Orthodox Serbs, and the portrayal of the US's 'distaste for war' (ibid: 101). The application of force both served as a warning to those who would not conform to US domination, and stimulated military production and sales. These themes and outcomes can be seen in the Iraq War, as was the major role of companies like Brown & Root, Halliburton & Bechtel<sup>11</sup> in the post war efforts.

In the Kosovo war, the narrative framed by Bush and the media called for yet another sanitized war, one of those 'gnostic wars, neoplatonist wars of the pure spirit against the corrupt flesh, extropian wars of the digital against the meat' (Ryan 2004: 236). Shaw writes that this humanitarian intervention in fact just meant adding an armed element to humanitarian aid (2005: 15). A humanitarian justification for occupation, with the military being involved in reconstruction also has the effect of lessening the culpability of deaths, especially when combined with the acknowledgement of precision of weapons. Deaths become 'accidental', but for a good cause. Any end justifies the means, and the spirit lives on.

The 'humanitarian' war has other strands which become part of the discourse. Hoskins and O'Loughlin point to the political discourses present in the CNN broadcasts and debates in the US and UK of the lead up to the 2003 Iraq war, as being one of 'democratic imperialism', that is to make Iraq a democratic country, which would have a domino effect on the rest of the Middle East, and 'assertive multilateralism', that is 'working through the UN, NATO and other multilateral

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<sup>11</sup> Halliburton (which was once run by Vice President Dick Cheney, had the contract to deliver fuel to the US military in Iraq. Kellogg, Brown & Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton and which supplied cafeteria services to the US military, overcharged the Pentagon possibly by as much as \$61million. (BBC News, 2003)

bodies to identify and resolve problems in international society' (2007: 76).

Robinson et al point out that the presentation of the war, that is to defend Britain against weapons of mass destruction, was not humanitarian, but for national interest (2010: 5), but as the war progressed into occupation the humanitarian intervention justification increased (Ryan 2004: Heinze 2006). As the occupation lengthened, four aspects of the war, humanitarian aid, nation building, battling for hearts and minds, and using indigenous troops, were mentioned in the American press (Ryan, 2004: 376).

The dominant discourse was one of intervention in Iraq for humanitarian reasons (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007). Boyd-Barret refers to the framing of the US troop presence in Iraq as one 'motivated by selfless humanitarian intervention, and the profiling of 'terrorist' groups as completely 'other to the US and its allies, despite a dark history of covert penetration and redirection of such groups by security forces' (Boyd-Barrett, 2007: 91). The Iraqi people were positioned as the victims of the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein with Iraqi society being fragmented and separate from the regime, which is also defined as a threat to its own people (Carpentier, 2007: 107). However, as the occupation became a counterinsurgency and other ambiguities became apparent, the simple master narrative seemed to come unstuck. Chernus notes that the American story became one of 'regeneration through violence' (2006: 132), that the Americans could do violence without losing their innate goodness, that their sacrifice purifies and ennobles them as it spreads liberty around the world.

With the capture of Saddam Hussein and the killing of notable Al Qaeda suspects, mission accomplished could be claimed. However, Chesterman writes that in Afghanistan as the likelihood of capturing Osama bin Laden 'dead or alive' diminished, a rhetorical shift became evident in the Bush administration's war aims (2002: 169), and the rhetoric of 'nation building' became more prominent.

Combined with this primary justification for intervention, the other justification according to Chesterman was self defence. This belief arose from the development of a 'new customary norm created by the evolution of consistent and widespread state practice accompanied by the necessary *opinion juris*, the belief that a practice is legally obligatory' (Chesterman, 2002: 169). He states that the right of such

humanitarian intervention is cited reluctantly, in part from the recognition of the weakness of the legal argument, but also that others might use this right, especially in support of the Palestinians against Israel (ibid: 170).

The justification of war as a humanitarian exercise is still used, as seen in the intervention in Libya, but the questioning of the British military endeavour and the likelihood of the same uncertain outcome in Afghanistan, has led to questions being asked as to whether it is actually the role of the military to be involved in these 'humanitarian' conflicts. Both Beebe & Kaldor (2010) and Ledwidge (2011) doubt their role, and posit that with the 'human security' focus of both these conflicts, the army might not be the best organisation to deal with problems thrown up in both countries.

This section has looked at the justification for war as protection of the nation state, to war against evil by heroes who have to be seen to be doing good. This dominant discourse often silenced the economic and political reasons for going to war. Its use and ubiquity is important to establish a familiar way of reporting war that reoccurs in the coverage of the Iraq occupation. However, war has moved on and with changes in war, so the justification changes, and as reasons for going to war become more ambiguous and unpalatable, and the militarisation of society deepens, war is seen to carry its own justification.

## **2:4 War looking for a purpose.**

With the rise of global war Shaw (2005) writes that Western military campaigns are wars which can only be contained in new ways which are carried on 'without damaging polity, economy or society to a significant extent' (Shaw, 2005:73). Thus the coverage of the economics and politics of war is sidelined. Silences are already forming. In the media wars became more about perception and management, than substance (ibid: 91). By embracing the human rights and causes of military humanism the West can renew its self-legitimacy and the

old fashioned aims of imperialist world politics dovetail with supposed disinterest and encourage the creation of state roles that give lame ducks – politicians and military men – the opportunity to bathe in the glamour of renewed activity and legitimacy (Beck, 2002: 68).

In Bosnia 'journalism of attachment' led to journalists making Bosnia a meaningful cause, and initiated charges that the war in Kosovo was not a 'real' war because no Western troops were killed. Ignatieff writes 'The bad conscience on my side was that we had talked the language of ultimate causes and practiced the art of minimum risk' (Ignatieff, 2000: 155). Hammond cites *The Independent* which reported that there was no 'sense of triumph or of virtue rewarded'... though there 'might have been, had NATO suffered some casualties' (Hammond, 2007: 55). War is fought because it is cause in itself, and the war becomes worth fighting when people are killed. People therefore have to be seen to be killed as this provides evidence that the war is worth fighting. The deaths contribute to the regeneration that Chernus (2006) mentions.

Hammond writes that 'the other directed actions that are undertaken in order to fill the emptiness at the heart of the Western state sometimes involve those others having to fight and die in order that 'our values' might live' (Hammond, 2007: 143). It is this lack of political purpose and vision which gives rise to the phenomena which have been seen as typifying 'post-modern' war, that is the use of hi-tech 'smart weapons' and the importance of media spectacle' (Hammond, 2007: 21). Hammond paints a bleak picture, but contributing to this mediatisation of war and media presentation is the entwined discourse of the Manichean struggle, where a

hero can act out the values by which society would like to live, and by his valour become the sacrifice and defeat evil.

Documentary use of recognisable narratives favours the representation of the soldier as hero, which will be a major question for research below (Chapter 7). The discourse falls into the larger network of both the justification for war as a humanitarian intervention in that the hero soldiers can save others because they are heroes, but also assuage the hunger for 'shared values' by the media (Hammond 2007).

As wars lose their grand purpose mentioned above (Beck 2002), the importance of the media to find justification for the war is increased<sup>12</sup> which also means that war is fought for the media, and war on the media becomes the new way of war and part of its tactics. Ignatieff also makes this point that the Kosovo campaign appeared to vindicate the strategy and tactics of virtual war (2000:162). However this pale reflection constructs war as an empty event with no purpose, apart from giving meaning to those holding up the mirror of the media.

After the First Gulf war in 1990-91 with increasing doubts about the justifications for war and its lack of purpose this development in the symbiotic relationship between the media and war is noted.

Without a grand narrative to make sense of the enterprise, war is unable to inspire belief or enthusiasm. Instead it becomes meaningless and empty, an image fought against a backdrop of spontaneous indifference (Hammond, 2004: 24)

For Baudrillard the image of war on television was a sanitised media spectacle in which it was difficult to distinguish the virtual from the reality, and the virtual became the reality. Hammond advances this theme and argues that for the Iraq War, the emphasis on image, spectacle and media presentation has been driven by the leaders of the West to recapture a sense of purpose and meaning for what they are doing (2007). Spectacle and performance feature largely in the legitimacy of the

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<sup>12</sup> The debate about whether public opinion is swayed by the media is unclear (Gilboa 2005), but Aday (2010) points out the belief among elites that vivid news coverage will affect public support for war.

war. Michalski and Gow write 'very often weak obscure or even doubted bases for legitimacy can be overcome simply by good performance' (2007: 203). As wars are fought in front of global audiences, image and audience is where the strategic campaign is going to be conducted (ibid).

According to Hammond the wars in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq were initiated by the US elite to overcome their lack of confidence and self-belief (2007:42). Included in the 'elite' are the news editors and journalists who were and are also trying to find a new role for themselves in the new post-Cold War landscape.

It is into this landscape of a visual war with the importance of spectacle and perception that the emergence of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism in Iraq can be placed. This is not to say that counterinsurgency tactics are being used by the media, but they are perhaps both a material effect of this discourse of war where information and spectacle become both a strategy and a weapon of war. The British manual of counterinsurgency (AFM1-10) places a great deal of stress on 'influence' stating that it is one of the three major components of a successful counterinsurgency campaign. 'Information war', the 'enemy's perception' of the other side and the war become part of the war itself. If the 'enemy' can be persuaded that they are losing and that the occupiers can offer something better, then much of the battle is won. The US military manual on Information Operations written by the Joint command, Control and Information Warfare School states that the new 'battlespace' is focused on 'wetware', the 'grey matter' of the brain which opinions are formed and decisions made, and the weapon is information (2004).

In the networks of interplaying discourses, counterinsurgency strategies and practices play into this last justification for war of war looking for a purpose, which argues that war is seen to be worth fighting because it is war, and the spectacle is seen on television and people are dying which is what happens in war. If they are dying then it must be worth fighting. Chernus writes, 'Why are we always fighting? Because we always have enemies. How do we know we always have enemies? Because we are always fighting' (Chernus, 2006: 211). War carries its own purpose, but the argument is a chimera. It is an argument which draws on the discourse of the truth of science and technology as well as the emotions of the spectacle. In the next



section I look at how the discourse of science uses both tools and techniques to contribute to the justification for war.

## **2: 5 The Science of War**

War as a science is one of the dominant discourses in the media's coverage of wars, both before and after the Iraq war. Its manifestation perhaps lies outside the more traditional locations of examination, but it incorporates many regimes of truth and thus is a discourse of some power which makes it of relevance to this study. This regime informs the discourse of television as well as the military discourse, where the accuracy and impartiality of the machines themselves become part of the weapons used in the justification of the conduct of the war, and can become an implicit part in the narration of the war as humanitarian. Much like the positivist argument of documentaries claim to objectivity in the iconic nature of the visual sign captured by the camera, the objective nature of the weapon was an icon of truth in that it was a machine of science and precision with no ability to lie. As Foucault argued, even science is a discourse and one might be on shaky grounds trying to claim an absolute truth. He writes:

What types of knowledge are you trying to disqualify when you say that you are a science? ... I see you assigning to those that speak that discourse the power-effects that the West has, ever since the Middle Ages, ascribed to a science and reserved for those who speak a scientific discourse (2004: 10).

Power is not only assigned to those that speak in a scientific discourse, but what they say becomes 'truth', and the machines which have a scientific function also retain that 'truth'. DeLanda writes that Foucault showed that the investigatory procedures to capture human nature in tables in the judicial regimes and procedures instituted at the beginning of the industrial revolution, became scientific functions which ascribed a 'true nature' to humans (DeLanda, 1991: 175). The military process of transforming soldiers into machines and the advance in technology of war machines leads to the removal of humans out of the decision-making loop of warfare. The power of the discourse of science is noted by Hallin in the Vietnam war as he writes that the appeal of the pilots was that they fitted one of the great hero images of modern American culture; they were professionals who had mastered technology and could make it perform (1989: 137).

The 'rationality' of machines is part of this discourse, as well as the echoes of the discourse which sought universal military principles and applied a science to the analysis of military challenges and strategies. The camera was seen to be a mechanism for recording the truth because of its mechanical ability and its ability to function without a human in much the same way as a military computer is perceived to be a 'scientific' tool. It is seen as recording, analysing and determining information and targets, in the same detached way that the camera records visual information. Ignatieff writes 'from the beginning, technology was in search of impunity', that 'in all previous (to the Kosovo War) revolutions in military technology, proponents of new weaponry have overcome moral resistance to their diffusion by arguing that greater precision and lethality would make wars less bloody' (Ignatieff, 2000: 164), and that after the impasse of the nuclear war, precision war became the method by which war gave nations power.

DeLanda (1991: 189) states that as the first age of technology of recording images was the counterfeit, that is they created an illusion that would pass for reality as in painting; the second was the replica, that is the camera; but the latest is simulation, where reality is simulated, as in the flight simulator. Both the military's belief in the power of machines, such as smart weapons, and the media's acceptance of this power can perhaps be seen in the reporting of recent wars with the dominance of the reporting about and pictures of the technology and progress of war.

The use of stylistic devices such as figures and graphics contribute to the discourse of technowar. 'Technowar measures its successes and its ability to control the situation through numbers by means of quantitative measurement' (Kellner, 1992: 196). These stylistic devices such as used by the *Sunday Telegraph* and *News of the World* which express enthusiasm for military effort, constitute an incitement to vicarious pleasure in warfare in the Second Gulf war, which Tumber & Palmer say is analogous to the use of 'smart' weapons in the First Gulf War (1991), thus giving an impression of sanitised warfare (2004: 107).

Reid argues that power is itself an expression of the epistemic interconnectivities of human sciences, including that of military-strategy theory (Reid, 2003: 20) and

Network Centric Warfare<sup>13</sup> can be seen as part of the network of organisational structures (such as modern business corporations) and epistemes which are bound together. It could be argued that the military's fascination with FRES (Future Rapid Effect System) mentioned by North (2009) is an example of this. As warfare becomes information based, so news coverage mirrors that information. Coverage becomes the number of plane sorties, planes shot down and equipment destroyed, which all measure the progress of war.

Der Derian (2009) draws attention to this relationship between the military and the media, which he terms the 'Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network, or MIME-Net, where the culture industry reproduces a militarist worldview. The MIME-Net 'runs on video-game imagery, twenty-four-hour news cycles, multiple modes of military, corporate, university, and media power, and microchips embedded in everything but human flesh' (Curtis, 2007:189). The military discourse meshes and affects the civilian discourse producing a new form of power and regime of truth. This is further complicated by the use of the media space as part of the battle. Der Derian and other authors have noted that the mobilization of the public as spectators is an integral part of modern conflict (Tumber and Palmer 2004; Shapiro 2007).

It is primarily as a picture-led medium that television is 'at its best when depicting generalised details of military hardware and action (Taylor, 1992: 16). Askoy & Robins also note in the First Gulf War that much coverage was given to the 'marvellous intelligence of the new high-tech weapons', and how they used night hours efficiently. They conclude, 'The rationality of the weapons seemed to be an expression of moral virtue' (1992: 207). Ignatieff notes that because the Kosovo campaign obtained its objectives without sacrificing a single Allied life, it appeared to 'vindicate the strategy and tactics of virtual war (2000: 162), which feeds into the humanitarian war justification, but not Hammond's (2004) critique. The increasing

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<sup>13</sup> An information superiority enabled concept of operations that generates increased combat power by networking sensors, decision makers, and shooters to achieve shared awareness, increased speed of command, higher tempo of operations, greater lethality, increased survivability, and a degree of self synchronization (Alberts & Hayes. 2006: 2).

use of remote controlled drones both in Iraq and Afghanistan contribute to the discourse of moral virtue with claimed successes in the Afghan Pakistan border.

The US government claims success for this strategy in Afghanistan<sup>14</sup>, but this is disputed by other observers (Rogers 2010). The ‘Afghan Model’ of warfare which arguably influenced the ‘shock and awe’ tactics of the invasion of Iraq is part of this discourse of the rationality and cleanliness of war. Biddle writes that the US use of special operations forces, precision weapons and indigenous allies toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The Special forces guided the bombs which were doing the killing at a distance, and indigenous allies replaced American conventional troops, (Biddle 2006), so the dying count of ‘our troops’ was seen to be less.

The episteme of rationality and science pertaining to the machines and warfare is also caught in the network of discourse of the rationality of reporting and news. McNair citing Baudrillard (2003) says that some modes of political discourse, some styles of journalistic and academic output are an elitist bourgeois construct with ideals of rationality and truth. However, as Markham (2012) argues, most journalists realise the ideals will not be attained, but it is a major standard in the phenomenology of war reporting. The move away from expository documentaries to observational documentaries where the camera as a machine became a witness to the ‘truth’ is part of this argument about science, rationality and truth.

As seen the discourse of science includes many networks which affect the coverage of war. Caught up in this network is the domain of the visual, which is itself informed by and contributes to the power of emotion. When discussing the coverage of war especially with reference to the criticisms of the dumbing down of news (Franklin 1997), the emotional discourse is of increasing importance in the literature on the media coverage of war, and is examined in the next section.

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<sup>14</sup> John O’Brennan, Assistant to the US President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism writes that the practice of drone and aerial bombing would continue in Afghanistan, stating: ‘targeted strikes conform to the principle of humanity which requires us to use weapons that will not inflict suffering. For all these reasons, I suggest to you that these targeted strikes against al-Qa’ida terrorists are indeed ethical and just’ (2012).

## **2: 6 Emotional War**

As a rhetorical tool, emotion has been employed by poets, dramatists, authors and the media to justify war for as long as all these have existed. Emotion can both promote and silence discourses. Raising emotions from past wars to give a framework to present wars is a feature noted by Stjepan Mestrovic who defines the current politico-media-military discourse of 'postemotionalism', as a discourse which manipulates and promotes emotions from history 'that are selectively and synthetically attached to current events' (1996:11). He writes that facts are obfuscated through the use of displaced emotions from history, that he cannot examine the war in Bosnia as a separate war, as the ghosts of past wars and past events are constantly invoked by the media (ibid:3). The connection to the 'real' visually, verbally and emotionally is a tool of rhetoric, according to Silverstone:

If rhetoric is to be effective, it has to be based on some degree of identification between the orator and the audience... At the heart of persuasion and at the root of rhetoric lies the commonplaces, drawn on shared understandings and memories (1999: 34)

One of the ways offered by Aristotle whereby argument can gain persuasive support is the emotional, and Seaton (2005) argues that news about violence has always drawn upon emotion and the body in order to communicate to the public. Wars by their nature are about emotional events. Hallin declares that the media is governed by a powerful mythology born in part out of the trauma of earlier war (1989), although Hoskins and O'Loughlin also ask whether the invocation of past wars actually inhibits responses to the contemporary. They argue that by comparing the images from the Trnopolje Camp<sup>15</sup> to the Holocaust response was actually inhibited (Hoskins & O'Loughlin 2007).

Nichols (1991) states this strategy of emotion is based on appeals to the 'audience disposition' amongst other things. Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen write that it is the witnessing of the ordinary people at a scene that 'loads the news event with an

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<sup>15</sup> The camp was established by the Bosnian Serbs in the beginning of the Bosnian war and photographs of starving inmates were likened to those from German concentration camps.

exceptional emotional charge and binds the readers to the disasters of others' (2007: 10), and is a familiar feature of conflict and disaster reporting.

The ascendancy of 'human interest' in reporting on the occupation of Iraq is clearly visible, culminating in the scenes of unbridled emotion and sentiment as coffins are paraded through the streets of Wooton Bassett<sup>16</sup>. Chouliaraki writes that television is a space of image, visibility and spectacle, and thus also a space for emotion (2007:131). As a medium it has the embedded facility to utilize tools which appeal to the emotions, unlike print for example, which does not have recourse to rhetorical strategies such as music and moving images. Television is particularly suited to the service of emotion, and Chouliaraki states that the legitimacy of war becomes an aesthetic project that involves the 'staging of images at the service of the management of emotions, rather than a project of the 'best argument'(ibid: 5). So emotion replaces logic as a rhetorical tool of communication, and the ideals of the enlightenment are sacrificed for dumbed down populism.

The increase in emotionalism is one of the factors noted in the blurring of boundaries between programme genres, and in the rise of 'soft news' (Nichols 1991) and the increase in stories which are 'softer, safer' and which deal with 'human interest and crime stories' (Anderegg: 1991). One of the developments in news noted by Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen is the rise of what they call 'emotional reporting', which is seen as part of a larger social trend that is shifting public discourse away from matters of the common good and towards a preoccupation with the intimate and affective (2007:4). They cite Tessa Mayes criticism of 'therapy news' which suggests that journalists' inclusion of their own emotional reaction to events is a new phenomenon. Pantti and Walh-Jorgensen discount this, but do note that the portrayal of grief has seen profound transformations in the reporting of news. 'We can trace journalism's growing focus on the private and the intimate... ordinary people are increasingly expressing their grief in their own words and taking charge of mourning rituals' (ibid: 15). This perhaps is especially noticeable since 9/11 and

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<sup>16</sup> The coffins containing the bodies of British soldiers were paraded through the town of Wooton Bassett on their way from the RAF base where the plane landed to being taken for a post-mortem examination. The parade became a ceremony of mourning for the relatives of the soldiers, the media and the residents of the town.

is not just a feature of news. Moeller uses three pages to describe the trauma of the photo journalists, including herself, when covering 9/11, but it is interesting that even though she criticises journalists for their lack of reporting of ‘other’ deaths, she only takes half a page to cover the reporting of Iraqi deaths (Moeller 2009).

Where war reportage becomes focused on human interest stories, emotions, suffering and victims, wars can take on an ‘essential sameness’ which Ignatieff (2000) argues weakens constructive analysis regarding the causes of the wars. The suffering becomes an ‘empty empathy’ where evidence of the suffering is provided without context of background knowledge (Kaplan, 2005: 93), this makes the structural components of injustice invisible, so disabling criticism both of the policy which lead the soldiers to suffer, and which also caused suffering for the Iraqi victims. The suffering of the soldier promotes a sentimental identification, in which viewers become emotionally involved, but are not politically mobilized (Takacs 2009). The personal rather than the collective is foreground, (again also as a tool of rhetoric), but it also offers a psychological cure to the suffering, rather than a political one.

Susan Sontag claimed that politics was being replaced by psychotherapy after 9/11 (Sontag 2004) and this portrayal of the soldiers as an individual victim of war confessing to camera places them in a discourse where the solution to the occupation is interpersonal communication and the public’s sympathy for the soldiers is a panacea to the queasiness felt by the audience over the justification for the occupation. Media and society seem obsessed with our interiority (Chouliaraki 2006).

Intimate relationships, fears and desires, bodies and appearance are all subjects for television and this is perhaps reflected in the preponderance of documentaries about the damaged soldier, rather than the soldier at war. The soldiers become the victims of war, not the agents of war and injury and death become ‘sacrifice’ and honour. Takacs writes ‘The result is a guilt-ridden compensatory identification with the ‘nobility of the grunt’ that decontextualises military violence and makes political dissent difficult, if not impossible to articulate’ (Takacs, 2009: 88). She also notes that the spectacle of confession, the need to tell, can bring closure to the historical trauma of war, which tells us not that war is traumatic, but that trauma can easily be

overcome (ibid: 97). The narrative structure with this neat ending gives the impression that the trauma can be acknowledged and mourned. ‘The discourse of healing promotes forgetting and depoliticisation rather than ethical contemplation (Sturken, 1997: 16).

The only way dissent becomes possible is by articulating the emotional pain of others, that is the families and friends of the soldiers who died heroically. Rose Gentle, mother of Gordon Gentle who was killed in Iraq garnered much media coverage in her questioning of the war and the reasons for her son’s death. Her strength perhaps lies in the ‘truth’ of her emotions. Boltanski writes that access to truth is arrived by a ‘relevatory externalisation of interiority’ where truth as a route to the heart is a manifestation (Boltanski, 1999: 82). Yet Boltanski also argues that these emotions are socially constructed and consequently ‘socially and historically variable’ (ibid: 84). They are constructed by and contribute to the emotional discourse of the suffering soldier. In the media coverage of the British military in Iraq suffering of both the soldiers and their families is a major discourse. The soldiers suffer mainly because of the damage done to them and the families suffer because of the death of the soldiers. What has lead to the damage, and the role the soldiers play in the damage is seldom questioned.

This emphasis on the damaged soldier feeds into the discourse of the ‘suffering soldier’ which I examine in the research in Chapter 7. Coker writes of the trend of glorification of the soldier as ‘victim of their circumstances’ (2007:95) which originated in the Vietnam War, but which is illustrated in the media eulogy of Jessica Lynch in the Iraq War. He states that a soldier is less likely to be traumatised when he is able to see war not as emotionally scarring but as a challenge, and that ‘we heal psychic wounds when we are able to give meaning to our experience’ (ibid: 102). In Chapter 8 I examine this trend and question whether the increasing interest in the suffering of the soldiers might also be a result of the media’s doubt about the meaning in the experience of the Iraq war and occupation.

Television is thus a medium much suited to the portrayal and rousing of emotion, which silences an analysis of rational truth, drawing on the truth of emotions. Confessing the truth of emotions leads to an individual psychological healing which



gives closure to the soldiers' war, making him a hero, thus excluding a deeper inquiry as to the causes and responsibility of war. All wars become one war, and are more acceptable in their repetition.

As stated, a main purpose of war is killing, and death has enormous emotional impact on the construction of the discourse and is a major issue of war. How the media deals with death also has implications on the war's justification.

## **2: 6 Death in War**

How deaths are presented in war is of major importance to the justification of the war and is a subject that holds great power. Coker writes 'for the true warrior death confers meaning; retroactively it gives his life significance' (2007:45) and this belief plays into the discourse of justification for war being the fighting of war. The sacrifice of the soldier legitimises war in that in 'giving up his life he is consecrating it to society and thus investing it with value' (Coker, 2007:80).

The topic of death raises questions such as whether the casualty figures are acceptable, or whether the deaths are emblematic of a larger malaise (Seaton 2005). The reporting of death falls into a framework of a 'jeremiad', writes Seaton, 'a monumental lamentation for an idealized past which bewails the unsoundness, rottenness and hypocrisy of the present' (ibid: 194). The death of the soldier could either be interpreted as a symptom of the general waste of the Iraq war, or as Marvin states (as quoted by Seaton, 2005: 27) that 'the willing blood sacrifice of soldiers in wars in the name of the totemic flag is the defining feature of the American civic religion of nationalism', and thus a reinforcement of power. Seaton suggests that the media play a crucial role in quantifying and articulating pain and in so doing 'they legitimate the pain they communicate' (ibid: 126). The same could perhaps be said with regard to death, both deaths of Iraqis, and allied soldiers. The Iraqis die unquestioned because they are at war with each other, and soldiers die because that is what they do, and following Hammond's argument (2007) the deaths give meaning to the continuing occupation of Iraq. Death can be mythologized especially in war reporting. It can transform the dead into the eternally remembered,

as well as take ‘from the living something of their historical specificity’. (Nichols, 1991: 254). By eulogizing soldiers as sacrifices, it seems rude to ask why they died. They were simply fulfilling their purpose of being a soldier, so any relationships of power remain unquestioned. Nichols states:

In terms of hierarchy and dominance, sacrifice can also be imposed on others unilaterally both in a ritualistic and stereotypical sense. The individuality and the lives of others are sacrificed to the maintenance of cultural ideals by those with the power and the need to do so (ibid: 256).

News might make use of myth and narrative, but as Nichols writes ‘it employs them in a context where the process of framing, setting an agenda and promoting certain assumptions over others foster the position of viewer-observer’ (ibid: 194). This tends to have a distancing effect. The ritual of the portrayal of soldiers’ deaths also distances death, mystifies and mythologizes it. The flag-covered coffins at Wooten Bassett fulfil multiple purposes. They distance the deaths by homogenising individual losses; Boltanski writes that the politics of pity have a double requirement, they must generalise, and they must not get too close, or the victims no longer appear as unfortunates, but as Hannah Arendt’s ‘enrage’s’ (Boltanski 1999).<sup>17</sup>

The ‘troubling ambiguities of lethal violence are also squeezed from the frames of those endlessly similar individual events’ and they may be ‘the only mechanism by which the loss of life from an unpopular war may be noted’ (Woodward, Winter & Jenkins, 2009: 219). These authors also note that photographs in the print media study feature mostly un-named, anonymous soldiers, but that images of named soldiers occur most frequently when those soldiers have died (ibid: 215). This has the effect of making the soldier heroes, suggesting a need to give meaning to loss which ‘reflects anxieties about the legitimacy of the conflicts in which they occurred’ (ibid: 219). The sentimental reaction of the close up still of the soldier perhaps encourages introspection and an indulgence in the aesthetic, rather than a feeling of moral emotion which impels political action as a response.

The placing of the deaths as part of an historical process in the history of war and the history of the soldier’s regiment also raises the death beyond questioning. The pomp

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<sup>17</sup> ‘If we inquire historically into the causes likely to transform *engages* into *enrages* it is not injustice that ranks first, but hypocrisy (Arendt 1972: 162).

and ceremony with which the military mourns soldiers to give their memory meaning takes them beyond criticism. Foucault writes that history is an intensifier of power, it has a magical function, role and efficacy, and that the power 'dazzles and petrifies' (Foucault, 2004:68). The deaths become engraved as part of the history of the regiment and the ceremonies of mourning blind criticism. Part of this power and interwoven with the discourse of death is an assumption of risk and payback which has become universal, according to Shaw (2005). He cites Beck who argues that in risk society relations of definition are to be conceived as analogous to Marx's relations of production. Risk becomes a 'mathmaticized morality' and becomes a socially constructed phenomenon. This discourse carries the power to define and set the risk (Beck 2000 cited in Shaw, 2005: 97). The concept that soldiers had earned better treatment because they were dying is perhaps an effect of this discourse. The price of earlier wars was balanced in that the cause seemed morally equal to death, but with the growing realisation that in Iraq the cause was not worth the deaths being paid, the risk had to be re-defined.

The discourse of death is also an arena where the military and civilian discourses collide. Ignatieff states that 'sacrifice in battle has become implausible or ironic in the course of the twentieth century as the gulf between military and civilian values has grown. To some extent, this reflects the gradual banishment of death as the over-riding pre-occupation of civilian society (Ignatieff, 2000: 186). It is of some concern to soldiers in war. He also writes that because of this divorce of citizens from war, and from the democratic process, war is transformed into a spectator sport. As with sports, nothing ultimate is at stake, neither national survival nor the fate of the economy. 'War affords the pleasures of a spectacle, with the added thrill that it is real for someone, but not happily for the spectator' (Ignatieff, 2000: 191).

Death does pose other problems for documentary makers and news. It is difficult to show it in an authentic way without showing how banal or shocking it can be, but also to convey its importance. Cousins & Macdonald cite Bush & Captain Kleinschmidt writing about the First World War:

A modern battlefield really shows little or nothing, and the real scenes are diametrically opposed to the usual 'posed' battle scenes... In real life a man who has been hit by a bullet does not throw up his hands and rifle and then

fall in a theatrical fashion and roll a few times over. When he lies in the trenches and is hit, he barely lurches a few inches forward or quietly turns over on his side (Cousins & Macdonald, 2006: 29).

The showing of war wounded and dead on television raises ethical, moral and practical issues. Brothers writes that during the Vietnam war all three major television networks voluntarily forbade the use of graphic footage of American casualties to avoid offence to soldiers' relatives or to the public at large (Brothers, 1997: 204). She writes that in the Falklands war, 255 Britons died, 777 were wounded and there were 2000 Argentine casualties, but there were no pictures of British fatalities and virtually none shown on the Argentine side (1997: 2009). The BBC documentary contract with the MoD<sup>18</sup> does not say that the producer cannot film military fatalities or injuries, but that if the showing of the deaths is counter to the Official Secrets Act, the Ministry can request to have it removed. However, the army's rules about letting the family know before the death is announced means that in the news' arena of the liveness of events, the news is old before permissions can be obtained, so dead soldiers are seldom shown, if at all.

It might also be of worth examining the calls for pictures of death on television. Is the intention behind these demands to inform or persuade an audience? Morrison and Tumber argue that 'historically there is no evidence to suggest that showing the horrors of war act as a brake on existing wars or indeed make wars in the future less likely (1988:346), and would they be an appeal to the emotion as a rhetorical device using shock, horror and sentimentality, themselves devices which the media has been accused of engaging for entertainment rather than information (Carruthers 2000; Brothers 1997; Brown 2003). Likewise Ignatieff writes that 'war does not become illegitimate simply because citizens see carnage on their screens. It becomes illegitimate when the political reasons for it no longer convince (2000:187).

Death is ordinary, but there are also the demands of a story-teller, in how to differentiate 'one day's scene of aftermath from the hundreds of days before (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007:131). Gourevitch writes of the Rwanda massacre in

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18 The contract cited is based on the template used in *Fighting the War 2003*, and subsequent series for the BBC.

1994 ‘all massacres are created equal; the dead are innocent, the killers monstrous, the surrounding politics insane or nonexistent’ (Gourevitch, 1999: 186). There are also the considerations that the person who has died has a family who might be sitting at home watching his last moments on television. In the Falklands war the clip of a soldier being carried on a stretcher with his leg blown off was shown on the BBC, but not ITV (Morrison and Tumber 1988). David Nicholas said, ‘I thought it was not right that if you were sitting at home you could see your son writhing agony’ (Morrison & Tumber, 1988: 222).

The dealing of death by the media thus both distances it, but also strengthens the emotional aspect. As Lynn writes, ‘there is a sense of cause and sacrifice associated with war, that is not implied by a police effort’ (2003:320). The conventions and restraints of the discourse and the institution set rules as to how it is reported. In the next chapter I look at how the media attempts to report the soldier’s war and death and the difficulties of translating events from one discourse to another. This convergence effects the representation of the justification of war and the coverage of war and death.

## **2:8 War discourse; The Civilian and the Military**

When reporting war journalists as civilians are subject to impositions of the military, such as security restrictions, patriotic allegiances, and political and economic factors<sup>19</sup>, but in keeping with the thrust of this research, I look at the literature which examines how these are manifested, and at how the discourse of war reporting is affected. The basic problem for the media when reporting war is that most war, or the utility of force, is unjustifiable on legal, moral, or political grounds (Gray 2011). It is a ‘tortured and ecstatic rupture of all our laws and social conventions ... which are incompatible with the values we celebrate in peacetime’ (Coker, 2007: 45). If the aims of politics, law and morality are to protect people, war is fundamentally about killing people. It is mostly senseless, but part of the role of the media is to make sense of events. Gray writes:

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<sup>19</sup> See P.7.

The dilemma that good people sometimes need to be ready and able to resort to bad means is typically resolved in one or both of two ways. One is that the military tools of violence are washed clean enough by the legitimate and virtuous purposes for which they are applied. The other is that the evil of the death and destruction wrought by military force is mitigated by a variety of means—technical, tactical, operational, strategic, legal, ethical, and political (Gray 2011:2004).

The narrative of war as a battle of good and evil, or as an humanitarian quest are the tools of the former, and the means employed are the scientific and military discourse, and under these circumstances the role of the media is to explain this bizarre, nasty activity to those who do not participate in it but in whose name it is undertaken.

Lynn writes that a single society can harbour several discourses on war that vary by class, gender and profession (2003: xxi). To become soldiers, civilians are essentially being trained to kill as part of their profession, with all the forms of violence surrounding the act of killing. For them to be professionally competent, it has to become ‘normal’ behaviour, an activity far from the norm in the rest of society. This has to be explained to viewers from that society, value judgements of whether it was right or wrong aside. A programme maker or reporter has to cross discourses, and explain an event from one in the language and ‘normal’ parameters of another. The soldiers themselves are caught in this dilemma. In describing the killing of someone as part of their task as a soldier they use terms such as to ‘take out’, or to ‘slot’ the enemy, which is justifiable to them as part of their job, as ‘killing’ had a different connotation in a civilian discourse. Journalists and programme makers reporting from a civilian discourse also have this problem.

Morrison and Tumber write:

There is something incongruous in holding on to civilian notions of the sanctity of human life in a situation where the whole point of the exercise is to destroy as much life as possible in order to defeat the enemy. Death becomes a technical question, the conclusion of which is a framework of statements about the ability to kill, not a fine concern for individual life. Thus it is not just the scale of killing... but the lack of a civilian reality by which to hinge the significance of death (1988: 124).

The difficulty of showing the true horror of war without trivialising it, or explaining it sufficiently, especially in the time constraints of news can be considered self-censorship. John Danvan of ABC's Nightline stated 'I have never shown the viewer what it's really like; how horrible war is. And partly you can't show it, because you can never capture it' (Schechter, 2003: 255).

Likewise, the journalists' refusal to ask questions about the wider sense of the operation can be explained by the 'unrealistic' atmosphere of the whole operation which they describe as a kind of 'military Mad Hatter's Tea Party' (ibid: 125). Meaning is constrained within the activity itself, 'the rationality of which is structured into the *raison d'être* of military life'. The 'silence' of the journalist in reporting killings, and in the reporting of certain incidents can also perhaps be seen in this disparity of discourses. Events are reported merely as incidents which 'are part of the nastiness of war'. They become a feature when they happen out of the context of war, then they have a higher claim to be reported. (Morrison and Tumber, 1988: 112). Lynne writes:

should cultural needs for special forms of combat be great enough and reality unable to adjust to them, a society may go so far as to replace reality in whole or in part with 'perfected reality', which better adheres to ideals within the discourse. Such was the case during the Middle ages with the creation of the tournament (2003: 360).

This is not to excuse certain behaviour of the military, but perhaps to explain why some silences might occur, as in what is 'acceptable war', and in the way war is sanitised. It is the job of the military to perform violent deeds, or have the threat of violence sustaining their other operations. It becomes their everyday life. 'Military language constructs a coherent system for the military to get on with their violent job without having to confront or defend that violence in their daily language use, and that becomes the unremarkable language that audiences expect from the military' (Matheson, 2005: 20). However, the use of language by the military as propaganda should also be noted. Norton-Taylor points to the discourse celebrating military precision and control, where words such as 'blue on blue', 'collateral damage' and 'embedding' are used (2003).

Lynne states that the military also preserve practices which can be seen as replacing the realities of today's warfare, such as drill, ceremony and parades, which conform to the ideals of what war should be. When one discourse could not be satisfactorily explained, another with its own terminology was constructed. They have their own justification for what they do which can sit uncomfortably with a civilian, and it is these perhaps which often remain unquestioned by reporters who enter their discourse.

It is part of the media's role to cross these discourses, to translate and analyse them, and it might be in doing this that they contribute to the resulting discourse in ways not initially intended. If 'audiences came to the viewing experience with an understanding that factual content should be true to life' (Hill, 2007: 231), how can most of the audience know what is true to war? Most have no experience of war. In a documentary it is the things that are true to the life for a civilian audience which are highlighted to convey a feeling of authenticity, such as emotions, family ties, and loyalty, and which perhaps because of the paucity of other recognisably 'authentic' scenes, are given more prominence than in other programmes. The down-side of this desire to make more 'authentic' programmes, is that emphasising the shared human values of the soldier also has an effect on the 'support the troops' discourse mentioned by Lewis (2008).

When explaining war to an audience who on the whole know nothing of war, programme makers use rhetorical tools such as emotion which can contribute to the dominance of certain discourses. To make a programme which engages an audience, features such as identification and emotion are used. These features can also silence aspects such as a deeper analysis of the role of the soldier and a more critical questioning of the war.

A failure to cross discourses, to understand 'the reality' of war by the media was one of the reasons behind the idea of embedding, and a recurrent theme in the literature of the media in the Iraq war is about the practice of embedding. As stated, this research draws on Foucault's idea that the formation of a discourse is affected by and affects organisational practices, and the conditions which allow certain statements to emerge (Foucault 1972). The question is how the conditions of



reporting as an embed allow for a specific coverage to emerge, and prevented other reports from emerging, and I now look at the literature on embedding.

## **2: 9 Embedding in War**

The issue of how the journalists' autonomy was affected by embedding became one of the main criticisms of the coverage of the Iraq war, and might be seen to affect the coverage of the military in occupied Iraq as the security conditions meant that journalists were again often embedded with the military. Coverage of the war was seen (Brandenburg 2007, Boyd-Barrett 2004, Lewis et al 2006, Miller 2003) to have been affected by the journalistic practice of reporting from and being with military units during military operations. This research starts from the premise taken by Carruthers who asks whether it is 'standard journalistic news gathering and framing practices' which led to the media's supportiveness of war (Carruthers, 2000: 27) or whether it was specifically the practices of embedding. So this section looks at the explanations of how embedding gave rise to the dominance of certain issues in the coverage of the war, and failed to cover other issues.

The main criticisms of embedding were: the inability of the embeds to give a context to what they were reporting as they were tied to the military unit and military sources they were allocated to and could not get a bigger picture; the nature of the relationship between the journalists and their sources in that their dependency and emotional ties to the military allowed for a partiality towards the military; and that all of this effected the ideal of journalistic objectivity (Miller 2004: Tumber and Palmer, 2004: Brandenburg 2007). The continuous availability of exciting war footage from embeds also emphasises the process of war, rather than an analysis of war (Lewis et al 2006: Carpentier 2007), and the increasing access to information encouraged a focus on the action of the troops, so the story became all about winning and losing rather than a consideration of the context in which the war was fought (Lewis and Brooks 2004: Keeble 2007).

The presence of reporters with the military and the nature of the war itself combine to enhance the importance of the visual. Bell writes 'One of the damndest things

about warfare is that it is visually attractive. A battle at night can be a thing of terrible beauty...The devil has all the best fireworks (2008:231). These developments combine with the increasing importance of the visual in documentary and news in general<sup>20</sup>. In the section below<sup>21</sup> on the documentary genre I look at image as a rhetorical tool of imparting knowledge, but here examine the literature on the media coverage of war with reference to the image and embedding.

Zelizer (2004) writes that in times of war journalism turns to images. In war there are more images, visual representation is stronger, images gravitate more toward familiar depictions of the past, and they become bigger, bolder, more colourful, more memorable, dramatic and more shocking, but 'not necessarily newsworthy' (Zelizer, 2004: 121). Knightly notes this in the coverage of the Vietnam War where he writes 'The American viewer who hoped to learn something serious about Vietnam was subjected instead, to a television course in the techniques of war' (2003: 455). As in this later war the continuous feed of visual images by embedded journalists in Iraq helped produce this trend, and the coverage of war became the progress of war rather than an analysis of war, and questioned nothing but the success or otherwise of individual military operations (Lewis et al, 2006: 18).

In the debate on embedding and reporting war, it is not just the importance of the image which should be considered, but the nature of the image. One of the major criticisms of embedding is that by being tied to the military unit the majority of sources were soldiers, who on the whole were pro-war, thus alternatives to war were not represented. Criticism about sources is not new to the embedding practice. Carruthers (2000) states that the media approval for the resort to war in general derives from a bias in news-gathering towards powerful elite sources who 'themselves sanction war' (200:51). Entman (2004) also states that the general reliance on military or government sources in war, the priorities of facts over opinion and the need to file stories every day lead to an endorsement of war. In the case of the Iraq war the reliance on military sources meant that all the evidence was coming

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<sup>20</sup> See below section 2:11

<sup>21</sup> Section 3:1

from people who were ‘firmly in the pro-war camp’ (Lewis et al., 2006: 119), and with the lack of embeds elsewhere, only one perspective could be shown.

The dominance of one perspective is a difficult problem to overcome, and it is acknowledged to be a problem from those who cover war. Boyd-Barrett criticises embedded journalists for not reporting from the side of the Iraqis. ‘They sought few interviews with ordinary Iraqis, and were not embedded with Iraqi families’ (2007:102). There was a dearth of information from the Iraqi side, but practically it would have been very difficult for an embed to cover both sides. The C4 reporter Alex Thomson asks ‘Are there really people alive out there who seem to think you can attempt on-the-one-hand-but on the other journalism? ... you cannot stand in the middle of the battlefield for very long without incurring huge risk’ (as quoted in Keeble and Mair, 2010:14).

Schechter reports that 47% of the embedded reports described military action or the results. “While dramatic, the coverage is not graphic. Not a single story examined or showed pictures of people being hit by fired weapons’. (2003: 164). Again, practically, the probability of also being killed when filming others been hit by fired weapons is quite high. These practical problems affect the reporting, and are still difficult to surmount so will affect the reporting from Iraq post invasion. They should thus be taken into account when critiquing the coverage.

Another issue raised in the literature on embedding, and connected to the argument about the dominance of one perspective is the control of the journalists by the military. In the Falklands war, the media come under much criticism for their ‘sheep-like’ attitude. Knightly writes that the MoD was brilliant ‘censoring, suppressing and delaying dangerous news, releasing bad news in dribs and drabs so as to mollify its impact and projects its own image as the only real source of accurate information about what was happening... with the compliance of the media’ (Knightly 2003: 481) However Morrison and Tumber (1988) argue that for the most part correspondents were not obstructed<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> This view is backed up by a conversation I had with Colonel Chris Keeble who took command of 2 Battalion Parachute Regiment, after Colonel H Jones was killed in the Battle of Goose Green in the

Morrison and Tumber (1988) suggest that a reasonably well-defined role in the Falklands evolved for 'the participatory journalist', for example Max Hastings, who decided deliberately to assist the efforts of the Task Force by his writing, but as Tumber writes, 'it did not exclude him from being objective' (2004: 202). Tumber goes on to say that 'in certain circumstances the participant is likely to be more critical than their erstwhile 'objective' colleague, the observer (Tumber, 2004: 202). He argues that the structural environment of the institutions of reporting is restricted by economic and political factors that lead to a subjective outcome, (Schudson 1978), that objectivity is used as a strategic ritual allowing for the defence of the profession (Tuchman 1972) and that the separation of facts from analysis does not guarantee objectivity. Again, it is not just the nature of embedding which affects the coverage, but the standard factors which effect journalism in general, and particularly in times of war.

Regarding the gathering of information in the Falklands war, Morrison and Tumber write 'The problem was rather a logistical one. It was simply very difficult for them to find out at any moment who knew what' (1988:120). They also point out that for the Iraq war, the restrictions on filming were more to do with inability to move, operational security restrictions and issues of safety and fear (Lewis et al. 2006).

One of the main criticisms of news embedding is that the journalist loses his or her 'objectivity' (Miller 2003). The practice of embedding, of immersion in the world of those you are filming has been a long established practice in documentaries. It is a laudable practice in one genre, but seemingly not in the other, and I will examine this further in the section on genre. Documentarists, conscious of their responsibility to the 'scientific' expository art of documentary-making have been aware of the pitfalls of emotional dependence since Robert Flaherty spent months at a time with the Inuits to make *Nanook of the North* in 1922. He wrote:

They warmed my feet when they were cold, lit my cigarette when my hands were too numb to do it myself, they had taken care of me on three or four different expeditions over a period of ten years. My work had been built up

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Falklands. He said that he told the two radio reporters with him that they could report anything they liked as long as they went where the Paras did, and kept up.

along with them; I couldn't have done anything without them (as cited in Cousins and Macdonald, 2006: 43).

This type of ethnographic documentary is becoming rare today but Pawel Pawlinkowski who made *Vaclav Havel* (1988), *From Moscow to Pietushki* (1990) and *Dostoevsky's Travels* (1992) amongst other documentaries and feature films writes:

For me making a documentary involves a degree of schizophrenia: I try and enter the subject, see the world through its eyes, accept its logic, while at the same time maintaining an aesthetic and often ironic distance from it (Cousins and Macdonald, 2006: 451).

Morrison and Tumber found that of all the journalists, the broadcasters were most successful at retaining their independence, 'this was partly because the principles of 'balance' and 'impartiality' are more firmly entrenched with that medium than in print journalism and they were more often in touch with their offices' (1988: 105). It might also be that broadcast journalists tend to operate in pairs (cameraman and reporter), so they are not as dependent as the sole operators for companionship with the people they are filming. Tumber and Webster write that 'today's correspondent is less persuaded by appeal to 'my country right or wrong' and, if so disposed, there are likely 'to be many other correspondents in the combat zones from a variety of nationalities, so any unthinking reflection is likely to be contested' (2007: 68).

Stuart Ramsay from *Sky News* often embeds with British forces in Afghanistan, whilst his colleague Alex Crawford has embedded with the Taliban. Crawford states 'My reports aim to reflect the ground reality and not just the "message" either side wants to portray. It is a basic journalists' rule. Why should it be any different if you are embedded?' (Crawford, 2010: 41).

In the literature it is not just academics who are critical about embedding, although the military criticism is more operational than ideological, as perhaps to be expected taking the above arguments into account. The Ministry of Defence acknowledge that the embedding system during Telic 1 (The British term for the military invasion of Iraq) failed. They write that two systems were used, one with embeds at unit level 'observing the war through a straw' and the divisional Field Press Information

Centre (FPIC) where senior journalists and new media were placed with the promise of access to information from headquarters. Lt Colonel Kevin Stratford-Wright writes that the information access ‘failed to materialise’, and puts this down to ‘The problems were the ad-hoc nature of the Media Ops manning, thrown together at the last moment, and the tenuous communications between the FPIC staff and the HQ that knew the context...I understand that Media Ops was considered as one of the top ten worst things on TELIC 1 – quite an achievement’ (*MoD news*: 2007).

The practice of embedding did not end with the end of the official war in Iraq. With the deterioration in security for Western journalists, for those making the news and documentaries for British television, the only safe place to be was with the army or in the security of the Green Zone, or the secure compound of the BBC house in Baghdad. With pictures one is more restricted as the camera has to actually see locations and events, or the footage can be bought in. This was happening more and more in Iraq with footage being shot by local crews, or taken from local networks, especially the footage broadcast by the militias.

A feature of the occupation and Afghanistan more worrying perhaps, is the scarcity of embedded journalists, and the growing control by the Ministry of Defence. Stephen Grey quotes *The Telegraph’s* defence correspondent Thomas Harding ‘Dealing with the ministry of Defence is genuinely more stressful than coming under fire... we have been lied to and we have been censored’ (*The Guardian* 15 June 2009). There were large periods of crucial time in Iraq when no journalists were present, although I don’t know if that was because of decisions by the MoD or of the broadcaster. Dixon writes that military incompetence involves ‘a suppression or distortion of news from the front, usually rationalized as necessary for morale or security’ (Dixon, 1994: 153), and even David Loyn and Stephen Grey have been barred from being embedded<sup>23</sup>. Christina Lamb was also not allowed to embed with the military in Afghanistan from 2006-2008. Major General Andrew Stewart, commanding MND (SE) (Multi National Division South East) Dec 2003 to July 2004 reported to the Chilcot Inquiry that he embedded *Al Jazeera* for a short period ‘because they reported what they saw. I refused to have the BBC because they only

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<sup>23</sup> Both are senior reporters with much experience of war and reporting from Afghanistan and Asia.

reported what they wanted people here to hear, and those people did not affect me’ (Stewart, 2009: 21 ).

Jonathan Steele is quoted by Tumber & Webster as saying that he found in Iraq ‘the worst working conditions I have had to face in 40 years of foreign affairs reporting’ (2006: 26). Security is a growing issue for journalists and programme makers in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan *Al Jazeera* has been banned from Iraq and Afghanistan, the problems of access are increasingly worrying for programme makers.

The question of embedding is thus fraught with problems, the practical limitations of access to events outside the military arena, the pressure from the MoD, and limitation of sources all contribute to this. Yet, balanced with this is the danger for journalists not embedded, the professionalism and desire to get a story by the programme-maker which can counter the supposed feeling of attachment, and the ability of journalists to negotiate around contracts, another practice of journalism, not often seen by critics. Morrison and Tumber write:

Insufficient attention has been paid to how the journalist as an individual exercises his own judgement in negotiating his role... he no longer fits, or rather researchers cannot find a place for him in the grand indictment of the news as the reproduction of dominant ideology (2008: x).

Much of the criticism of the embedded reporting of war can be levied at television reporting in general, and not just as an outcome of embedding per se. Marsh states that in Afghanistan the ‘complexity, cause and effect are indeed missing but for reasons that have little to do with the constraints of embedding’ (Keeble and Mair 2101: 75). The authors say that the failings of journalism in this conflict are the usual ones:

daily journalism’s aversion to complexity; its centripetal tendency, dragging the apparent plurality of multiple outlets towards common framings; its inevitable preference for the striking event over the telling trend, and its eternal excuse, we’re just telling stories (ibid: 81).

The emphasis on the progress rather than the context of war, the dominance of spectacular imagery, identification with one side, and reliance on PR is not just

confined to or a symptom of embedded war reporting, and embedding as a documentary practice can offer strengths to programme-making. Many of the problems of embedding stated in the literature are perhaps those of journalism in general, and effects of the dominant discourses and products of the genre, as much as are attributable to the practice of embedding.

One of the criticisms of embedding was that it contributed to the perception that the Iraq war had been 'won' by the coalition. It is arguable that it is the media who decides whether a war has been won or not, thus a consideration of the term 'success' is of importance.

## **2: 10 Success in War**

In examining how the discourses of war reporting are manifested, it is not only the intrinsic knowledge contained that holds power, but also the words used. Words not only regulate, but control the meaning of this knowledge. In looking at the coverage and discourses of war it is difficult to avoid using the terms 'success' and 'failure'. This is partly because the phrases are frequently used by the media and by the soldiers quoted by the media, and also because it is intrinsic to the concept of war. Van Creveld writes 'War is a collective, exceptionally complicated extremely violent form of combat sport' (2008: 66). One side wins, and the other loses, and the actions of the military are measured against these two poles. In looking at the role of the British military and its coverage it is difficult to avoid judgement of these actions as it is often implicit in statements made by soldiers and commentators. There is also confusion as to the exact nature of the 'success' or 'failure'. Victory in battle might not be a success in other terms, or for other objectives. The journalist therefore has to specify the objective, which makes the task extremely complex.

The overall performance of the British military forms one of the main silences in the coverage. Gelpi et al. find that the public in the US will tolerate body bags if they see that the war is successful (2005/6), but they note that success is not measured in terms of body bags. It was determined by whether the coalition was 'winning hearts and minds' of the Iraqi people and they write that 'If the public ever loses that



underlying optimism, then the administration will find continuation of the war politically untenable' (Gelpi et al. 2005/6: 45)<sup>24</sup>.

As well as a consideration of the hearts and minds campaign I borrow Chenoweth's definition of success as meeting the full achievement of its stated goals, and a 'discernible effect on the outcome, such that the outcome was a direct result of the campaign's activities' (2011:14). So, the cited aim of the Iraq war as stated by the MoD is:

It remains our wish to see Iraq become a stable, united and law abiding state, within its present borders, co-operating with the international community, no longer posing a threat to its neighbours or to international security, abiding by all its international obligations and providing effective representative government for its own people (Mod 2003).

The titles of recent literature on the Iraq occupation states the authors' views. Steele's book (2008) 'Why they lost Iraq,' North's (2009) is titled 'The Ministry of Defeat', Ledwidge's (2011) 'Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan.' However, television coverage seems not to be so clear about defining the occupation.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, DeLanda, calls defining victory the 'squishy problem' (1991: 97). He asks is it 'casualty levels, ground gained, or the control of strategic objectives, and over what time period?' (DeLanda, 2005: 97). In addition to the winning hearts and minds, Gelpi et al (2005/6) found that the criteria for success stated by the public they questioned included a 'stable and democratic government', followed closely by 'Iraqis provide for their own security' and 'Iraqis able to live peaceful, normal everyday lives.' (ibid: 41). This coincides with the MoD aim above. As quoted in Chapter 2, Bhuta (2005) believes that war is justified if the outcome is seen as successful thus the media's definition of 'success' can also be considered bound to the justification for the war. It is thus important to consider these terms, and use them in the context of justification for the Iraq occupation.

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<sup>24</sup> The analysis of the events at the Jamiat police station on 19.9.05 is therefore important as the attack on the warriors by the populous can be seen as evidence that the British were not winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqis

The Pentagon's ban on the media showing body bags in the first Gulf war, as well as the Iraq war illustrates the US government's views about perceptions of success in war, and their acknowledgement of the power of the image. In the next section I look at the literature on the image. This is an extremely wide area of research, so I have selected that which is pertinent to television and relevant to my argument about its contribution to the power of a discourse.

## **2: 11 War and Television: the Power of the Image**

Television is primarily a visual medium. Thus the relationship between seeing and knowing is of some importance especially where the notion that argumentative discourse has undergone a 'visual turn', as image has come to replace words in the contemporary political landscape (Smith and McDonald. 2011). The transformation of the media driven by television as a primarily visual domain characterised by image and spectacle (DeLuca and Peoples 2002) is relevant to the argument about the dominance of emotion in visual representation. How news and documentary use pictures in the coverage of the British military is a fundamental part of this study, and how this use contributes to knowledge of an event based on emotion and distraction rather than rational analysis and deliberation is a major question in this study. Ekstrom writes that the medium of television:

lends itself to aesthetically appealing and dramatic representations but is less appropriate for logical and factual argumentation, discriminating descriptions of reality and in-depth analysis. Television is primarily a medium of sensations, pleasure and entertainment (2002: 262).

In the preceding chapter I looked at the various justifications for war, and Michalski and Gow write that image has an important role in the portrayal of the legitimacy of the war, as legitimacy is a function of the interaction of political, legal and strategic elements. Images cut through and define the detail (2007: 204), and can often combine the elements. As Brothers notes, photographs signify more than the sum of their surface parts (1997: 15). Sontag also stresses the importance of the image writing 'Industrial societies turn their citizens into image-junkies.... turn experience

itself into a way of seeing... an event has come to mean, precisely, something worth photographing' (1977: 24).

Television images have the potential for a multiple signification, 'they may be called to dignify as an index, and a signal, but also as an icon and or a symbol' (Chouliaraki, 2006: 57). Images are both indexical, but also carry an emotional understanding. Both can be interpreted differently. Barthes (1981) describes this as the 'active participation' of the viewer in producing the meaning/affect of the photograph. Pictures have different meanings to different people. Umberto Eco argues that the image and its framework of cultural reference are inextricably intertwined, that the viewer's 'ideological, ethical, religious standpoints, his psychological attitudes, his tastes, his value systems... constitute a patrimony of knowledge which interacts with the image and determines the selection of codes with which the image is read' (Eco in Brothers, 1997: 20). Memory is evoked by the visual, and the fusion of the personal memory and the media memory create a powerful connection with the past.

However pictures themselves do not tell the whole story. For Lewis (2001), what makes images powerful is their position in the news item and the ideas the viewers are ideologically attuned to receive. Viewers remembered facts which fitted into the dominant ideological framework for example that of a morally consistent United States government and military battling against a singularly immoral regime in Iraq, or Vietnam, Grenada or Panama (Lewis 2001). Zelizer also notes the key use of photographs as a tool for facilitating the accomplishment of political and military ends (2004: 130). For her, in images of war the news offers pictures that are consonant with already existing opinions of what war is, and she quotes Leroux as writing in the *Chicago Times*: 'It's as though all wars become at some level, the same war; all reaction that of a common humanity' (ibid: 124). Machill et al. (2007: 189) cite Ballstaedt in his studies of image-text ratio in television news productions and corresponding levels of communication, where he doubts that complex political information can be conveyed by television news at all. Like Zelizer (2004) and Lewis (2001) he thinks that television images only become understandable in relation to mostly abstract, invisible connections. Hallin also notes that 'most of the

time the audience sees what it is told it is seeing' (1989: 131). The ubiquitous use of anonymous soldiers as mentioned in the study by Woodward et al (2009) would support this argument, but also add the dimension of the embarrassment of the Iraq war to the reading of the image. Even when visual imagery was used in cases illustrating civilian and military casualties, humanitarian operations and the failure of law and order following the fall of Baghdad, Robinson et al argue that this did not translate into more substantive criticism of the war itself (2010: 175)<sup>25</sup>.

The narrative into which the images fit is important, but the pictures also have their own power. Sontag writes 'Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us' (Sontag, 2003: 89). The specific attributes of photography, such as materiality, ease of access and the frozen capture of time 'bypass the intellect and communicate directly with emotions' (Zelizer, 2004: 117), and it is this familiarity or haunting which can lead to faulty judgement, or which fill the space of knowing by feeling. Deleuze writes that the subtitle of *The Birth of the Clinic* was 'The Archaeology of the Gaze', and although Foucault later denounced this subtitle, 'the primacy of statements will never impede the historical irreducibility of the visible....The statement has primacy only because the visible has its own laws, an autonomy that links it to the statement' (Deleuze, 2006: 50). Image has its own power.

Visibilities are not defined by sight but are complexes of actions and passions, actions and reactions, multi-sensorial complexes, which emerge into the light of day. As Magritte says in a letter to Foucault, thought is what sees and can be described visibly (ibid: 59).

What is filmed is both index and icon. For Barthes, the photograph was both real and unreal. It is real because the photograph is not experienced as an illusion, but unreal because what it presents is a 'having been there', not a here now, but a there-then (Barthes, 1981: 45). Dai Vaughan states that the image reassures us not only that this is the way it looks, but 'more fundamentally, that an object of which this is a representation must have existed in the first place' (as quoted in Chanan, 2007: 52).

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25 See section 2:7 on death above.

This ties into the discourse of science surrounding the image. For Barthes the photograph holds two attributes, the *studium*, or the general sense of seeing which fits into the rules of framing and expectation, and the *punctum* ‘the prick of the unexpected...something in the image which fractures it, an accident, a point which bruises me, is poignant to me’ (Barthes, 1981: 27). Silverstone writes that for Barthes, news can hold no punctum, it can ‘shout, not wound’ (1999: 54), and the flow of moving images kill the meaning anyway.

However, it is perhaps the punctum of the moving news image which communicates directly with Zelizer’s emotions (2004), in the resemblance of a scene to a familiar photograph which stirs the emotions, and which place those in a familiar discourse. Sontag (1997) (argues that our sense of a distant past can be revised and constructed through the dissemination of new or unseen images, as for example the photo of the burned Iraqi soldier by Ken Jarecke from the First Gulf War (1991) which was used again in *The Observer* in the run up to the Iraq war in an article questioning a second invasion. It was perhaps the visual likeness of the hooded US soldiers in the Abu Ghraib torture pictures in 2005 to the Klu Klux Klan which added extra emotion to the event. For Hoskins the ‘human eyewitness memory and visual media connect and re-connect in influential ways to construct definitive and historical accounts of the past and to make sense of present events through those accounts’ (2004: 40). Reference to memories is not just of the similar, but as Hoskins shows, can be used to contrast the then with the now. He cites the perception by the media of the successful conclusion to the Gulf War being made more definitive by contrasting it to the failures of the war in Vietnam. This brings us back to Foucault, for whom words and the visible make up the discursive formations, not only in the materiality of the visible object, but in the way the objects are seen, and the words which put it into context.

Hoskins & O’Loughlin (2007) cite the example of the decapitation strike in Iraq in April 2003 where Nic Robertson’s voice-over meshes with the visuals to create meaning. Mellencamp writes of these visuals ‘because they were bad and barely decipherable, we assumed they must be real’ (Mellencamp, 2006: 122), but that it is more complex than that. Vision served sound and the ‘sights on television are

accompanied by varying facts and opinions, suggesting that words create the context that critically determine meaning. Thus seeing is not believing' (ibid).

Philo & Berry (2004) and Petley (2007) also note the importance of contextualising images, especially images from war. Petley writes that 'there certainly is evidence that large numbers of viewers fail to understand why the scenes of violence which they are witnessing are happening in the first place and are bewildered by them'(ibid: 173). The images need context for emotion to be felt.

Where emotion is invoked, the recurring question according to Hoskins and O'Loughlin is what are they, and whether the images amplify fear or shock, or nullify or contain such impact (2010: 21). They argue that the mediation of the images makes them more familiar, but that the truth-value of emotion is bolstered by the fact that spectators don't intend to feel touched. The truth value of emotion also contributes to the increasing use of image as a tool of rhetoric.

However, Blair (2004) suggests that arguments can be expressed visually, that they hold rhetorical properties. He writes 'visual arguments constitute the species of visual persuasion in which the visual elements overlie, accentuate, render vivid and immediate, and otherwise elevate in forcefulness a reason or set of reasons offered for modifying a belief' (ibid 2004: 50). Argumentative discourse has undergone a 'visual turn' as visual imagery has come to replace words in the contemporary political landscape

I have examined the power of the image, in its indexality and iconography. Its power also lies in its multiple interpretations and its call to memory which is examined in the section on documentary.

## **2:12. Summary**

In the introduction I stated that this study was an investigation into the manifestation of the discourses in war reporting. Eco writes that for Foucault power is 'not only a repression and prohibition, but is also incitement to discourse and production of knowledge' (1995:242). In this Chapter I look at the literature on the media's coverage of war, examining the discourses which have been incited in the

justification for war; that the war is a battle of good against evil, that war is humanitarian, and that war is justified because people are being killed, and it therefore must have a purpose. The discourse of war as a science was also considered, where the accuracy and impartiality of the machines become part of the weapons used in the justification of war. The literature on the emotions of war was examined both with reference to its use as a rhetorical tool and its relationship with and contribution to the power of the image. The power of repression has also been examined in the literature in the section on embedding.. How death has been approached by journalists as a repression of certain questions, but also as an incitement to emotionalism is also important in establishing justification for war. I conclude by considering the problem of ‘success’ and the importance of the image, which draws on topics already discussed such as emotionalism and science, but will also feature in the following discussions on genre.

It is to genre that I now turn; examining what features pertaining to documentary and to news might affect the coverage of the British military in Iraq, and also look at what has been written about the effects of war reporting on the genres themselves.

### **Chapter 3. What Genre?**

Having looked at the discourses through which wars are reported, I now look at the literature on the media form or genre by which it is reported, and at the similarities and differences in genre and format of news and documentaries. I am interested not only in what is covered and what not, but in what are the differences in these two genres and why this might be so. Historically documentary claims a relationship to both journalism and art (Nash 2011), and it is in this relationship that the power of the discourse is found which will have an influence on how the discourse is constructed and where this power to silence other voices may lie. In considering the practicalities of making programmes, the different demands of such things as time, format, and aesthetics of the genres cannot but have some influence on the discourse. I thus first look at what is meant by genre and I then move on to discuss the specifics of the documentary and news genre

Genre is originally a literary term, but its definition has been applied to film and television. Aristotle (1927) founded three principal methods of distinguishing genre. Dubrow says the definition lies in three factors: 'the act of choosing a genre involves making a number of implicit statements about one's reaction to that mode of literature, to the other writers who have adopted it and to the cultures that have respected it' (Dubrow, 1982:29). Therefore genre is not only designated by its subject, but is assigned by how the information is presented and how it is received. Ekstrom writes that genre may be defined as a 'system of codes, conventions and expectations' (2002: 277). I look at its codes and conventions, but do not cover the expectations, except to acknowledge that my analysis and conclusions about the genre are obviously informed by my experience and expectations of documentary.

The definition of genre can therefore be constructed by how the representation of reality is addressed. Representation is defined by its 'common cultural consensus' (Grant, 2007:22), that is the definition of genre given by previous practitioners as well as by readers and viewers; by its content, that is its production, iconography, style, setting, narrative construction and characters; but also by its effect upon the



viewer, as in horror, comedy or porn films. It is the recognition of the conventions<sup>26</sup> and expression of each genre which allows for an ‘economy of expression’ (Ibid, 2007: 8), and which carries extra meaning to war films. This impacts on documentaries about war as the conventions of the fictional genre can be carried into the documentary genre. In this way the genre allows us to see the unique properties of individual works by comparison of them with others that have similar qualities (Grant 2007), wherein lies their ability to evoke experiences from similar work (Dubrow 1982).

The classic genre story features a dramatic construction, ‘focusing on an individual hero who must overcome obstacles to achieving a goal’, which cast social debates and tensions into formulaic narratives with the actors performing ‘types’ rather than individual characters to bring narrative closure to all plot strands (Grant, 2007: 15-16). In this way genres have their own rules which are familiar and recognised. They can direct attention to what is significant; the meaning can be implied, but not fixed. The dramatic construction in the genre of war stories from this understanding will have a profound influence on other representations of war. War films also focus on the exploits of a few soldiers or sailors, even though the film may revolve round battle scenes that depict thousands, and contemporary politics are removed, so allowing the representations of the military to ‘function more freely as a metaphor for the nation’ (Stewart, 1996: 76).

However to return to the definition of genre, Turner believes that television genres are not constructed in relation to an Aristotelian model, that ‘individual programmes may evolve out of an originating premise that can itself be revised or shelved’ and that perhaps a more relevant way of defining programmes today is by format, rather than by genre (Turner, 2001: 6-7). This might be more pertinent to documentary which has always been difficult to define. Certainly the term documentary can encompass many different genres, and one programme might make use of a variety of genres. For example, documentaries about war might borrow from other genres such as film noir where noir narratives suggest a fatalistic, entrapping world in which action has already been determined, where the iconography includes puddles,

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<sup>26</sup> Grant describes conventions as ‘frequently used stylistic techniques or narrative devices typical (but not necessarily unique to particular generic traditions’ (2007:10).

rainwater, reflections, windows and blinking neon lights. It might also take from genres such as westerns or from horror films.

Turner writes that the hybridity of subject matter, formats, style, setting and character make it difficult to determine a specific type of programme which can be called a 'documentary genre' (2001). In perhaps much the same way as this research is looking at how the discourse on war effects and is effected by the genre, so the definition of the genre is in part constructed by how each genre affects and is effected by its own subject matter and discourse. I now look at what has been written about documentary to establish how this genre or format might construct the coverage of the subject matter.

### **3: 1 Documentary**

As seen in the preceding section, the definition of genre is loose and contested. The definition of documentary is just as debated, which in part contributes to the problems of defining documentary as a specific genre. Corner writes that documentary has always been defined in a 'loose, contingent kind of way' (2001: 125), and Nichols claims that documentaries 'adopt no fixed inventory of techniques, address no one set of issues, display one single set of forms or styles (2010: 21). Channan considers that documentaries should be regarded in the same way as Wittgenstein regarded games, as extended families 'A genre doesn't consist of a set of rules, but a family of works' (2007: 5).

For Mittel (2004) and Kahana (2008) television genres are constructed through production and reception processes. Hill argues that one way to categorize documentary is to consider the 'institutional settings within which documentary practices exist' (2007: 47). However, it is not only their category of title that is debated but also their claim to the real, to be part of a truth telling discourse. This claim carries issues of evidence and trust which are of great importance when undertaking a comparison of news and documentaries. With the claim to belong to 'the real' lies a responsibility to impart something of the real, as it does with news.

Hill suggests that it is ‘what is natural or true to life about a factual programme’ which becomes the ‘driver in genre evaluation’ (2007: 119). It is the evaluation of performance which determines one genre from another (ibid).

Winston (1993) asserts documentaries are linked to science, and their origin places them in this discipline. The origins of the documentary lay in the early nineteenth century when in France, Britain and the USA judges, doctors and criminologists were seeking new techniques to gain knowledge necessary to the administration of power (Tagg 1988). Prisoners were encouraged to write down their life stories, and dossiers and case histories were compiled. The police also began to take photographs as evidence. ‘The emergence of the ‘documentary’ as evidence of an individual ‘case’ was tied to the development of the examination and a certain disciplinary method and to that ‘crucial inversion of the political axis of individuation which is integral to surveillance’ (ibid 1988: 89). Thus from its inception the notion of a ‘truth’ in relation to the documentation of these lives was already bound to the political, economic and institutional regime which produced it. He writes:

We must forget the claims of a discredited documentary tradition to fight ‘for’ truth or ‘in favour’ of ‘truth’ and see that the battle is one that should be directed at the rules, operative in our society, according to which ‘true’ and ‘false representations are separated’ (ibid 1988: 94).

Truth is thus the product of discursive practices (Tagg 1988). Bruzzi (2000) also argues against the concept of a universal truth. She cites Linda Williams, ‘Films cannot reveal the truth of events, but only the ideologies and consciousness that construct competing truths’ (Bruzzi, 2000: 11). In the construction of the war story, it is thus not only the ‘truth’ of the discourse which is tested, but also the ‘truth’ of what the camera shows, the indexical nature of the object filmed.

Bill Nichols (1991) argues that both news and documentaries are involved in the ‘discourse of sobriety’ which include science, economics, politics, foreign policy; education, religion and welfare. Nichols states that ‘their (documentaries) discourse has an air of sobriety since it is seldom receptive to make-believe...they are the vehicles of domination and conscience, power and knowledge, desire and will’. However, he writes that the documentary has never been accepted as a full equal

(Nichols, 1991: 3). Bruzzi criticises Nichols' preoccupation with connotations of 'authority, gravity and probity' as the basis for the definition of documentary as a discourse of sobriety, as she queries the assumption that this implies a natural affinity between factual representation and earnestness of endeavour (Bruzzi 2000: 79). Cousins and Macdonald believe that documentary does all that art does; 'they give form to the chaos of life and make it meaningful' (2006: 5). Renov cites the 'fathers of documentary' as insisting that 'documentary is not news, but art' (Renov, 1993: 97).

Documentary claims to the 'real' are also subject to debate about the real. Dai Vaughan believes that documentaries offer the possibility of relating strongly to individual rather than general truth, and thereby of getting deeper, specific and a more sustained connection to particular realities (Vaughan 1999). Thus the 'truths' voiced by a documentary are more often those of the interior, than the exterior (Renov 2008). Renov believes that the private truths and inner realities have become 'the business of documentaries (ibid 2008:42). The emotional truth might be strong, but if the 'truth' about war is an individual truth, and responsibility for it lies with the individual or his immediate family, then the wider role of the state or society may be elided. However, Morrison and Tumber write that this genre, 'does not present nations or armies, but feelings and people' and that this 'de-contextualises and offers instead the immediacy of suffering as a shared attribute, capable of shared understanding' (1988: 348).

The claims of the 'individual truth' are tied to the concept that the 'truth' lies in the witness statements of the 'ordinary' person. Matheson and Allen write 'the citizen, the amateur, the individual, the passionately partisan, and the victim caught up in events all become categories of value, associated with claims to authenticity, the authority of personal experience' (2009: 107). Yet they also warn personal experience is often de-contextualized and ambiguous. Smaill believes that by acknowledging the suffering of the individual, attention is drawn to the broader social disparity or exploitation. She writes that documentaries 'harness the emotion of pain as an expression of social injury' (2010: 54). Smaill cites Gutierrez-Jones who notes that 'like the verb from 'to injure', injury marks an act against 'jure' against the law, rights and accepted privilege (2010: 55) so the personal becomes the

public and is widened out to encompass the public sphere. I discuss the discourse of the suffering soldier in chapter 8.

Bruzzi writes ‘Documentaries are performative acts whose truth comes into being only at the moment of filming’ (ibid 2000: 9). She is commenting more on the ‘reality’ of an event filmed, rather than an ‘ideological truth’, but it can be argued that it is the presentation of the reality of events, which make up the ‘truth’. For her, observational documentary’s claims to be pure truth damage it,

Rather it is the suggestion that it is the central dialectical relationship between content or unadulterated truth and representation which creates the dynamism, not destroys it... the core of direct cinema is the encounter before the camera, the moment when the film making process disrupts and intrudes upon the reality of the world it is documenting (ibid: 72).

Bruzzi interviewed various film-makers including Chris Terrill who was embedded on HMS Brilliant for 12 weeks in a war zone when making his series ‘*HMS Brilliant*’ (BBC1 1990). Terrill says:

Our stock in trade (in documentaries) has to be honesty; not necessarily truth, whatever truth is, truth is a construct. We deal in perceptual truth, personal truth, not absolute truth. Who deals in absolute truth? Nobody does. It’s continually an interpretation, a relating of events as we see them to our audience (Bruzzi, 2000: 90).

The documentary tradition of observational filming has had a profound effect on the establishment of the discourse of journalistic objectivity. This quality of ‘observation without intervention became one of the key claims of its truth-value’ (Chanan, 2007: 177). The questioning of the presence of a camera and crew, and the ‘truthful’ behaviour of the subjects being filmed in observational documentaries has done much to challenge this claim (Winston, 2000), but with the increase in ‘reality television’ there is now a debate about whether the ‘performative act’ or what is filmed can also contain some reality (see Bruzzi above). Chanan writes that in institutions (a setting for many docu-soap observational documentaries):

a place that has certain kinds of geographical limitations and where at least some of the people have well-established roles ... people do not significantly alter their behaviour for the camera

and the camera is therefore capable of capturing truths of human character... If people are made self conscious by the camera, then they will fall back on behaviour that is comfortable (2007: 227).

When Kennedy was being filmed for *Crisis* 1963 by the Drew Brothers he 'thought that he'd gone too far... He said he had forgotten the cameras were there'. (Chanan, 2007: 219). However, it can be argued that it is perhaps the presence of an observer as much as the camera which elicits a performance from those being filmed. Chanan cites the Heisenberg principle, which says not that the presence of the observer changes the behaviour of the observed, but that it introduces uncertainty... revelation through situation' (Chanan, 2007: 220). Although, Goffman (1959) says that we are all performing and judging the performance of others all the time, using props to help us in the performance of the self and our ongoing identity work ( Hills, 2007: 19). Jean Rouch maintained that the presence of the camera made people act in ways truer to their nature than might otherwise be the case, so instead of considering it a liability, he looked on it as a valuable catalytic agent, a revealer of inner truth (Barnouw, 1993: 253). When Bob Dylan was accused of acting in Pennebaker's film *Don't Look Back* (1967), Pennebaker replied that of course he was acting, Dylan was playing himself, and he was doing it very well (Chanan 2007: 220).

How much the contributors to these 'performative' documentaries act up and are thus not real in front of the camera is perhaps not the main point of interest, although whether they are seen to be 'true' or not contributes to their rhetorical power. Nichols writes that these documentaries address us emotionally and expressively, rather than factually, as it is the tradition of acting in the performance which brings heightened emotional involvement to a situation or role. These types of documentaries share a 'rebalancing and corrective tendency with autoethnography' in that they speak about 'ourselves to you' (Nichols, 2010: 205). They are thus an ideal genre to present soldiers as a strange tribe, persuading us about their way of life. Nichols writes, 'The performative documentary freely mixes expressive techniques that give texture and density to fiction with oratorical techniques for addressing social issues that neither science nor reason can resolve' (ibid: 206). We also learn from the 'experiential encounter' with them, rather from other sources such as experts or books (ibid:1010) as the knowledge is situated in them and their performance, and documentary becomes less about history than memory.

Corner talks of four functions of documentary (Corner 2000a). The first is that of 'the project of democratic civics', that is providing publicity for citizenship, the second is 'documentary as journalistic inquiry and exposition', the third is that of 'documentary as radical interrogation and alternative perspective' and the fourth and latest is the function of documentary as 'diversion'. The genre's connection to the real lies in its ability to relay information and knowledge. Documentaries relay information and knowledge through these different functions, and Beattie argues that traditionally, in the first three functions this knowledge is expressed through argument, often presented in the expository style as a 'telling' (Beattie 2008:5). However, the latest function of documentary display entertains in ways which produce pleasure and which rely on sensation as a vehicle of cognition and knowledge, rather than through acquired logical or rational argument. Beattie calls this documentary 'display' which 'entertains startles and excites in ways which produce pleasure' (ibid:5). This form of knowledge relates to a broader visual culture, that shows instead of tells. It is 'subjective, affective, visceral and sensuous' and draws on the relationship between sight and the imagination (ibid: 16). Part of this study is to find out how far this function of diversion and display has influenced the more traditional function of documentaries as expository works, and whether the genre of news has also been affected.

If documentaries are to claim to be purveyors of the real, then it is important at times to test this reality. Kahana writes that it is the moments of authenticity which 'function as guarantees, affirming its (the documentary's) value' (Kahana, 2008: 10). It is the tension between the reality of the example and the metaphysic of the universal which identifies a documentary. The example has to be real. Nichols states that documentaries tell stories which are plausible representations of what happened, rather than a reproduction of what happened or an imaginative interpretation of what might have happened. 'We judge a representation more by the nature of the pleasure it offers, the value of the insight it provides and the quality of the perspective it instils' (Nichols, 2010: 13).

With the increasing dominance of the performative documentary and dominance of an emotional discourse, for demands for a sensational (that is of the senses) rather than a rational response, documentaries become more representations than

reproduction, more a picture of the metaphysical universal than an example of the real, stimulating a desire to feel, but not to know. Nichols writes that power and responsibility reside in knowing (ibid: 41), but there is little responsibility demanded from feeling without knowing. Michalski and Gow write that in the discussion of war and the media:

it is image and experience rather than issues of accuracy in factual reporting and fictional depiction or their impact on policy making or on public opinion, that are salient in shaping and defining interpretation and understanding (Michalski and Gow, 2007: 6).

Both news and documentary claim to be accounts of the real. Grierson called documentary a creative form of actuality (1922). Nichols writes that actuality means a respect for the historical world, 'it refers to historical reality while representing it from a distinct perspective' (Nichols, 2010:6), and it is this historical world given by the Chilcot Inquiry that I will be comparing with the actuality of the documentaries to see how far the perspective has become a 'creative perspective' of the discourse.

### **3.2. Documentaries or News?**

The representation of the real is crucial in the identification of the genre, whether an item is 'news' or 'documentary'. Corner outlines a view of documentaries as a 'series of transformations (1996: 79-81), where the event is transformed firstly by the planning stage, where the locations, interviews archive clips and thematic emphases are chosen; then the transformation of the shooting stage, and finally the editing stage, where 'the combinatory logics of documentary are variously applied, narrative coherence is achieved, evaluations are established, emphases marked, closures made, moods set' (ibid), and it is in these 'transformations' that the documentary art of record is to be found. Nichols writes that film is not just an object for perception and expression, it is also the subject of perception and expression (1981: 36) and the 'voice' of the documentary is conveyed by spoken words, silences, intertitles, music, composition, editing tone and perspective (ibid:36).



One of the ways that Carroll differentiates between a work of art and a moving image is that it is a detached display, which Wartenberg interprets as meaning that 'there is a discontinuity between the space portrayed in the images and the physical space in which the viewer finds herself' (Wartenberg, 2010: 70). Although for Carroll (1996) the picture of the object, taken in the same space as the object is 'art', there is a physical and metaphysical closeness to the reality of the object, a separation of just the lens. The further away the viewer gets from the object via mediation, it can perhaps be argued, the closer the viewer gets to fiction, and it is perhaps in the mediation of this space, a space of physical and temporal distance where the producer and editor using the techniques of post production construct the interpretation or meaning of the 'reality' engineered, that that difference between news and documentary lie. Chouliaraki writes that the 'sense of distance born in the medium itself - visual editing, soundtrack, repetition, distinction between reality and fiction - presents the spectacle but not the authenticity' (2006: 25), but it is the spectacle that moves the emotions<sup>27</sup>. It is also the spectacle which appeals to the emotions.

It is thus in the 'transformations' and the production of the 'voice', in the 'creatively dense' construction of the programme, that is, in the process of mediation, that the differences in genre between news and documentary lie. However, the transformations as Corner (1996) depicts can be narrowed down. His stages of transformation take place in different locations, but these can be located in the edit suite. For example, a news item might contain an interview with a recently returned soldier and film him sitting on a sofa with his wife beside him. The interview would be cut to juxtapose a question, his answer and perhaps a reaction from the wife. However, a documentary could include flashbacks of events from archive footage from the time of war which are colour graded, and overlain with music. Separate film of the wife 'performing' an activity by herself might also be obtained to represent her 'aloneness' to intercut with the sequence. The meaning, memory and emotion is added and constructed in the edit suite. The spectacle and narrative construct lies in the transformation. It is in the distance between the event and the

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<sup>27</sup> See section 1:11

mediated spectacle, during its transformation, that the programme becomes a documentary, rather than news. Time is a luxury that documentary makers have in the making of the programme. The temporal gap between the event and the viewer is generally longer than in news, and the producer and editor have the time to construct complex meanings and contextualise the event. In these transformations and mediation, that the documentary can also construct the different connections between the individual and the particular realities contained in the event.

The difference between documentaries and news also lies in what Altheide (1987) lists as formats. Altheid notes that news tends to cover the *event*, whereas the coverage of the *topic* is more typical of documentaries. Bruzzi also distinguishes between 'events' and 'documentary' in her example of the Zapruder 22 seconds of film on the assassination of President Kennedy (Bruzzi, 2000: 13) By itself it is factually accurate, but she writes, 'it cannot reveal the motive or cause for the action it shows' (ibid:13). It is incomplete, and it is the function of a documentary to provide structure and meaning. In his study on the television coverage of terrorism in the United States and Great Britain, Altheide found that the event type focused on the visuals of the aftermath and the tactics of terrorism, whilst topic-type formats associated with interviews and documentary presentations included materials about purposes, goals and rationale (1987: 161). Visual action influences the pacing and arrangement of television news reports, and visuals encourage an event-led format. 'the narrative is tied to visual so that more thorough information about the relevance of an event to a broader topic or issue may actually be inhibited by the use of more visuals' (Altheide,1987: 165).

It can thus be seen that news and documentary can be classed as different genres, with news at one end of a scale, fiction at the other, and documentary in between. Documentaries allow for an interpretation of a variety of realities negotiated in the transformations from the filming to the viewing. Individual, interior and the represented truths can be expressed as well as the indexical truth of news. I also suggest that on this generic scale, a separate genre of News and Current Affairs documentaries lie between Documentaries and news, having attributes of both.

### **3.3. News and Current Affairs (NCA) Documentaries.**

In the research I include the long format programmes transmitted from News and Current Affairs as part of the documentary output. One way to categorize documentary 'is to consider the institutional setting within which documentary practices exist (Hill, 2007: 47). Michalski and Gow note the importance of the institutional setting as they refer to the pronounced shift from evening to morning with big breakfast shows completely outweighing the other branches of news and current affairs output in terms of revenue, where breakfast shows had hosts, mixing news with 'cute entertainment pieces' (2007:189). This had an impact on the format of News and Current Affairs (NCA) programmes. The institutional setting of News and Current Affairs is different from that of more traditional documentaries, although as with news and documentaries the subject matter and categories of programmes often cross over, which again adds to the confusion about the definition of a documentary. Hill classifies current affairs and investigations as a broad category which 'encompasses both long form journalism, political debate, consumer-based stories and investigative journalism (Hill, 2007: 5).

Michalski and Gow (2007) also note a difference between current affairs and documentary films, writing that the former are documentaries in the traditional sense of being actuality, or factually based films, but they 'are treated separately from films categorised as documentaries because of the increasing short-term focus they have' (ibid: 18). According to them, documentaries have a longer shelf life, educational benefits, and are made for the 'intrinsic merit of the stories to be told and what the film makers have to say about them' (ibid: 18). Corner makes a distinction between 'thick text' and 'thin text' documentary. The former is 'creatively dense', because of the use of such features as 'narrative design, subjective voice, symbolic suggestiveness and the dynamics of depicted action' (2001: 125). 'Thin text' documentaries, which perhaps are the documentaries from NCA 'work with a more directly reportorial and observational discourse'... an analysis 'close to that applied to news' (ibid: 125). Schlesinger et al write that current affairs programmes still tend to draw on the same cast of spokesmen and women used by news, but their casting is wider because of the time factor (1983: 40). The difference lies, they argue, in the way presenters perform their roles of chairing and interviewing. In the

current affairs programmes the reporters often present themselves as ‘populist spokesmen articulating what they take to be the prevailing fears and preoccupations of ‘ordinary viewers’ (ibid). They base their questions on ‘some supposed commonsense consensus on the issue’ which ‘places the discussion firmly within the parameters of the official perspective’ (ibid: 40). I will look at whether the discussion in the current affairs documentaries is within the ‘official perspective’ or whether alternative discourses intervene. Schlesinger et al (1983) also argue that the current affairs programmes increases the scope for alternative views (in relation to the news) to be articulated. Part of the research undertaken will look at these claims in the literature on News and Current Affairs documentaries, to discover what differences there are between these, the traditional documentaries and news, and how close they lie to the news genre.

In this section I state that news is closer to the simple recreation of actuality than documentaries, that it is less mediated and perhaps lies at one end of the scale of mediation with fiction at the other, with documentaries somewhere in between. I look at the debate about the epistemological claims for documentary, and their claims to a connection with the real which might be increasingly based on the visual and on the spectacle and hence on emotion and their performance, rather than the spoken, and more rational. It can perhaps be claimed that the same is happening in news with its coverage of live events so I look at the literature on the genre of news below.

### **3.4. News**

Much as documentary is the creative treatment of reality (Grierson 1922), news is seen as representation, interpretation and also a construction of reality, (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2007: Keeble 2004). The media constructs the space in which wars are fought and are the ways through which populations experience war (Thussu and Freedman 2003: Tumber & Palmer 2004: Shapiro 2007: Der Derian 2001). The literature I examine looks at the various models of news to examine who constructs the news, how this is done and then examines some of the features pertinent to its genre. These models are important as they help explain how the discourses are constructed in the circularity of power which gives authority to certain people to

speak, so constructing the discourse which allows them to speak. I put the literature about news models in the news section as the literature deals with journalistic news, but they are pertinent to all media.

Cottle (2006: 14) lists three paradigms of theoretical approach to news which sums up the literature succinctly. The first is the manufacturing consent model which incorporates the political economy model of Herman and Chomsky (1988). Their propaganda model argues that the media is essentially propagandist and is based on five media filters which they say explain why the media disseminate the views and values of the dominant political and economic interests. Dissent is filtered out by the private and concentrated ownership of the media; the media relies on advertising, and government news sources; it encounters 'flak' especially from government in order to curb any deviation, and finally, a deep-seated hatred of communism (later replaced with a pro-market ideology) in society acted as a force to deploy against any anti-capitalist or radical ideas.

The second is 'Media contest', which incorporates Hallin's theory of 'sphere of consensus' where the journalist's role is to serve as an advocate or celebrant of consensus values (Hallin, 1989: 116). For Hallin, journalists reflect the battles of policy fought out by the elite. He writes 'What compelled the journalist often compelled the policymakers as well...Power is exercised indirectly, through manipulation of symbols and routines of working life that those subject to it accept as their own' (1989: 24). Carruthers concurs and 'rejects the naive premise that the media simply mirror a world out there...they belong to socio-ethnic classes and ethnic groups... and they breathe a particular cultural air' (2000: 17.). Tumber and Palmer also cite Bennett's 'indexing hypothesis' where non-official sources only appear in news stories when their opinions are 'are already emerging in official circles (2004: 163). The three stages of this model are the 'sphere of consensus (Hallin 1989) or the elite-driven model (Robinson et al., 2010: 4) in which news media coverage is hypothesised to be supportive of government war aims; the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' (Hallin, 1989: 34), or 'Independent model' (Robinson et al., 2010:4) where the news media remain balanced toward events and produce negotiated coverage, although Robinson et al include some critical reporting. The third is the 'oppositional model (Robinson et al., 2010: 4), or Hallin's

‘sphere of deviance’ (ibid), whereby news media offer a profound challenge to the legitimacy and conduct of a conflict and generate oppositional coverage (Robinson et al., 2010:4).

This study looks at the events after the official end of the war, and Tumber and Palmer state that after the fall of Baghdad the media generally moved back to the ‘sphere of legitimate controversy’ where the debates about the war in the media reflected those going on within the elite. They also mention Mermin (1996) who accuses the media of maintaining the illusion of fulfilling the journalistic ideals of balance and objectivity, but only present the subject and question to debate the ‘ability of the government to achieve the goals it has set’ (Tumber and Palmer, 2004: 163) and only within the terms of the apparently settled policy debate. They point to the post invasion phase where they find evidence of this formulation even when the media were given space to question the implementation of the policy in Iraq (ibid: 165).

The third of Cottle’s paradigms is that of ‘media culture’, which acknowledges the ‘concentrations of economic and symbolic power located within the cultural industries’ but ‘is based fundamentally on the explication of ‘culture’ as the medium of social representation and engagement’ (2006: 25). This would include Hall’s culturalist approach which also combines elements of the political economic theory. A proponent of ‘media culture’ is Kellner, who writes:

I argue that media culture is a contested terrain across which key social groups and competing political ideologies struggle for dominance and that individuals live these struggles through the images, discourses, myths, and spectacles of media culture (1995: 2)

With regard to the manufacturing consent paradigm, Cottle argues that the reality is perhaps more complex than the theory would allow. The construction of the discourse is multi layered. Cottle writes ‘we need to pay more attention to the nature and forms of media visuals, talk and text and how these are organized into narratives and discourses that construct meanings, not simply reflect them’ (Cottle, 2006: 18). Likewise, with the political contest model, it perhaps doesn’t take into account how the media can itself influence events. Jacobs stresses the importance

of the 'news story', which he claims lies at the core of journalists professional activity and it is the basic forms of storytelling which 'help define the news genre' (Jacobs, 1996: 373). Cottle also points to the increasing importance of the story in news, writing that the focus of vision has shifted away from news sources to the structure of the story itself (2000: 438). The stories are fitted into patterns and the patterns draw on a re-occurrence of images which become part of the 'connective turn' which become part of a network in the particular discourse (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010).

The importance of the narrative and the images in news is emphasised by Ekstrom (2002) who finds that it is the image which actually decides what gets investigated and that interviews are carried out with a view to fitting them into the dramaturgical structure of the narrative. He looks at the practical, rather than the ideological construct of the news, and an important aspect to the theories of news, and which also perhaps reflects Foucault's stress on the practical effects on the discourse, is the organisational approach of Altheide (1974). He points out the two constraints in a media organisation, time and space which exclude or include stories. Cottle notes that news is a bureaucratic accomplishment, which 'ensures that sufficient amount of news, comprising a certain mix of news subjects are produced and packaged on time and to a pre-determined and professionally understood organizational form' (Cottle, 2000: 433). Cottle writes that the 'genre' of news is established by the 'mundane ritual forms routinely built into the characteristic subject selections, presentational formats, modes of address and cultural appeals' (ibid:443).

The 'reality' of news is mainly constructed with less complex meanings, as a 'thin text', hence the reliance on the simplicity of the visual, whereas documentaries are often more complex, with a greater temporal distance allowing the editor to form a more composite discursive structure. One of the criticisms of news (Greg and Philo 2003: Lewis 2006) is that it has to be turned round so quickly, that is that the temporal space has become so close to the event that no context or interpretation is given, and that without context there is no meaning.

Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2010) argue that developments in media technology also have an effect on the reporting of war resulting in a 'new media ecology'. They

also state that with the emergence of non-linear and non-hierarchical communication flows, power is more pluralised. This can limit the power of the military/government to control the media, and journalism practice is also cited as a technique to counter the effect of power. Hallin writes that the ‘professional ideology of journalism can act as a countervailing force to constraints’ (1994:13) such as reliance on elite sources, patriotism and ideology. Robinson et al call this the ‘professional autonomy thesis (2010:125) which argues that journalists can and do think independently of elite power by virtue of their professional commitment to journalistic norms of independence<sup>28</sup>. They cite examples from *Channel4 News* which they argue demonstrates the potential of journalists to overcome the constraints that are predicted to limit news media autonomy (Robinson et al., 2010: 128) such as patriotism and ideology. This can also be evidenced in documentaries such as *Fighting the War (BBC2 2003)*, *Restrepo (2010)* and *Armadillo (2011)* where embedded crews created films questioning official versions of events, war’s efficacy and they questioned the assumptions of the soldiers they were with, although perhaps not questioning the resort to war. Events can also occur which are outside the control of elites which create the conditions under which oppositional news media coverage can arise (Entman 2004), such as the Rodney King trial, or the Abu Ghraib photographs.

However, the news still deals with these events in a manner particular to its genre. Ekstrom argues that news is unusual, unexpected and about concrete events rather than about processes (2002). He states that many news reports are based on previously published accounts in other media. With reference to investigative journalism which perhaps falls into the remit of the NCA documentaries as well, reporters decide the story then gather the evidence to support its message; general truths are constructed out of individual non-representative cases and in the construction of exposures of ‘moral disorder’ journalists ‘find it natural to ignore circumstances that complicate and blur the issue’ (2002: 272).

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<sup>28</sup> as discussed in the section on embedding 2.9



In this section I look at the literature on the theories of news which informs debate on the construction of the discourse of news, suggesting who and why it is formed, with especial relevance to war. The complexity of the genre is noted, with the impact on the changing technology of news reporting. In the next section I look at how the technology has had an impact both on the genre of news and on the coverage of war in the 'liveness' of reporting.

### **3.5. The Impact of 'Liveness' on Genre**

The pressures of live reporting influences both content and practice. Hoskins & O'Loughlin state that the 'economy of liveness' has become a rule which constitutes the news discourse (2007:10), and thus has an impact on what can or cannot be reported. Hoskins writes 'news by its very nature is limited by time, its whole currency and value depends upon its recency' (Hoskins, 2004: 51). Liveness is therefore a contributory factor in the coverage of the British military in Iraq, and in this section I look at its literature.

CNN's Senior Reporter Christiane Amanpour states, 'our network has gotten (sic) away from taped packages; they think 'life' brings more spontaneity. 'Keep it moving, keep it moving' is what they tell us' (Seib, 2004: 61). Seib writes that the commitment to real time coverage in the 2003 Iraq war kept reporters tethered to their equipment. They could not stray far from their transmission gear and lost valuable information gathering time, 'cleaning out sand and recharging batteries'. A more important effect of the pressure of time, and the plethora of bulletins which had to be transmitted was the cost speed had on accuracy. Seib also writes 'In Iraq almost all the errors could have been avoided if a bit more time had been taken to check out the information before delivering it' (2004: 12).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Luostarinen cites the announcement from AFP four hours after the first attack of the First Gulf War on Jan 17<sup>th</sup> 1991 that allied forces had 'almost totally' wiped out the Iraqi air forces and the elite troops in Basra; that 18,000 tonnes of explosives were dropped, and that as many as 2,500 planes were said to have taken part in the first strike. However a Finnish military expert Pekka Visuri estimated that probably no more than 300 planes took part and they didn't have the technical facilities to carry even 2,000 tonnes of explosives (Luostarinen, 1992: 129).

The demands of 'liveness' in its relationship to 'reality' are still present in documentaries, but generally there is more time to reflect and investigate. As Brothers writes with reference to the showing of more realistic coverage of the deaths and wounded in the Falklands 'it was only in television documentaries broadcast long after the war that the fate of individual soldiers injured during the conflict could be publicly confronted and explored' (1991: 209). It is argued that 'live' events are seen as being more real than an actual portrayal of events themselves (Couldry, 2003: 96). The proximity to the events makes them seem more legitimate, especially when there is a witness to them in the shape of a reporter. Chouliaraki lists four ways that liveness adds to the sense of realism. These are the 'narrative realism'; the 'perceptual realism' based on the truth of what we see; the 'categorical realism', that is the reality of 'the heart evoked by strong feelings', and the 'ideological realism', that which appeals to our deep-rooted certainties about what the world should be like' (Chouliaraki, 2006: 74).

Hoskins and O'Loughlin point out that the technological advances have ushered in temporal and spatial transformations which have changed the nature of news, where the availability of the image and correspondent tends to increase the trend to linger on the dramatic and the visual at the expense of the context and detail (2007: 32). They add that talk is a key conveyor of liveness (ibid: 39) and this preponderance of image and talk contribute to the increasing dependence on sensation rather than knowledge of the actuality, as seen in documentary. If embodied talk is a feature of 'liveness', Le Landa and Peeples note that dissemination rather than dialogue has now become a 'characteristic of contemporary communication practices' (2002: 130). Thus the markers of a reality such as people talking about a subject as actuality, are perhaps being supplanted by the qualities belonging to the image which signal the reality of the event.

Hoskins and O'Loughlin also point out that the requirements of television news to maintain continuous output, and the reality of finding actual events to fill this requirement is 'resolved through the devices of speculation and repetition' (2007: 43). This therefore also affects factual accuracy and weakens the impact of the

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events. The understanding of an event is also affected by the news order which is dictated by the news value of recency (Hoskins2004). Hoskins notes that the most recent event is often placed first so overturning linear narrative or chronological order. Thus understanding of the event is lost where the chronology might better explain it.

I have looked at how liveness is seen to be a feature of reality and legitimacy to reporting, and how the demand for liveness can affect the coverage of war. As mentioned a feature of liveness is often the accompanying reporter who attests to the recentness of the event, and acts as a witness to the event which is seen to be taking place. In the section below I look at the role of the reporter in news, and how this role, and the increasing demands for celebrity personalities also affects the genre of news, and increasingly also documentaries.

### **3.6. The Reporter**

In television news the reporter is also often the producer so plays an important role in the production as well as the presentation of the item. However, for traditional documentaries, where the role of a reporter is not so established, and the producer/director largely stays behind the camera, the two functions of producer and presenter are more often separate. Like the discussion about the institutional origin of the genre, the historical development of the reporter and how this impacts on the genre would be worth further study, but is not part of this study.

As a witness, the news reporter is both a connection to the 'real' of an event as he is part of it, and can signpost the emotions required to forward an argument, or narrate a story. Nichols argues that the presence of a reporter who has to preserve the distance necessary to relay the disaster can suppress any sustained and totally absorbing response to the event. His presence just attests to the authenticity of the representation. In the Iraq War, the reporter was subject to the war in that he had to react to it, and his behaviour was largely affected by the war, but 'it is an authentication built on the inauthenticity of the reporter's own presence' (Nichols, 1991: 90). The reporter is not part of the war. Nichols writes that the reporter certifies the omnipresence of the authoring agency, the news apparatus, 'rather than

offering witness to the response of one human plight to the plight of another'. He also becomes a barrier to engagement with the events which are unfolding. Nichols goes on to say that the subjects of the report become victims and nameless examples, 'their representation provides the evidence of disaster, their anonymity licenses empathy and charity' (ibid: 91). The film maker represents a different function to those they represent which imposes constraints on their ability to interact with the other, and 'positions them within the text as the occupant of a historical discursive space paradoxically incommensurate with that of their subjects' (Nichols, 1991: 59). The 'distant' reporter can therefore be an important tool for countering the persuasive tool of identification and emotional connection.

However, the reporter also reacts to what is happening in the war. Hoskins & O'Loughlin report that the reporter inserts 'his own sensorial experience between the event and the viewer' (2007: 91). He describes what he feels, hears and sees, all sensorial reactions which contribute to the emotional discourse of the coverage. Reporters are also reduced to reacting to potential threats to themselves, to the extent that the journalists themselves become the story (Hoskins, 2004: 57). This can perhaps be best seen in the *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan* (Sky1 2008) series, where as an embed he participated in the battle action, and could articulate the fear and emotions experienced by the soldiers, but it can be argued that the actual story of the series was about Ross Kemp in Afghanistan, not a reporter's account of the military in Afghanistan. The soldiers became bit-parts in what was essentially a monologue by Kemp. This can also distance the actual story, that is, what is happening in the war, and also with the emphasis on the reporters as eye-witnesses, negates the need to show what could not be seen or shown (Hoskins, 2004: 127). One of the criticisms of the embedded reporters was that they did merge with the subjects they were reporting. Keeble writes that 'the modern embed... soon lost all distinction between warrior and correspondent and wrote and talked about 'we' with boring repetition' (2004: 49).<sup>30</sup> The war became as much about the reporters as it did about

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<sup>30</sup> This is perhaps a grammatical distinction. If you are in a location with other people and an event has affected all in the group, it is natural to say we, rather than specify each member of the group, especially when time is limited or the reporter is under some stress. As an embedded reporter, if you are being mortared, it is more natural to say 'We are under fire', rather than 'the soldiers are under

the soldiers, and this happened with reporters such as the BBC senior reporter John Simpson who was not officially embedded, although he travelled with his own private security detail, vehicles and permission from the military. The attack on Simpson became an event in the war and part of the blue on blue discourse of American ineptness, or malign intent.

The use of known reporters can also be seen as an example of a general trend where the style is more subjective or reflexive. Nichols argues that subjectivity has influenced the new 'soft news' and reporting style in local television news, with the auteur-like status of the reporter as personal witness and sometimes, trusted friend. He writes that subjectivity subverts the more traditional documentary and news objectivity, but lays its cards on the table. (Nichols 1991). Bruzzi states that the acknowledgement of the filmmaker's presence in a film is a means of accessing the personal and everyday (2000: 96), and it would be interesting to see how much this has influenced embedded news reporting where the reporter or filmmaker is perhaps also part of the performance which for Bruzzi has become a crucial way of establishing the credibility of the scene in documentaries:

what emerges is a new definition of authenticity, one that eschews the traditional adherence to an observation idea of the transparency of film and replaces this with a performative exchange between subject, film-makers, apparatus and spectators (ibid: 6).

The live reporter also adds authenticity to the programme in the fact that he is a witness, but also he brings the credibility of his presence as a 'celebrity' to the events he is reporting. Cashmore raises the point that the performance aspect has also become part of the role of the viewers, who have become participants in the celebrity production process (Cashmore, 2006: 5). Perhaps this performance aspect empowers them in the viewing process and thus increases their desire to watch reporters whose fame they have helped to create.

The increasing use of celebrity reporters has an impact on the style, nature, reading and context of the programme. It is now difficult to get a documentary

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fire, and so am I and the crew'. However, it's effect is to align the reporter with those he is being mortared with whether it is boring or not.

commissioned without having ‘talent’ attached, and is part of the increasing trend to front programmes with celebrities. This is perhaps in part a reflection of the desire to increase viewing figures, in the ‘saleability’ of the famous name (Cashmore, 2006), so for example, if Ross Kemp is to front a programme, the commissioners can argue that not only will viewers who are interested in the subject watch, but also viewers who might watch *Eastenders* (BBC1) would watch. The use of a reporter might also be a reflection of the difficulty of explaining one culture to another mentioned earlier in the section on the two discourses of war, in that commissioners might feel it necessary to have a familiar intermediary to explain one culture to another. Using a reporter also lessens the necessity for research time, in that it is not so important to find and establish strong central characters who can hold the story, as the reporter fulfils that role in such a series as *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan* (Sky 1 2008)

In examining the genre of documentary and news, I raise the question of the increasing adoption of performance in both genres, with the use of celebrity reporters, the demands of liveness and the increasing tendency to interest the imagination through sentiment rather than knowledge in programme making.

Corner (2001) writes about the ‘use’ value of documentaries as opposed to the ‘exchange value’ of the documentary where the post-documentary form takes it away from the ‘discourse of sobriety’ (Nichols 1991). This move seems to betray the strength and meaning of documentaries ‘as a reaction against the dominant culture of the multiplex, mired in a special-effects cornucopia of puerile wish-fulfilment, full of bully-boy violence and conspicuous destruction, fairytale romance and the obligatory happy ending...which deals with the actuality of the social and historical world’ (Chanan, 2007: 7). In their basis on reality they should also be a counter voice to power.

Authors such as Nichols (1991) Boltanski (1999) and Chouliaraki (2009) write that the emotional engagement of the viewer moves him from the position of viewer to participant, and ‘the move beyond observation to experience opens a space for contestation (Nichols 1991:194). In the coverage of war the contestation for this space becomes especially vulnerable to emotional manipulation.

Foucault writes: 'For a domain of action, a behaviour to enter the field of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it' (Foucault, 1997: 117). The role of documentaries should be to help initiate this 'problematic', therein lies their function and power. If documentaries do not ask the questions from knowledge of the real, to make subjects such as the occupation of war in Iraq uncertain, then what is their future role?

Issues of truth and power are clearly of concern to journalists and documentary makers. In the next section I look at Foucault's arguments about discourse, power and truth.

#### **Chapter 4. The Discourse, Power and Truth.**

Much of the literature on embedded journalists seems to contain accusations of complicity with the military and acquiescence to its power. As an embed, I knew it was not as simple as that. The restriction of economic and political factors which impact on the structural environment of the institutions of reporting (Tumber 2004:202), the contract signed with the MoD, a supposed emotional attachment to those being filmed have all been considered elsewhere. As stated, I am looking at the manifestations of the discourse, and my experience as a programme maker informs the choice of an appropriate theory of power in this research. In my experience of working for different organisations, films are not defined by the different institutions commissioning them<sup>31</sup>; the contract is a starting point for negotiation and not an end product<sup>32</sup>, and the professionalism and desire to get a story by the programme maker can counter the supposed feeling of attachment. Thus Foucault's explanation of discourse and its materiality, of power and truth, helped me understand how it was not just being an embed which subjected the journalist to certain rules and constraints, how it was possible for us to negotiate around military power structures, use networks of power, but, also be subjected to them<sup>33</sup>. Foucault thus informs my methodology and is vital to the conception of 'truth' for this work.

As stated in the introduction, this study looks at the news and documentary coverage of the British military in Iraq to establish the dominant discourse and identify what was not covered by the television media by looking at the evidence given at the Chilcot Inquiry. The first part of this study looks at the literature on the media and some of the discursive practices which constitute the conditions for existence of the discourse of the Iraq war and occupation. This chapter looks at Foucault's theory and his idea of discourse which defines *how* the media justifies the war in Iraq, as

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<sup>31</sup> I have made documentaries for C5, ITV, BBC, MBC, and Sky and the production, sources, and narrative have been roughly the same.

<sup>32</sup> See p.96 below

<sup>33</sup> See p88 below 'rather than look for a grand theory, or for 'the truth' of who had power over whom, Foucault suggests that one should rather consider the mechanisms which led to the dominance of a particular 'truth'.



well as *who* it allows to speak and of *what*. It thus touches on the methodology used in this work, but I also draw on the methodology of Corner et al. (1990) for the research undertaken.

I thus firstly interpret what I understand the discourse to be. I then examine what Foucault means by the object as this informs the objects of my research which are part of the discursive formations, such as the soldiers, the Ministry of Defence, the Occupation, embedded journalists, and the Chilcot Inquiry. I then look at how the discourse is unpicked, examining the archaeology and genealogy of the discourse. The archaeology is of use in the next chapter on methodology, and a summary of genealogy connects the archaeology to the discourse to power. Foucault writes that discourses are productive, they produce objects and define the truth, so I include a section on 'truth' and 'power'. I conclude by looking at the subject, as it is the power of the discourse which allows the subject to speak, and sets out the rules of who can speak and of what.

I use both Foucault's own writing and exegesis on Foucault's work, and where relevant draw on my own practice and examples. In the study of Foucault it is necessary to examine the discourse and materiality of the discourse, to 'study the work itself' (Foucault, 1991: 104) rather than just the author Foucault. He refers to Marx and Freud as 'founders of discursivity' (ibid: 116) and I would include himself in this term which necessitates the discourse around and of Foucault to be examined.

Foucault writes that discourses should be studied 'according to their modes of existence. The modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation' (Foucault 1991: 117) should all be studied. The practical mode of existence cannot therefore be separated from the theoretical application of their interpretation. The 'Foucauldian' innovation lies in the challenge of all status quo and the possibility of other alternative interpretations, and as a catalyst for possibilities. He offers no universal theories, but by suggesting alternatives he raises questions about fundamental beliefs and systems of values. Foucault writes:

My role is to raise questions... try to pose problems, to make them active, to display them in such a complexity that they can silence the prophets and lawgivers, all those who speak for others or to others (Foucault 1994: 288).

Andersen argues that Foucault's strengths lie in his 'periodisations, delimitation of discourses, monuments rather than documents and demonstrations of rupture', and that his analytical strategies are defined in relation to a specific research question or problem (Andersen, 2003: 2). So as Foucault suggests, it is perhaps of use to ask the questions and adapt his theory to that particular question. Foucault writes:

A book is made to be used in ways not defined by its writer. The more, new, possible or unexpected uses there are, the happier I shall be. ... All my books are little tool boxes. If people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner, or short-circuit, discredit systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged... so much the better (Foucault 1979:3).

This study therefore applies Foucault to the question above, which is how and why did the television media fail to tell the story of the British military's failure in Iraq. How did the discourse silence the voices which could have asked these questions, and give the power of truth to the statements which were heard? Before I unpack Foucault's tools to do this I will look at what Foucault means by discourse.

#### **4.1. What is a Discourse?**

A discourse is characterised by a 'delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts or theories' (Foucault, 1977: 199). Philo writes that for Foucault discourse is 'a social force which has a central role in what is constructed as real and therefore what is possible...discourse is crucial in explaining how the social subject is positioned and limited' (2007: 175). Discourses are not histories of concepts or thought, and have material effects. For example, Foucault looked at how torture was applied to bodies, with a material effect, but was directed by discourses, particularly those of Greek and Roman law and ethics (Foucault 1977). In the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, (1985a), Foucault examined how the dominant mode of discourse of the sixteenth century was informed by a desire to find the same in the different. 'This ultimately succeeded only in disclosing to consciousness the fact of the essential differentness among all particular things' (White, 1973: 35) so the 'age of the classique' of the 17<sup>th</sup> century became the age of classifications of tables, of relationships, that is of 'life, wealth and language'. This age hoped that if the

‘correct table of relationships could be discovered, one could manipulate life, wealth and language by the manipulation of the signs that signified them’ (Ibid: 35). Thus philology, biology and political economy were established, and the ‘discovery that things not only differ from one another, but differ internally within themselves... is the basis for that temporalization of the ‘order of things’ which Foucault ascribes to 19<sup>th</sup> century consciousness’ (White, 1973: 47). This might be ascribing an ideology to an age, which is counter to Foucault’s theory, but it is the effects of the scientific discourses of classification and order of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which established the practices of measure, inquiry and examination by institutions which Foucault argued manifested rules for establishing knowledge and exercising power.

The Victorian tendency in science to produce detailed tables is characteristic of the set of epistemes of the age. The sets of discourses make up the structures of an episteme (Foucault 1985a) which are a series of diagnoses which sanction the different discourses. Epistemes are constructed from sets of statements (enonces) grouped into different discourses or discursive frameworks (Mills, 1997: 60). They ‘do not succeed one another dialectically nor do they aggregate. They simply appear alongside one another (White, 1973: 27). In examining them it is thus difficult to know where to start, to pin-point the irruptions in a discourse, as they are not linear, with a cause and effect, but circular and multi-dimensional. They are fluid and draw upon existing discourses, often combining and overlapping with others. Every starting point must be questioned. There are only particular interpretations in discourse and therefore only objectifications comprising particular juxtapositions of discursive entities.

Discourses are discontinuous, that is they change over time. Discourses are historicized. Such a thing as ‘madness’ is not an objective fact, but appears only within a specific discursive formation that changes, and is itself changed over time<sup>34</sup>. For example when considering the discourse of femininity, Mills notes that the discourse changes because of women’s resistance to it and because of changes in

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<sup>34</sup> See for example section 7.2. below, on the discourse surrounding the terminology of the Iraqis which changed according to whether they were fighting the British, or being subsumed into the military humanitarian endeavours.

social structures. The discourse is not just about thought, but is something that you do, it is productive (Foucault 1972). It is an interactional relation of power, rather than an imposition of power. Foucault shows that the development of the idea of 'sins of the flesh' for example, was not something that exists in the mind, but was the result of a process of 'material events' (1972). In digging out the material events which lead to such an event, Mills cites the example of Victorian advice manuals (1997: 87) which encouraged women to be wives and mothers and not to read or engage in intellectual activity. Mention of this means there was a tendency for women to do the latter, indicators of resistance to the discourse of femininity. 'It is the variety of discourses, often in conflict with each other that force discourses to change in structure and content which make available to women and men spaces wherein they can resist and construct their own sense of self' (ibid : 94). Mills suggests that a Foucauldian analysis would focus on the conditions of acceptance of new ideas and would perhaps 'attempt to analyse those ideas and inventions which were not sanctioned by a society and which were not classified by society as acceptable within its frames of reference' (ibid: 73).

It might thus be that by identifying the dominant discourses in the occupation of Iraq with the demands to recognise that the soldiers are heroes, the indicators of resistance are the questions about the purpose of the occupation, and doubts about the deaths of both soldiers and Iraqis. In order to excavate the discourses Foucault suggests, I carry out an archaeology of the discourses in the coverage of the British military in Iraq.

#### **4.2. Archaeology of a Discourse**

. Archaeology is the illustration of 'well defined regularities' and their organisation which construct the discourse. Foucault writes 'The domain of things said is what is called the archive, the role of archaeology is to analyse that archive' (1972: 130). Dreyfus and Rabinow stress that the investigation proceeds without concern as to what the truth is. Archaeology 'must remain neutral as to the truth and meaning of the discursive systems it studies' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983: xxiv). The aim is not to assess the truth of a claim, but 'to understand how those claims came to be claims, how they are then deemed justified or otherwise within the targeted knowledge-

system and how some of them come to constitute knowledge within that system' (Prado, 1995: 25).

Archaeology can be regarded as the analysis of the system of unwritten rules which produces, organises and distributes the statement, that is the authorized utterance, as it occurs in an archive, that is a body of statements (Mills, 2003: 24). Thus, according to Kendall & Wickham (1999) when using Foucault's methods, one of the first things to do when examining a discourse is to recognise the discourse as a corpus of statements whose organisation is regular and systematic. Foucault gives an example of an algebraic formula which gives a template to get to the next number (1985a). The statements in a discourse are regular and systematic, they follow a template. So if one recognises and gets to know the formula of the corpus of statements, by recognising its pattern, one can discover the rules of the production of statements which make up the template, and thus the construction of the discourse. The discursive formation is made up of these rules of formation which establish objects, that is targets of investigation, and the enunciative modalities within the discourse establish the field of statements, that is, who can make the statements and perform the actions, or who does not say them, and what is not in the field of statements.

Foucault's (1985) archaeology examines these systems that establish statements (enonces) as events with their own conditions and domain of appearance; things, and discursive practices.. An event is:

Not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked 'other' (Foucault, 1985: 154).

The question Foucault asks is not of codes, but about events,

the law of existence of statements which rendered them possible... the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define the limits and forms of the sayable; the limits and forms of conservation, which utterances are destined to disappear without trace, or enter into memory and which will be recognized as valid or invalid, the limits and forms of reactivation, and the limits and forms of appropriation (Foucault 1991: 50).

This is summed up by Smart who describes what makes up the archive, and so what should be examined:

Literally what may be spoken of in discourse; what statements survive, disappear, get re-used, repressed or censored; which terms are recognized as valid, questionable, invalid; what relations exist between the system of present statements' and those of the past, or between the discourses of 'native' and foreign cultures; and what individuals, groups, or classes have access to particular kinds of discourse (Smart, 2002: 48).

In undertaking an archaeology of the discourse, not only the statements themselves must be looked at but also, who made them, and with what authority. Mills writes that for Foucault, statements are 'those utterances which have some institutional force and which are thus validated by some form of authority' (1997: 61) Foucault states that discourse is characterised by a 'delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts or theories' (1977: 199) The discourse fixes the 'field of vision' (Mills, 1997: 51) establishing what is worthy of attention or not; the statement is made by a subject who has to have the right to speak, and be acknowledged as such, and each act 'has to have embedded within it the parameters of the possible ways in which future statements can be made' (ibid: 51).

It is therefore important to look at what Foucault terms enunciative modalities of a discourse: who can make statements or perform actions, and the credibility or materiality of the subject who makes them. The particular discourses are structured by which concepts and statements are intelligible together,

How those statements were organized thematically, which of those statements counted as 'serious', who was empowered to speak seriously and what questions and procedures were relevant to assess the credibility of those statements that were taken seriously (Gutting, 1994: 93).

In examining the discourses of the occupation, it will thus be important to note who can make statements about the military, and which concepts are structured by these statements, such as the acceptance and comments that the soldiers are in Iraq for humanitarian purposes, as stated by the soldiers and the reporters concerned.

These historically situated fields of concomitance form part of the 'discursive formations' or 'formations of concepts' which also include the objects under

discussion, so the object only becomes relevant with the discursive formations that made it possible to talk about them.

Foucault asks how a discursive formation such as psychopathology is formed, and names three types of rule, the 'surfaces of emergence', 'or social and cultural areas in which a particular discursive formation makes its appearance' (Sheridan, 1980: 97). In the case of nineteenth century psychopathology, these were the family, the immediate social group, the work situation and the religious community. In the case of the formation of the discourse of the military in Iraq, the 'surface of emergence' could be the families of the soldier, especially the wives, widows and mothers, the soldiers themselves, and the media, with new surfaces of emergence arising after May 2003 with the anti-war groups, NGO's, Iraqis, and the religious communities, both Muslim and Christian.

The second kind of rule of formation is the 'authorities of delineation' which would be the government, the army and the law. Foucault writes 'The West has never had another system of representation, of formulation, and of analysis of power than that of the law, the system of the law' (Foucault, 2004: xvii). The debate around the law, the confusion of *jus ad bellum* (justice of the resort to war) and *jus in bello* (justice in the conduct of war) has major ramifications around the 'conditions of existence' of the discourse, and the shift in support for the war when the official war was being conducted, to questions about the legality of and opposition to the war after May 2003. This is also a factor in the discourse of the war as a humanitarian intervention, or bellicose illegal invasion of another sovereign state. What discourses normalise any killing as legal, and define some as more acceptable killings than others? In the light of the discourses surrounding war, both these statements and assumptions of what is perceived to be a 'just war', should be examined. The importance of the causes of war became more important as the political situation deteriorated in Iraq, and this discourse had a major effect on the representation of the military. When the body count rose, the families of the soldiers also became an authority of delineation.

The conditions of existence of past discourses discussed in chapter 2, and the justification for war and occupation will thus affect the programmes made about the British military in Iraq. The power of the system of law means that there has to be

justification for the military's presence, and the narration of events will be played out to fit into this discourse. So the war is justified, for humanitarian reasons, for reasons of security, or because soldiers are dying, and the discursive formations construct this object, that is the occupation.

### **4.3. Truth**

For Foucault, discourses are productive, in that they produce the objects of which they speak; they are constitutive in that they construct a particular version of the subject as being real, so define and establish what is 'truth' at particular moments (Carabine, 2001: 267).

Part of my research will be to ask Foucault's question 'What type of power is it that is capable of producing discourses of power that have, in a society like ours, such powerful effects?' (2004: 24) For Foucault, power constitutes discourse, and discourses construct truth. He writes:

Power ...institutionalises the search for the truth, professionalises it and rewards it. We have to produce truth in the same way, really that we have to produce wealth... truth lays down the law; it is the discourse of truth that decides, at least in part; it conveys and propels truth-effects (ibid: 25).

Different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false, and it is the claims to 'truth' which dominate the discourses of news and documentary. Hill writes, 'Truth claims are a defining characteristic of factuality' (2007: 216). Fairclough writes that 'truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' (1995: 49). The understanding of documentary is based on its truth claims. Thus it is important not only to look at who made the statement, but what was said and the constraints which prevented other statements from being uttered. The occasions on which they were made are also important.

With regard to the discourse of truth, the 'will to know' or the 'will to truth' is historically constituted in pre-Platonic Greek thought, according to Foucault (Barrett, 1991: 144). From seeing truth as a given property of the discourse of those in power, truth became a property of the referent of discourse, and it is from this,



argues Foucault, that the entire western ethos in which the will to truth is reinforced and renewed. For example, Foucault states that the legal discourse has increasingly abandoned a theory of justice as its justification and moved towards the 'externally guaranteed truth of sociological or medical knowledge. 'It is as if even the work of law could no longer be authorised, in our society, except by a discourse of truth' (1981: 55). Likewise the dominance of emotional truth as explained in section 2.6 and 3.1 is becoming a dominant truth in knowledge.

Foucault also writes of the humanist myth which subscribes to the belief that popular inquiry can produce objective truth (2004), a discourse subscribed to by the media and academia. Likewise any inquiry should not read a teleological motive into the present moment, that is the reading a meaning into an event from the viewpoint of an ideological standpoint of the present. Barrett argues that Foucault's genealogy seeks to establish not the 'anticipatory power of meaning' but the hazardous play of dominations. 'Emergence is not the culmination of historical process (even if things appear so) but merely the 'current episodes' of a series of events' (Barrett, 1991: 133). If one expects an 'objective truth' to arise from events and meanings, there is a danger of assigning meaning to random happenings. Foucault states:

Finally, though it is true that these discontinuous discursive series each have, within certain limits their regularity, it is undoubtedly no longer possible to establish links of mechanical causality or of ideal necessity between the elements which constitute them. We must accept the introduction of the *alea* (chance) as a category in the production of events (Foucault 1981: 69).

An example of this would be Miller's (2003) claim that the presence of 'tanks' at Heathrow in late 2002 were part of the government's move in the visible propaganda war leading up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. However, it might have just been chance, that as the nearest regiment to Heathrow, the Household Cavalry (who use light armoured reconnaissance vehicles) responded to the threat in the scimitar vehicles that they use as part of their function.

In much the same way Kendall & Wickham (1999) point out the importance of resisting technological determinism. They cite the argument posited by Lynn White (1962) that the invention of the stirrup is determinant in the advent of feudalism, in that it enabled warriors on horseback to be a much more effective fighting system,

but they were expensive so society was completely reorganised into a feudal form to support this elite fighting force. However, Kendall & Wickham note that the Franks had feudalism, not the Anglo Saxons who had the same fighting system prior to the Norman Conquest (1999: 78).

Foucault suggested that poverty might be an inevitable effect of capitalism, but it cannot be seen to be the aim of capitalism (Mills 2003: 50). He acknowledges that there is a temptation to invoke an historical constant, but argues that:

It is not a matter of emancipating truth from the very system of power (which is a chimera for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time (Foucault, 1980: 4).

So, rather than look for a grand theory, or for ‘the truth’ of who had power over whom, Foucault suggests that one should rather consider the mechanisms which led to the dominance of a particular ‘truth’. He writes ‘There was no such thing as a bourgeoisie that thought that madness should be excluded or that infantile sexuality had to be repressed... but there were mechanisms and techniques to keep sexuality under surveillance’ (2004: 33). Part of the question to ask regarding embedding would therefore be how far one truth was subverted, and how far it was the mechanisms and discourses in place which constructed another ‘truth’, both those of the army, and media.

Foucault himself warns against the temptation to invoke a ‘historical constant’, but that one should discover the

connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on which at a given moment establish what counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary. In this sense one is indeed effecting a sort of multiplication or pluralisation of causes (Mills, 2003: 115).

Fairclough argues there are important lines of causality to be considered. He writes:

To what effect do discursive changes constitute ...wider social or cultural changes as opposed to merely ‘reflecting them’, and how far therefore, can wider processes of change be researched through analysis of changing discursive practices? (1995: 55).

He asks how widespread and how effective are conscious efforts by institutions to adopt, for example, informal conversation practices which normally belong in the private sphere. Are they part of a wider discourse in the public domain or have they been adopted on the basis of calculations of their effectiveness and training? (ibid: 55). For example, the army has adopted certain management practices, some on the large scale, such as gender awareness, and interview techniques, to the bureaucratic level such as a formatted letter plan when writing to external organisations which must be adhered to. It would be interesting to establish whether the causes of these implementations were reflections of a changing discursive practice or a conscious effort by the army to modernise where they were caught up in an alternative discourse of working practices.

For Foucault ‘truth is always a perspectival discourse.... It is a truth that can be deployed only from its combat position, from the perspective of the sought-for-victory and ultimately ... of the survival of the speaking subject himself (2004: 52). This discourse means that ‘truth’ is identified with peace or neutrality, so that being on one side and not the other means one is in a better position to speak the truth. The reporter strives to speak from this middle ground, but according to Foucault, is also a subject within the discourse and as cited above, can only speak the truth by ‘suppressing error and irrationality, that is those statements that do not conform to method and cohere with the regime it establishes’ (Rouse, 1994: 103).<sup>35</sup>

The statements of a discourse will also indicate the relationships which exist between, and within particular discourses, and suggest which are the dominant discourses in the particular field of object. To return to the discourse of ‘war’ for example, Tony Blair told the Iraqis ‘We will liberate you. The day of your freedom draws near’ (*The Times* 28.3.2003). The war is being presented as a humanitarian episode, the rescue of a country from an evil dictator. Tony Blair obviously contributes to the discourse of a humanitarian war, and he is also a subject of the discourse, which I now examine.

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<sup>35</sup> The role of the reporter, and his increasing authority as a speaker in the discourse is discussed in the research chapter, section 8.2.

#### **4.4. Subjects in a discourse**

Giddens criticises Foucault in his history which has ‘no active subjects at all. It is history with the agency removed. The individuals who appear in Foucault’s analyses seem impotent to determine their own destinies’ (1987: 98). Foucault writes ‘One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework’ (1980: 115). This would seem not only to remove the role of individuals in history and society, but also that of what they do, and what happens, that is events. However, Stuart Hall (2002) argues ‘Foucault does not deny that things can have a real, material existence in the world. What he does argue is that ‘nothing has any meaning outside of discourse’ (Foucault 1985a). The concept of discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from. Hall states that ‘all discourses construct subject positions from which alone they make sense’ (Hall, 2002: 56).

Hall cites Foucault’s study of the picture *Las Meninas*, where there the audience is positioned as the subjects of the portrait who are only seen as a reflection behind the self-portrait of the artist painting them, and who are the focus of attention of the courtiers in the painting. Hall states, ‘the meaning of the picture is produced... through this complex inter-lay between presence (what you see, the visible) and absence... representation works as much through what is not shown, as through what is’. (Hall, 2002: 59). An important focus of the study of news and documentaries is what is not seen in them, but as I discuss in the chapter on documentaries<sup>36</sup>, the complex relationship between the camera, the contributors and the audience can affect the performance of those being filmed as does an awareness of the audience by those making the film.

The subject is both affected by and constructs the discourse. Hall states that in his later works Foucault ‘went so far as to give the subject a certain reflexive awareness of his or her own conduct, though this still stopped short of restoring the subject to his full sovereignty’ (Hall, 2002: 55). Foucault writes ‘It becomes a matter of

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<sup>36</sup> Section 3.I

analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse ...how under what conditions and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume and by obeying what rules?' (1991: 118).

Fairclough writes that the formation of the discourse is the relationship between 'specific institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classifications, modes of characterization (1994: 42). It is all these influences and structures of the discourse which produce both the speaker, and who can speak. It is the social subject that produces a statement, which 'is the function of the statement itself (Foucault, 1972: 95). A reporter will use the words, phrases and speak within the boundaries of what he/she knows he can say, and what has been determined by his position, job and tradition. It is the complexity of the discourse and its mutability which is persuasive, not only within one discourse, but that 'there can exist different and contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another opposing strategy (Foucault, 1981: 101-2).

The subject or the reporter for example, is constituted through a construction of enunciative modalities and subject positions which is held in place by the current rules of that discourse, such as the conveyor of the 'truth' for example (see above). It is therefore important to note and establish the rules of the discourse which can be identified by what the subject is saying, and who says them. Who says them is important for Foucault as it is the 'we', which is constructed through a series of exclusions (Anderson, 2003: 3). So, what is said by whom, or the 'materiality' of the statements must be examined when considering analysing the discourse, as it is the 'production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' which contribute to 'the truth' (Rabinow, 1984: 74), and contribute to the dominance of a particular discourse.

The discourses of gender, narration, the role of the reporter and others as the speaking subject, the boundaries of the field of possible objects, the language, the physicalities and practices of subjection such as timings and construction of spaces,

(especially when based in barracks), as all impacted on the ‘how’ and the ‘who’ of the dispersion of power. Foucault states:

We should not be asking subjects how, why and by what right they can agree to being subjugated, but showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects (2004: 45).

Fairclough (1995: 52) writes that two major technologies of power analysed by Foucault are ‘discipline’ with the technique of examination or observation, and confession, the ‘technique of subjectifying’ people (ibid: 52). To relate this to my experience, and to give a practical example of how I consider the subject in the discourse, not only were the soldier and media foci of this ‘modern order of discourse’ (ibid: 54), but myself and other reporters used these discursive practices to draw the interviewees into the domain of power of the media, so also contributing to the circularity of power. It was not only the discursive practice of interviewing which subjectified the soldier, both infantry and Colonel of the Regiment, but the constant presence of the embedded film crew, and the constant visibility of the soldiers to the film crew (and other soldiers) which kept the ‘individual subjected and allowed the individuals to be treated and ‘arranged’ like objects’ (Fairclough, 1995: 52). This ‘disciplinary gaze’ of the military and perhaps ‘voyeuristic’ gaze of the film crew both subjugates and makes subject to. It can be argued that the soldiers knew that at one time the finished film would be viewed by their commanders making the disciplinary gaze doubly effective.<sup>37</sup>

The interview process is very much like a confession, and part of the power relationship. Foucault writes:

The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship; for one does not confess without the presence of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes it and appreciates it and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console and reconcile (1979: 61-62).

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<sup>37</sup> This also lead to issues such as self censorship for the programme maker not wanting to broadcast a soldier’s views that might have career ramifications, or divulge security issues.

Tagg states ‘the camera is never merely an instrument... it arrives on the scene vested with a particular authority; authority to arrest, picture and transform daily life... This is not the authority of the camera but of the apparatus of the local state (and I would add institution) which deploys it and guarantees the authority of its images to stand as evidence or register a truth’ (1988: 130). The presence of this instrument of authority both sustains and counters the power of the institutions of the military. Foucault writes:

Although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network ‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another (1979: 176-177).

It was not only the disciplinary gaze which provided a vehicle for power, but also the architecture of the buildings, and army discipline under which many embedded journalists worked from May 2003 when filming with soldiers in barracks in Basra, and Baghdad. Foucault states:

Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed... Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore aimed at knowing, mastering and using (1991: 143).

The subjects of the discourse thus both contribute to the discourse and are subject to the power of the discourse. This power allows certain discourses and prevents others. It is seen as well as being physically manifest, and it is maintained by those both subject to the power of the military and media, and by those who impose it.

I next look at Foucault’s interpretation of power and how it relates to my subject of study.

#### **4.5 Power**

Foucault described power as the ‘endlessly repeated play of dominations’. Prado explains this as ‘everything that orders our lives and which appears natural to us in those lives. What emerges and gains dominance not only looks to be predetermined,

it is legitimized in terms of its apparent inevitability'. (Prado, 1995: 38). It is these dominant ideas, values, disciplines or institutions which I look at in this study. However, as Prado also points out, 'in a crucial sense Foucauldian power is not, in itself, anything at all... It is wholly relational ...it is the conditioning of ongoing actions by the totality of previous and concurrent actions' (1995: 67). Dreyfus and Rabinow point out that Foucault does not offer a theory of power (1982). He develops what he calls 'analytics' of power relations, a dynamic mapping of power-relations (Foucault, 1980: 82). It is a genealogical exercise, and cannot be intended or construed 'as a context-free, ahistorical, objective description' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 184).

*L'archeologie du savoir* was written before May 1968, commentators have noted that Foucault was affected by the events in France of this time (Sheridan 1980: Kritzman 1990). Sheridan writes that for many of the participants of the ferment, for many Communists, what would have been a successful outcome of the 'revolution' would have been the seizure of state power by 'the people'. However, what was truly revolutionary of these times was 'the realization that the state was not sufficiently in one place to be seized, that the state was everywhere and that therefore the 'revolution' had to be everywhere, ubiquitous as well as permanent' (Sheridan, 1980: 113). To this effect, Foucault writes that the state is not a concrete source of power. The state does not

have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor to speak frankly, this importance; maybe after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think (1991: 103).

Barrett notes that Foucault 'developed a concept of power that did not locate it in agencies, but saw it in terms of 'micro' operations of power and by means of strategies and technologies of power' (1991: 134). Kritzman states that the events of May 1968 showed Foucault the lesson that the oppression associated with power could not be 'located within a single socio-political apparatus' (1990: x).

This is not to deny that the state operates repressive power as sovereign body, but that 'the state for all the omnipotence of its apparatus, is far from being able to



occupy the whole field of actual power relations...the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations, 'the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology' (Gordon, 1980: 122).

The traditional conception of power as developed in *Discipline and Punish* is a coercive retraining force, which results in the physical restraint of the criminal or the imposition of pain or death. Likewise, Foucault conceded that there was a certain point in common between the juridical and the

liberal conception of political power and the Marxist conception of power, by which he meant 'power is taken to be a right, which one is able to possess like a commodity and which one can in consequence transfer or alienate, either wholly or practically through a legal act or through some act that establishes a right, such as takes place through cession of contract (Gordon 1980: 88).

For example, the contract signed by the embedded journalists and reporters with the MoD could be seen as an imposition of power over the media, and as a right demanded by the Ministry setting boundaries of power. However, Foucault writes also that the notion of repression is inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power.

In defining the effects of power as repression one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition... Power is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law (Foucault, 1980: 92-93).

Prado writes that 'what we normally take as archetypes of power are only instances of power's 'institutional crystallization', not of power itself' (1995: 75). Power can thus be resisted, but liberation from one relationship of domination, can lead to the immersion in another. For example, if an a unilateral took a photograph of a wounded or dying soldier, thus escaping the power and rules of the military, the photographer would still be subject to the same power of the constraints of 'good taste' as an embedded photographer, and subject to the same BBC guidelines about what can and cannot be shown on television, and still probably not be able to transmit the picture.

In Burawoy's study (1979) of a construction site where joiners stopped work to put pressure on the incompetent management to force it to organize the job more efficiently so that materials and supplies would come on site on time to enable them to work harder, and earn more bonus, effectively increased the management's control over them and thus exploit them more efficiently. Clegg, citing this study, calls it a view of power which consists not in identifying the putative 'real interests', but in the strategies and practices by which 'agents are recruited to views of their interests that align with the discursive field of force' that can be constructed by other agencies (1993: 37). Subjects happily colluded in intensifying their subjection. This study illustrates the material power of a dominant discourse and the danger of assigning motive to events, and adopting teleological causality. The outcome was that the management forced the joiners to work harder, but the stages by which this outcome was achieved was a complex, series of causes and not as simple as a one-way imposition of power or conscious intent.

For Foucault power 'induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse' (1980: 119). To apply this to the example of the contract signed by the embedded journalists, it also provided an authorised platform for a field of statements to emerge from a recognised and 'official' source which had to be accommodated and recognised by the military. Where they went, the embeds went, and the embeds had a contract giving them the 'legal' right to report. In the face of hostility from some military commanders, this 'right' could be a useful negotiating tool. Where they might normally have automatically barred any media, the presence of the military PR and the recognition of the status of embeds allowed the journalist some access. Knightley (1995) mentions Drew Middleton the military correspondent of the *New York Times* in the Vietnam War who said that because there were no censors in that war, people were more wary of talking to reporters. The presence of the military press officers, lifted responsibility for the statement from the soldier making it to the officer who was seen to be giving permission for that soldier to speak. As Prado writes, power is enabling, 'the distribution or organization of some of the force-relations will facilitate or promote some actions and inhibit others' (1995: 108)

In *Discipline and Punish* (1991a) Foucault looks at how the legal machinery of penal methods and social sciences were not just part of a political tactic, but were a

technique for the exercise of power, where the ‘power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity’ (Foucault, 1991a: 23). Sheridan writes that for Foucault, ‘punitive mechanisms must be regarded not only in negative terms, as repression, but also in terms of their possible positive effects, as part of a complex social function’ (1980: 138).

The productive nature of power is also examined in the *History of Sexuality, Vol 1* (1979) where the repression of children’s sexuality in the nineteenth century and the attempts to regulate children’s masturbation produced the very sexuality that they were trying to eradicate. ‘The sense of surveillance of children and the treating of masturbation as an epidemic entailed a certain vigilance and therefore a certain awareness and foregrounding of sexuality’ (Mills, 1997: 37). Foucault argues that the ‘new methods of power (are) not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control’ (Foucault, 1980: 89). Foucault showed how the regulation of sexuality is not imposed through coercion, but ‘through the shaping of perceptions, desires and agents themselves’ (Prado, 1995: 90). What became ‘normal sexuality’ was heterosexual intercourse, sanctioned by the legal proscription of ‘unnatural’ homosexual sodomy, where subjects came to believe that their desires were manifestations of their own nature.

In these interpretations of power in *Discipline and Punish*, and *The History of Sexuality*, power could be read as an imposition of constraints, but Prado (1995) emphasises that they are not conspiratorial, that is the where the imposition of power is reflectively or unreflectively deliberate; power is impersonal. It is not the ‘privilege’ of a dominant class which exercises it actively upon a passive dominant class (Sheridan, 1980: 139). Power is not unitary, it is a ‘complex network of ‘micro-powers’ so each ‘localized struggle induces effects on the entire network’.

Thus resistance is internal to power: ‘resistance is always to particular constraints that enable some compartments and inhibit others’ (Prado: 72). So, as power is impersonal, individuals are produced by and exist in power-relations. Power constrains actions by providing a ‘field of possibilities’ regarding behaviour. This

behaviour is constrained and constructed by an agent's self-image, beliefs and values all of which are set up by and in the network of power relations.

After the Falklands conflict Morrison & Tumber wrote that it is 'essential to get to grips with people as operative within a system rather than operators of a system', (1988: xi) and that to find out how journalists operated gives a

sense of reality to proceedings rather than some imagined account of what the journalist ought to have been doing and how they should have viewed events according to say, some creed of abhorrence of war (ibid: xi).

As part of my examination of the production of material I would like to consider this and to consider how Foucault's theory of power can be applied to the practical materiality of the relationships of power in the role of the soldier and reporter. As Morrison & Tumber also state:

Insufficient attention has been paid to how the journalist as an individual politicising of research in the area of mass communications has meant that the journalist as news gatherer has been pushed out of sight... he no longer fits, or rather researchers cannot find a place for him, in the grand indictment of the news as the reproduction of dominant ideology (ibid: x).

The interpretation that power was imposed on the media by the military or by the government as a unity, or that the reporters as part of that elite consciously concurred, does not reflect the complexity of the battles fought, games played and on reflection, the subjection of embeds to the dominant discourses. Barrett writes that for Foucault 'power relations can be heterogeneous rather than simply adversarial' (1991: 137), and as Foucault states it is in the intersections of these networks that power can be resisted. For Barrett, the word 'how' is the key to Foucault's concept of power.

Who is making decisions for me? Who is preventing me from doing this and telling me to do that? We can only study the who of power, in conjunction with the 'how'; the strategies, networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way it was (Barrett, 1991: 136).

Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application (Foucault 1980: 98) but it is through individuals that power can also be resisted. Foucault writes ‘There is no power without potential refusal or revolt’ (1990: 83)

Foucault states that power is not a substance, but is ‘only a certain type of relations between individuals’ (Kritzman, 1990: 83). Power is defined as ‘actions on other’s actions’ according to Gordon (1991: 5). It is never a fixed and closed regime, but rather an endless and open strategic game. Foucault writes that the relational character of power interactions plays the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. ‘These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network’ (1978: 95). Power is constituted by those who support and resist it. Flynn states that every exercise of power is accompanied by, or gives rise to resistance, and compares it to Sartre, whose maxim was ‘that we can always make something out of what we have been made into’ (Flynn, 1994: 35). This power relationship was never as simple as being subject to one form of oppression.

Foucault’s theory of the complexity of power shows us that conclusions as to why certain facts, and issues were not covered by the media as being due merely to the subjugation of journalists by a unified military power, or to the process of being embedded are too simple. The complex network of powers that allowed certain discourses and prohibited others, both for embedded journalists and for other journalists covering the occupation, and the system and constraints of the genre they were creating, would all contribute to what was constructed. From 2004 the formal war was over in Iraq, and with it the long term embedding of journalists with the military. Part of this study will look at the reporting from Iraq to question whether some of the criticisms levelled at embeds, could still be applied to the later coverage and therefore draw conclusions as to the nature of the discourse and whether the constraints on journalists comes from the practice of embedding or from the field of possibilities available to journalists operating in a Foucauldian discourse.

#### **4.6. Summary**

The aim of my research is to look at how the media via documentaries and news, has constructed and represented the military in Iraq, at how they have interpreted their

role, their function and purpose, what they have not pictured, and to some extent why they have not done this. If I am analysing both what is being transmitted, and why, and how one discourse is favoured over another as a reflection of power relationships, as stated, a more sophisticated interpretation is needed than just an analysis of what is being said read simply as a top down relationship of power<sup>38</sup>. Fairclough writes that changing discourse practices ‘contribute to knowledge, social relations, and social identities, and one needs a conception of discourse and a method of analysis which attends to the interplay of these three’ (1994: 8). As well as examining the discourses I look at the format of the different genres of news and documentaries, and identify how the construction of the format both contributed to and prohibited the formation of various discourses.

The discourse of news and documentary will be considered. Hoskins and O’Loughlin note that news has all the features of a Foucauldian discourse, in that it is a system of statements in which some things can be said and others cannot, norms about what constitutes news, what counts as facts, and what is litigious (2007: 10). As a discourse it also produces roles, that of the anchor, reporter, expert and witness. Foucault’s ideas about truth must also be considered with reference to this study of genre, in that it informs its relationship to reality, and truth as a defining principle in news and documentaries.

Hall writes that for Foucault, discourse is about language and practice (Hall, 2002: 72). This will mean looking at the language used when studying the news and documentaries, but also examining evidence of the practices which surface from the literature on the Gulf wars, the military, news and documentary, such as ‘institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality and philanthropy (Hall, 2002: 75). Both Lewis (2006) and Carruthers (2000) point out that in the Iraq war, and Vietnam war respectively it is the non-discursive practices, the journalistic routines, and practices which shaped the message of the reporting, and persuaded people to support the war. I will look at these both in the section on the communicative design in both news and documentaries, and in the section on news and documentaries.

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<sup>38</sup> See introduction p.6 on limitations of power,

To enable a clearer practical application of this methodology I have borrowed Corner et al's study of three documentaries (1990), and now look at how I apply this framework with the methodology just considered.

## **Chapter 5. Methodology**

Foucault states that his work should be used as a tool, as an enabler to examine the discourse which should not be considered as a methodology in itself. I have thus incorporated the methodology developed by Corner et al. (1990). They look at two documentaries made for the BBC, *Uncertain Legacy* (Part 3 of a series, Taming the Dragon on BBC2, 22/10/1987) and *Heart of the Matter* (BBC2, 18/6/1989), and a film made by the CEGB, *Energy, the Nuclear Option* (1987). The format and production are similar to the documentaries selected in this study. 'Expert knowledge' is central to most of the issues to be mediated in their study. They also note that the programmes they analyse were made after the Chernobyl disaster when public confidence in the industry produced a 'situation in which journalistic attitudes towards 'official' positions were possibly more confident in their scepticism and interrogator vigour than was the case in other areas of public policy' (Corner et al., 1990: 2).

It can be argued that similarities could be found in the coverage of the British military in Iraq with the change in attitude towards the war after the invasion and the reliance on military experts to inform an audience as to what is happening in Iraq. Corner et al.'s study of the themes, the rhetorical use of the visuals and aesthetics, and the structural format of the programmes seem to be the most inclusive way to analyse expository documentaries with an argument at the heart of the exposition.

In their study Corner et al. (1990) apply three elements to analyse the text. These are thematic development/framing, communicative design and visual aspects. The literature in Chapter 2 shows that the theme of a programme is of great importance in establishing the cause of the war and justification for the occupation. In looking at the literature on news and documentaries I examine how the format and aesthetics also play a part in the construction of the discourse. I further analyse the chosen programmes looking at the discourses, where the irruptions and changes in narrative template have occurred, and whether these occur in news as well as documentary. Under the title of 'communicative design' I look at the format of both genres to establish what effect this has on the discourse and also at the visual and aesthetic content.



## **5.1 Thematic development.**

Corner et al. (1990) suggest first identifying the ‘thematic development’ in a programme. Thus the archaeology of the statements is still considered, but after identifying statements, their theme is established, so indicating which aspects of the debate are fore-grounded and how they are treated (Corner et al., 1990:10).

Andersen also comments that it is not possible to define the discursive formation before the multiple themes are looked at (Andersen, 2003:13).

The themes looked at in Corner et al.’s study (1990) are ‘proof and probability’ with an appeal to scientific rationality for both sides of the debate (ibid: 33), the use of ‘ordinary’ accounts to supply sceptical pressure to aspects of expertise (ibid:38) and the idea of a ‘threat’ as a powerful metonymic discourse (ibid:42). The reason for war and the reasons for the occupation is a major theme in this research, incorporating the scientific discourse of the rationality of weapons and war. Similar to Corner et al.’s study, and discussed in section 2.6, the use of the ‘ordinary’ soldier, both as a contributor to the emotional discourse and as a speaker of ‘truth’ will be examined. Other narrative themes will also be examined such as those mentioned in Chapter 2, and it is these themes around which the programmes are constructed which Corner et al. (1990) refer to as thematic development, that is which aspects are foregrounded and how they are treated.

I use Corner’s terminology of a ‘theme’ which I understand to be the central idea or subject being written or spoken about. Themes can fit within a frame, which is a structure of concepts.

Gitlin defines frames as:

largely unspoken and unacknowledged, (they) organise the world both for journalists who report it and in some important degree for us who rely on their reports (1980: 7).

Frames are constructed by the discourse. Weedon writes that discourses

Are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (1987:108).

So both themes and frames must be identified to examine the discourse.

In their study of two protests in West Germany Gerhards and Rucht (1992) identify three frames used by the media. These are diagnostic framing, that is, identifying a problem and attributing blame and causality; prognostic framing, that is specifying what needs to be done, and motivational framing, that is the call to arms to fix the situation. This narrative structure would inform the framing. Fairclough (1995: 92) suggests looking at the framing element, and the situating element which define the narratives in the rest of the programme, and the parameters of the events narrated. He also suggests focusing on the events, and the orientations of the narrative, thus seeing what the actual narrative is about, and discovering how empathy has been generated towards certain characters. The framing element will include the range of arguments which existed at the time. It will also include the 'absence or presence of explanations and the manner in which some were highlighted' (Philo, 2007: 179). The range of arguments existing at the time will be part of the archaeology of the discourse, and hopefully identify where the frame's origins are sedimented. For example Corner et al. note how the nuclear programmes in their study were connected with scientific discussions of causation in the nuclear debate (1990: 33).

Assumptions of 'truth' may also help to identify the 'sedimented' origins of the frame. Culler (Culler 1975 in Silverstone, 1999: 44) mentions the question of vraisemblance, 'the accessibility of the texts that are appropriated on their transparency, on their naturalness,' and distinguishes five ways they are produced. These are: the claims to be representing the real world; the representation and dependence upon shared cultural knowledge, for example the presence of cultural stereotypes. The third way mentioned is a kind of second order naturalization in which texts refer to themselves as artificial, but as a result, reclaim their authenticity, for example the setting of the television news in a working newsroom. The final ways texts are sedimented is their dependence on genre, and their intertextuality, which is often through parody, irony pastiche or reference to other content or form which claims a certain kind of naturalness.

Fairclough also points to the use of 'presuppositions' in various types of reports and narratives which help establish represented realities as convincing (Fairclough, 1995: 107). Philo and Berry stress the importance of assumptions, and note the assumptions of cause, responsibility and consequences when reporting about

violence. For example, the assumption that children should not be blown up by tanks, when reporting on the death of children (2004: 95).

Corner's depiction of violence into 'turn-off' violence, and 'turn-on' violence will be a useful category for analysis in programmes about the military. The aim of the former is to 'portray the violence within terms of the moral framings of everyday life, so that a degree of unpleasantness, disturbance and even distress will accompany the viewing' (Corner, 1998: 104), whereas the latter's aim is to 'portray violence in a way which provides excitement by heightened action, intensified character performance and perhaps by spectacular visual effects'. Identification of the types of violence can be constituted by five features which are: the strength of prior identification with characters: links within the narrative to notions of justness and unjustness in relation to specific events: the levels of 'realism' and of entertainment at work within the surrounding narrative: the terms in which the violent scene was acted, for examples demonstrations of pleasure and of pain portrayed. The types of violence can not only be identified by thematic features, but also in the communicative design, in the terms in which the violent scene was shot and edited, for example proximity to action, camera angles, camera mobility, duration of shots, and finally, explicit indications of physical injury, presence and type of sounds and music on soundtrack. (Corner, 1998: 105).

The types of violence will be important to identify as they will indicate the framing of the particular narrative, and identify which discourse the framing relates to. For example, if the violence is justified it might be part of the soldiers as 'liberators' narrative, as part of the rhetoric of justification of invasion of Afghanistan or Iraq. If the violence is used to portray the suffering of the soldiers it could be analysed as part of the discourse of the soldiers as suffering heroes merely doing their role as subjects of the government, or portrayed 'one of us', as the 'ordinary man'. Or, they could be just characters in a violent entertainment, distant from the 'real world' of the viewers.

Thus the framing, or dominant theme of a programme might be of the soldier as warrior, or the soldier as peace-keeper/nation builder. I would ask how have they been represented as such, do they see themselves as such; what are the other

discourses which are part of this network; do other voices question this discourse and what are the silences in the discourse. Fairclough (2003) suggests examining the assumptions, both the existential assumptions, that is about what exists, the propositional assumptions, that is assumptions about what is or will be the case, and the value assumptions, that is about what is good or desirable. The value systems and associated assumptions can be regarded as belonging to particular discourses, for example, 'a neo-liberal economic and political discourse in the case of the assumption that anything which enhances 'efficiency and adaptability' is desirable (Fairclough, 2003: 58). This will also entail looking at the events presented. Fairclough calls this 'recontextualization' (ibid: 139). He suggests looking at the presence of events, that is, which elements of events or events in a chain are present/absent, prominent or back-grounded. For example, are the soldiers only shown fighting, or are they engaged in 'nation building/peace-keeping'. How are the events ordered, and what is added, that is what is added in representing events, what explanations, legitimacies or evaluations given.

Entman (1993) identifies five traits that set a certain frame of reference which are: importance judgements, agency, identification with potential victims, categorisation or the choice of labels for the incidents, and generalizations which fit into a wider context. Thus it is important to look at who says what and where that sits in the narrative, for example, the voices of the 'ordinary soldier as opposed to an officer, or PR; is the narrative structure organised around a cause and effect scenario; who is to blame for an incident and why; who suffers and how are they represented.

Cottle (2000) queries whether merely identifying framing is a sufficient analysis. He says an analysis should also ask whether the frame's origins are

sedimented within the wider culture or does it derive from a more active promotion by institutional sources and their claims-makers? Is it carried in general news values and routinised journalist practices or perhaps more actively in the conscious deliberations of journalists working to a sense of a professional ideology or specific organizational product? Does it express the conventions of standardized news structures and formats of delivery? (Cottle, 2000: 430).

Part of the analysis of the thematic development would be to identify the network of discourses, the discursive formation and the archaeology of such formations, whether they emerge from military, civilian or journalistic institutions.

The first section of the data sheet thus looks at the themes of each selected programme.<sup>39</sup>

- The theme will be identified. For example, whether the military is presented as peace-keepers, liberators or warriors.
- These themes are then described as to whether the frames are diagnostic, prognostic or motivational, as suggested by Gerhards and Rucht (1992)<sup>40</sup> which will define the parameters of the events narrated.
- The notion of the ‘enemy’ identifies the key concept for understanding the war. Who the ‘enemy’ is helps identify the role of the military. For example, if the ‘enemy’ are the Iraqis the assumption might be that they are engaged in traditional war fighting. However, if the enemy is the politicians, the military might be victims rather than perpetrators of malign intent. This is also one of the five traits identified by Entman (1993) which set a certain frame of reference.
- Identifying where the empathy lies is thus important, as this also helps identify the ‘enemy’ and place the military in the general narrative as well as assessing the assumptions behind any violence suffered or committed.
- Answering why the military is in Iraq also highlights the role of the military, the justification for the war and again places them in the narrative. This also highlights agency.
- I also list the deaths covered in each programme, and the reason for the deaths. This reason for the deaths will point to the role of the soldiers, and the justification for their presence in Iraq.

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<sup>39</sup> See data sheet on p.121

<sup>40</sup> See p. 104

- Listing the assumptions made in each programme will point to where the power of the discourse lies. The normalisation of a statement means it has the power of truth (Foucault 1980)<sup>41</sup>. Assumptions will also ‘document the conditions of existence’ of a discourse (Smart, 2002:49)<sup>42</sup>
- Identifying who speaks is part of the archaeology that must be conducted to identify the rules of the discourse, and who has authority to speak within the discourse, as well as contributing to the formation of the discourse. Who speaks will also signal new developments within the discourse.
- The order of events outlines the narrative and argument of the programme.
- The silences are where I compare the events and interpretation of events to the literature and the Chilcot Inquiry and what has not been mentioned in the television programmes.
- The depiction of violence (Corner 1998) will also indicate the framing of the particular narrative.<sup>43</sup>
- What is lacking from the programme, that is, events or issues raised in the Chilcot Inquiry and other literature, which helps to identify the silences in the discourse.

Having looked at how to extract the themes of the programmes where the network of discourses can be identified, I now look at Corner et al.’s (1990) second phase of methodology, which is to place the particular programme within the stylistic requirements of the series, or department. The organization of a *Panorama* is for example, different from the programme organization of a docu-soap<sup>44</sup>, so it is necessary to consider how Corner et al.’s study of communicative design or format can be applied to this study.

## **5.2 Communicative design**

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<sup>41</sup> See p. 92

<sup>42</sup> See p. 84

<sup>43</sup> See p. 105

<sup>44</sup> A hybrid of a documentary and soap-opera.

Communicative Design looks at the key features of each item's rhetorical organisation. That is the structure of the programme, who the contributors are, how they are presented and by whom. This study will help to answer Cottle's third question about whether the media frame's origins can be carried in the 'journalistic practices or specific organizational product' (Cottle, 2000: 430). Altheid writes:

The relevance of format in modern news work for all news is considerable, as well as the perspective and activities of new sources that have learned the formats as a key to news access. It is the rise of format driven planning and orchestration that has helped produce our postjournalism era (Altheid 1978 ).

In their analysis of the CEGB programme on *Energy – the Nuclear Option*, Corner et al. cite this as being the programme's 'imitation of certain aspects of television's established 'current affairs' discourses, and the use of Brain Walden as its presenter (1990: 16). Thus I would look at the format of each programme, and its use of reporter or presenter, and its contributors. As indicated in the earlier sections on news, reporter, and documentary, these all affect meaning and discourse.

I would also include factors such as the structural organisation of the news item and the rules of the discourse that construct both the object and what can be said. For example, Hoskins and O'Loughlin mention the rules of news which dictate that news contains the

economy of liveness, in which the value of a news story depends on whether it is live and immediately accessible or the grammar of breaking news, featuring cycles beginning with a report, interviews with witnesses, then studio analysis with in-house or external experts before returning to the report (2007: 11).

Corner notes that the perception of the grammar of documentaries becomes much more difficult to identify as being 'a documentary format' than the more structured news format; that most documentaries are watched 'without consciously registering much if anything to do with its communicative design', so the 'content' is made available to meaningful consciousness only through the form' (Corner, 1998: 98). The conventions of the form will be an important constitutive element when analysing these programme. By form he means 'the particular organisations of signification which constitute a given item as communication' (ibid. 1998: 96), for example the range of visual techniques and styles used to shoot the opening of a

programme, or an episode of a sit-com. The combinations of genres in documentaries of informing, persuading and entertaining are complex, but have become conventionalized (Fairclough, 1995: 60). Fairclough also notes that the different genres of programme contain interviews, report, conversation, narrative and 'disembedded genre'. He notes that these should be examined to identify Habermas's distinction between 'communicative' and 'strategic' action. That is interaction 'oriented to arriving at understanding, as opposed to interaction oriented to getting results' (Fairclough, 2003: 71). The documentary series strands which are made within the News and Current Affairs umbrella, such as *Panorama*, *Despatches*, *Newsnight* also have a much more identifiable format structure than the one-off series, or stand-alone documentaries.

With regard to witnesses, experts, interviews and commentaries, the use of 'conversationalized discourses' will also be examined. The use of 'elite' voices can be a manifestation of power, but as Tuchman (1978) argues it is part of the 'strategic ritual' of seeking out authoritative voices who are seen to be socially accredited to make statements about newsworthy events. Sources are 'classified', some sources need verification, but others not (Ekstrom, 2002: 266). Likewise, Ekstrom argues that journalists have their own 'implicit frames' to classify who is an expert (ibid). This classification of subjects might extend to subject matter. For example, what falls into the category of foreign news? Which experts should talk about British troops in Iraq, should it be British or Iraqi politicians? The British politicians send troops to Iraq, but they influence and affect Iraqi politics.

Cottle points out studies which observed how 'news routines per se do not determine coverage or the field of news sources gaining access, and points rather to the informing political ethos of the organization and its managers' (Cottle, 2000: 434). The study found that the different sources were actively selected to 'represent the news interests of this particular outlet and its local community, resulting in a different cast of accessed 'officials' and other voices' (ibid: 435). The selections would therefore seem to be made with an eye to the audience, which I would argue is something the producer is always conscious of.



However, Fairclough questions whether the use of other voices manifests a real shift in power relations in favour of ordinary people, or whether ‘they are to be seen as merely a strategy on the part of those with power to more effectively recruit people as audiences and manipulate them socially and politically?’ (Fairclough, 1995: 13). Statements made by ‘ordinary people’ may be interpreted as the view of the common man, or the norm, thus reinforcing a ‘truth’. They may also be seen as having a ‘higher status than the expertise of the experts, undermining the conventional status of the latter’ (Fairclough, 1995: 186). The use of ‘ordinary people’ and appeal to an audience’s identification with a character ‘like them’, can be used to subvert or counter the ‘official’ view.

The increasing authority of the ordinary man to represent the truth is a notion picked up by those who look at audience studies. Wahl-Jorgensen et al write of the ‘valourization’ of the voices of ‘ordinary people’ and the dismissal of experts and figures of authority who are seen to be less truthful (2010). Part of this lies in the authenticity that is given to those who have personally experienced something and the assumption that people can only speak truthfully on matters about which they have personal experience (ibid. 2010).

This perhaps runs counter to the growing celebrity status of journalist and news anchor, but may also account for an increasing authority of their experience in witnessing events because of their profession. However, Ekstrom writes that the construction of a formally neutral position remains crucial in news journalism, where in the news interview the journalist demonstrates a neutral position, by ‘diverting attention away from journalism as a producing, interpreting and arguing activity’ (2002: 272). Journalists communicate what others have said. This divergence of journalist’ neutrality, and the increasing foregrounding of the personal might lead to an interesting development in news journalism.

The study of the interview also brings up a methodological point raised by Kvale (1996) which is the importance of looking both at the expressed meaning and the intended meaning of an answer in an interview, and the assumptions of the ‘interview society’ (Denzin, 2003: 145) that persons if ‘properly’ asked will reveal

their inner selves to experts, such as journalists, detectives and social scientists. Denzin quotes Bakhtin as believing that there are no 'real selves', there is no inner or deep self that is accessed by the interview or narrative method. 'There are only different interpretive (and performative) versions of who the person is' (Bakhtin in Denzin, 2003: 148).<sup>45</sup> This however, does not mean that these views should be dismissed but looked at as part of the discourse which has an affect both on the subject and its materiality. Kvale quotes the 'Thomas theorem' in sociology, where he writes 'the phenomenon that empirically false beliefs may have real social consequences is termed the Thomas theorem, if people believe ideas are real, they are real in their consequences (Kvale, 2003: 223), which perhaps brings us back to Foucault.

Taylor citing Mark Lawson, writes that television give biographies and blood to soldiers, giving them faces, histories, fears, wives and children, 'in independently questioning the claims of general and politicians, ... has helped to undermine the military assumption of human disposability' (Taylor, 1992: 49). The increasing use of 'ordinary people' in reality shows might perhaps have also had an effect on the idea that 'ordinariness' 'confirms the reality of what is shown (Couldry, 2003: 107).

Foucault's designation of 'who speaks' also contributes to the theme of the programme as discussed in the previous section. It should be noted with reference to speakers from the military that I make a distinction between an official military spokesman, and a senior officer, that is a General, a junior officer and other rank. The official British military spokespeople are mostly Majors or Captains and occasionally a Lieutenant Colonel. In practice they comment on events, not on strategy. In my experience as a programme maker, and from filming the army, the spokesman is authorised to speak on behalf of the military, but will still defer to a higher authority on matters of politics or strategy, or not be asked about questions about these matters. This information is still seen as being within the remit of Generals, their specific spokesman or someone from the government. This is one of the 'unwritten rules' of the discourse, where those permitted to speak are accepted by the media, and it becomes custom.

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<sup>45</sup> I have covered the 'military discourse' as contributing to the civilian discourse in my literature review.

The next section, communicative design on the data sheet is designed as follows<sup>46</sup>:

- The Introduction. This mostly identifies the NCA documentaries, as they have an individual and particular format where the presenter introduces the issues, or question to be covered in the programme.
- The Reporter or expert interviewed is listed. Again this identifies the format, and helps establish who is felt to have the authority to speak, and thus who contributes to the construction of the discourse. The interaction of the reporters with contributors and the types of contributors interviewed will be important to establish the shift in power relations and appeal to the audience.
- Whether the programme is event or issue led is also discussed with reference to Altheide (1978). As noted above this has bearing on the programme genre, the narrative of the programme and its context. It will also enable me to look at whether this excludes or includes purposes or goals of the events or issues, to see whether and how the ‘impartiality’ of news style is sustained.
- The location is where the filming took place. This has implications on the liveness of the programme, its construction (in considering the use of archive material, if for example it was filmed in the UK, but archive of the Iraq war is intercut). The issue of ‘liveness’, both as a news factor and a ‘style’ of war reportage also impacts on relations of truth/entertainment.

### **5.3 Visualisation**

Visualisation is the contribution of visual images to the programmes (Corner et al. 1990: 2). Analysis of the image is complex, looking at multiple significations. Any analysis should involve the ‘dialectics of referential integrity and aesthetic value’ (Corner 2005). Hill writes, ‘so much factual content is concerned with spectacle, style, emotion and personality’ (2007: 14), so it is important not just to look at what is said in any analysis of factual television. ‘Consider the shot as the equivalent to the word... but it is a concrete visual sign. The shot is a complex signifier, multiple

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<sup>46</sup> See data sheet on p.122

and simultaneous, made up of the elements depicted within the frame, their relationships, and their movement and alteration' (Chanan, 2007: 48). The juxtaposition of what is seen and what is said is also important. Foucault said that it was in the intersections of the networks that irruptions appear (1985a), so whilst the aesthetics of the image might be pulling the spectator into hyperrealism, the power networks of other linguistic discourses might be pulling another way.

Iedema writes that tele-filmic analysis can be done in a variety of ways including thematic, auteur centred, psycho-analytical or from a symptomatic, structuralist and semiotic perspective' (Iedema, 2001: 186). He favours a social semiotic analysis which enables him to question ways in which the tele-cinematic text presents 'social-reality'. It 'focuses on techniques to highlight not only what was edited in, left out, and the reasoning about the choices producers make in relation to the socio-cultural fields which they decide to home in on'. (ibid: 188). This entails looking at how meaning is represented visually, verbally, musically or sound-wise. Corner also looks at the meaning of the imagery, citing the choice of a signifier or 'trigger' image of Hiroshima in 1945 as establishing an imagery of threat in his studies of the programmes on the nuclear industry (Corner et al. 1990). However, this analysis has to be reconciled with the fact that the events recorded are also constructed by the point of view of the shot, its framing, length and location of filming. Philo and Berry point out that in the studies from the coverage of the Israel/Palestine conflict, the Israelis were more likely to be interviewed in calm and relaxed surroundings (2004: 137). The location of the reporter or interviews which affects the realism of liveness should also be taken into account.

According to Matheson the 'modality of the camera' (Matheson, 2005: 113) describes the ways in which language communicates to us the speaker's attitude to what is being said or written. For example, a shaky, poor quality picture reminds the viewer of the presence of the camera in a setting not purpose-designed for filming. 'We learn to recognize a joggling image in a war zone as a sign that the cameraman is running for safety, because we have learned to expect steady cameras.' Dovey, (2000: 25) argues that such images are indexical in that they lead viewers to presume a 'direct and transparent correspondence between what is in front of the camera lens

and its taped representation'. This gives them a strong claim to authenticity in recording the events.

The reading of the image is also important to establish a sense of distance or 'un-reality'. Matheson cites MacDonald's (2003) argument that when the participants in a scene are not looking at the camera or viewer, the vectors are directed towards other objects, not including the viewer so establish distance from him. This becomes a relationship of 'permitted voyeurism' (Matheson, 2005: 111). So, the audience looks upon the hyper-real on a stage set that is also the real world. The distance of the camera from events filmed arguably has the same effect. Chouliaraki (2006) with reference to the pictures of the 'shock and awe' bombing on the opening of the war in Iraq, argues that the aestheticised, spectacular and distanced coverage inhibits any emotional connection to the civilians under the bombs, although Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) found that viewers were emotionally drawn into the situation, as they imagined what was going on although they couldn't see the evidence.

Chouliaraki's identification of other tools used as emotional rhetoric should also be analysed, such as whether the factual reporting in news is replaced by elements of fictional storytelling, whether it is just descriptive or whether it entails elements of exposition with value judgements (Chouliaraki, 2006: 78); whether the sufferers are given a voice, how they connect with the spectators; what space-time is set for an event (ibid: 100). For example the death of a soldier might be merely a soldier that is presented as a random singularity which becomes detextualised and restricts the potential for future implications and historicity (ibid: 100).

Hammond writes that postmodern war has given extra meaning to the visual as the lack of political purpose gives rise to the importance of media spectacle (2007:21). Baudrillard states 'The war ... watches itself in a mirror: am I pretty enough, am I operational enough, am I spectacular enough... to make entry onto the historical stage? (1995:31-32). Prettiness is in part an emotional reaction, and as this research is looking at the generic difference in the coverage of the British military, the emotional, the spectacle, and the aesthetic in the role of the visual is of importance in this analysis. Following Corner et al's study (1990), it is by looking at the aesthetic devices that the emotional demands of the programme can be gauged.

## **5.4 Aesthetic devices**

Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007: 5) refer to the 'multi-modal' discourse devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen, in which the analyst examines the visual, verbal and aural aspects of television content. It is therefore important not to look just at the images, but also the aesthetic devices, specifically editing.

John Berger writes that sight and appearance impact on an imagination that constructs and animates our understanding of the world (Berger 1972) and Dziga Vertov the influential Soviet film-maker of the 1920's, believed that the filmic capture of sound and image and its reorganization through montage could re-present the world in ways that could literally alter the consciousness of its audience. The importance of image and rhetorical persuasion ties in to the claim mentioned earlier that documentaries now reflect the dominance of part of a broader visual culture that 'acknowledges appeals to the senses as a form of knowledge production' (Beattie 2008:16), where display becomes a vehicle of cognition and knowledge.

Documentary display and the visual pyrotechnics are fundamental to the transfer of ideas and information. Nichols believes that the visual now constitutes the terrain of subjective experience as the locus of knowledge (2000:42). Thus how the programme looks and how it is edited have become enormously important.

It is the mediatised transformations that the power of the edit lies, so it is not just what pictures are used, but how they are put together. Beattie writes that cause, linkage and effect can all be implied through the visuals.

Recurrent images or phrases function as classic refrains, underscoring thematic points or their emotional undercurrents, such as the frequent montages of artillery fire and explosions in combat documentaries that steer the progression of a battle, its physical means of implementation and its human cost (Beattie, 2008:11).

In the data sheet I include visuals in the aesthetic devices and look at:

- The visuals. This includes how the film has been shot, that is who is holding the camera (suggesting point of view), whether the camera is hand-held (conferring documentary 'reality') or on a tripod. In this section I will also look at how the visuals have been tweaked in post production. This will be

an important analysis for genre identification. Visuals include editing, what archive material is used and the complexity of the edit. Editing is again an indication of ‘transformation’ adding effects, montages, and cutting techniques which all take the material further along the genre scale from the simplicity of news to the multi-modal editing that constructs fiction.<sup>47</sup>

I initially also considered the music used as this is an important aesthetic device. However, very little music is used in the documentaries and none in the news studied, so for the purposes of this research I have excluded an analysis of music.

### **5.5. Research Questions**

Corner et al.’s (1990) methodological structure enables me to analyse the complexities of the discourses highlighted in my sample of news and documentaries, and thus to draw general conclusions about the coverage. The main question is: what were the dominant discourses in the news and documentary coverage of the occupation of Iraq by the British military and by definition, what was left out and why.

An analysis of the dominant themes in the programmes will help identify the discourses and their formations, for example, which types and modes of characterisation, behavioural patterns and systems of norms establish the themes; an identification of who is speaking will help locate the institutions involved, and the economic and social processes (Fairclough, 1995:42). This identification will also establish who constitutes the ‘we’ and the assumptions given which identify the power networks. The justification for the occupation will be established, with silences noted.

An analysis of the communicative design also helps identify practices and how the materiality of the discourse is affected by the structure of the programme. The visual and aesthetic examination identifies the rhetorical effects and highlights the patterns of intent, and helps answer questions such as whether the discourses are

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<sup>47</sup> See p.63

used as bases of power ‘to seduce, manipulate and silence’ (Dedaic, 2003: 6). For example the discourses of suffering and indignation may be used as mobilization against an identified enemy or a justification to continue fighting. Examination of the format and aesthetic devices will also help identify generic differences in the construction and presentation of the news and documentaries, which will illustrate how the different genres promote or prohibit certain discourses.

Other questions which arise from comparing the statements from the Chilcot Inquiry and the literature with those from the media would be about the media’s construction of the role of the military in politics and in strategy, their responsibility for events and actions in Iraq and what were the results of the occupation and actions of the military on the people and politics of Iraq. The final question would be how effective was the military in its occupation as presented in the news and documentaries. Is war a test of collective fitness, an upholder of ‘traditional values’ or an aberration of politics? How has the cost of the war been established, that is, is it discussed in terms of payment of life, or of payment of money, and is the financial cost hidden by the dominance of discourse of sufficient cost of life?

The analysis of programmes also leads to serious questions about the programme makers and journalists’ ability to cover the controversial and dangerous occupation of Iraq, of their ability to identify other discourses which enable them to ask pertinent questions, to discard MoD palliatives and bullying and to look beyond the excitement and limitations of war. By an analysis of both genres I can also examine whether it can still be argued that documentaries are giving a more rounded picture of what is happening, and what role the communicative design has in the establishment or reinforcement of a discourse. As stated above Nichols believes that the ‘visual now constitutes the terrain of subjective experience as the locus of knowledge’ (2000:42), and this research is also a test of that statement with reference to the coverage of war.

## **5.6. Weaknesses**

Using Corner et al.’s (1990) methodological structure allows an identification and analysis of what is in the programmes, but a major question asked by Foucault’s



discourse analysis is ‘why did this and no other statement happen here?’ (Foucault, 1970; 156). Some of the questions I want to pose ask why, which infers a knowledge of what else, or why not. In any discourse there are those people, arguments, and themes which are excluded, and part of this study will be to try and establish why these have been excluded and what they could have been. As stated above, by invoking the literature and Chilcot Inquiry, I hope to identify some of these exclusions.

Morrison and Tumber write that journalists offer the primacy of facts as demonstrations of truth, ‘really such faith is epistemologically better seen as no more than a talisman ... facts form the basis of judgement, and judgement itself influences whether or not something is given the status of a fact’ (1988: 118). The facts I elicit from the Chilcot Inquiry are based on their importance in understanding the analysed content of the news and documentaries. Morrison and Tumber also warn that sourcing is a ‘spurious way of establishing truth’ (1988: 117), and indeed I am not claiming ‘the truth’ in the facts I cite, but offering a different version of events news and documentaries dealt with.

Likewise, analysis is an art rather than a science, and dealing with events to be interpreted, a more inexact art than most. There is much I do not and cannot know. In the reporting of war especially, many events are hidden and an interpretation of the exclusions and silences I do identify, will be subjective and itself dependent on other forms of knowledge. There is also the Foucauldian problem of being within a discourse and whether one can stand outside to identify others. However, I believe that the adaptation of the discourse analysis that I have explained above is best suited to find answers to the research questions.

I did consider other methodologies such as quantitative analysis, but decided against it as the predominant methodology, as it is mainly used to ‘quantify salient and manifest features of a large number of texts’ (Deacon et al., 1999: 119) which is not suited to my limited amount of programmes. Deacon et al also point out that this form of analysis is not good at exposing aesthetic or rhetorical nuances within texts (ibid: 119). However, I do use this methodology to back up the discourse analysis, as for example when counting how many military officers speak. I also quantify in

the visual analysis where I look at such things as the frequency of certain images as part of my question on format, and whether the paucity of footage had an effect on what was covered. Initially I wanted to conduct interviews as a means of identifying events and issues which were not covered by news and documentary, by asking both producers and those involved with the military about the occupation, and their views on how it was covered and what was left out. However, few people were willing to talk openly (a factor which must be considered in the coverage of the military in Iraq), and I realised my choice of those who would talk was perhaps too subjective, in that only those people I knew were willing to help and subjective in the fact that the desire to conduct interviews was bound to my desire as a programme maker to make a film, rather than a piece of academic work.

I acknowledge that it could be argued that such a small body of work examined could not be representative of the general claims for the dominance of certain discourses, or for the conclusions made about the genres of news and documentaries. This is especially with reference to Foucault, who showed that in his unravelling of the history of madness, he included 'readings of philosophical works as well as scientific dissertations and the statements, regulations and accounts of the institutions themselves (Andersen, 2003:13). The network of power which influences and creates the discourse in the texts chosen stretches not just across the media, but entwines and is powered by other institutions, subjects and sources. However, I am not investigating the history of 'the occupation', but have narrowed my question to ask what are the dominant discourses in the 'documentary' and news coverage of the British military, and have found what documentaries I have been able to access. With regard to the news, again, my selection might not be a proportional representation of the coverage, but I have attempted to select the time periods which were of major significance in the occupation in their newsworthiness, and thus are periods when the most in-depth, and frequent news items would appear on the television.

I also acknowledge that I am perhaps harsh in my criticisms of what has been left out by programme makers and reporters. However, I would also argue that much of the information recounted in the Chilcot Inquiry was in the public domain and was being reported in the news, in parliamentary reports and available to experts who could

have been consulted. I also point out that many of the questions that were not asked should have been posed in the series I worked on. The attempt to find out why this happened is also an acknowledgement of my own failure to know more about Iraq and the occupation, and to examine my susceptibility in becoming caught in the discourse. However, it is not the fact that I knew the questions and didn't ask them, as perhaps inferred by some of the studies on embedding, but that I didn't have the questions to ask. This absence of knowledge is what draws me to Foucault and his writings on the power of discourse.

## **5.7 . Data Sheet**

I have constructed a data sheet for each programme as follows:

Programme	
<i>1. Themes</i>	
Diagnostic	
<b>Motivational</b>	
<b>prognostic</b>	
<i>Enemy?</i>	
<i>Empathy?</i>	
<i>Why Here?</i>	
<i>Who speaks?</i>	
<i>Deaths &amp; reason/</i>	
<i>Wounded &amp; reason</i>	
<i>Assumptions</i>	
<i>What exists</i>	
<i>Who speaks</i>	
<i>Events/incidents</i>	
<i>In the chain.</i>	
<i>Violence</i>	
<i>Lacks (silences)</i>	
<b>2. Design</b>	
<i>Intro</i>	
<i>Titles</i>	
<i>Reporter/expert</i>	

<i>Event/Issue</i>	
<i>location</i>	
<b>3. Aesthetics</b>	
<i>Visuals</i>	
<i>Pov/location</i>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	

### **5.8. Samples**

I initially wanted to select all documentaries about the British military, commissioned as documentaries rather than being part of News and Current Affairs output, but for reasons not explored here,<sup>48</sup> there were too few. Some of the documentaries, notably the *Despatches* are often not just about the British military, but widen out to look at the situation in Iraq generally, but where that is part of the discourse of the military occupation, I will include the wider picture. I decided not to include documentaries or news on the military in Afghanistan which meant excluding two important documentary series, *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan* (Sky Jan 2008) and *Commando* (ITV). Many of the discourses are similar, but it is a different war, and I did not have access to the sources I had in Iraq to be able to identify discourses and events not covered in the news and documentary coverage of the Iraq occupation. Likewise, I am not looking at American documentaries or news, as it was a different war, fought by a different country, and with a different documentary culture, although they have made many more documentaries on the military occupation of Iraq.

I chose the documentaries from the main terrestrial channels, BBC, ITV, and C4, as I am also looking at news from these channels. However, I include the documentary series from Sky because of the paucity of documentaries on the other channels, and because the directors, and production values are similar to those on the other

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<sup>48</sup> I am not looking at the commissioning side of the documentary media or the reasons in detail as to why there are so few UK documentaries. This is an area which needs some research.

channels.<sup>49</sup> I then searched the British Universities Film and Video Council website for all the available documentaries on the British military in Iraq transmitted in my time scale, and asked the library to obtain copies. Regarding news, I have been able to draw on Cardiff University's archive of news from 2005, but have not been able to get copies of the news from 2004 which covers an important stage in the occupation. However, I include a NCA documentary (*Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29/11/04) made towards the end of 2004 as it is not time specific, and is about soldiers wounded in the invasion and occupation from 2003, looking not particular events but the issue of their treatment.

I have chosen five time frames to look at the news which contained events that I feel are most newsworthy and of major importance both to the British Military and to the impact of events in Iraq. As stated above I have chosen to look at the BBC1 and ITV1 news from 2200 and the evening C4 news on the same evenings of the dates specified. I have also included the *Newsnights* from these dates.

1. On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 two SAS soldiers were arrested by the Iraqi police and taken to the Jamiat Police station in Basra. British military officials went to the station to negotiate their release, but the soldiers were handed over to the Badr brigade (the military wing of Jaysh el Mahdi). The military despatched British armoured personnel carriers to rescue the negotiators and the warriors were attacked. The dramatic footage from Iraqi television was a major event which highlighted the break down in relations between the military, the authorities in Basra, the control of the Basra by the Baghdad government and a threat to Maliki's power.
2. On September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007, the British withdrew to Basra airport. There were newspaper reports of a deal with the militia. Two *Panoramas* were made which revealed the secret deal (see below). The discourse of British withdrawal from Iraq becomes emphasised as the MoD explained the withdrawal as a necessity to reduce inflaming violence against the occupiers.

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<sup>49</sup> I have made documentaries for Sky as well as the other major channels, and experienced little difference in remit, only subject matter. Sky is one of the major commissioners of documentaries on the British military.

3. 25th March to the beginning of April 2008, the Charge of the Knights  
Operation conducted by the Iraqi army to clear Basra of the militia. The Iraqi army achieve a significant victory over the insurgents. The role of the British military will be examined against accusations of failure in the print media and literature, and it is the establishment of security which results which becomes part of the British claims for 'success' and part of their exit strategy.
4. 30 March 2009, British forces end combat operations and hand over command of Southern Iraq to the Americans.
5. 28 April 2009 Britain formally ended combat operations in Iraq. On 30 April 2009 there is remembrance service for the 179 UK servicemen and woman killed in the conflict. Nearly all the remaining 3,700 British troops begin returning home. I have included an Outside Broadcast programme *Iraq 2003-2009* BBC 1 transmitted in October 2009 in this selection as it looks back at the occupation.

The news broadcasts that I look at are:

1.

BBC Newsnight 19.9.05  
 BBC Newsnight 20.9.05  
 ITV News 19.9.05  
 ITV News 20.9.05  
 ITV News 21.9.05  
 BBC News 19.9.05  
 BBC News 20.9.05  
 BBC News 21.9.05  
 C4 News 19.9.05  
 C4 News 20.9.05  
 C4 News 21.9.05  
 C4 News 23.9.05

2.

BBC News 2.9.07  
 ITV News 2.9.07  
 BBC NEWS 3.9.07  
 C4 News 3.9.07  
 BBC Newsnight 3.9.07

2.

BBC News 25.3.08 BBC News 26.3.08  
 BBC News 27.3.08

BBC News 28.3.08  
BBC News 29.3.08  
ITV News 26.3.08  
C4 News 25.3.08  
C4 News 26.3.08  
C4 News 28.3.08  
C4 News 29.3.08  
BBC Newsnight 27.3.08  
ITV News 25.3.08  
ITV News 1.4.08  
C4 News 1.4.08  
BBC News 1.4.08

3.

BBC News 31.3.09  
ITV News 31.3.09  
C4 News 31.3.09

4.

C4 News 30.4.09  
BBC Newsnight 30.4.09  
BBC News 30.4.09  
ITV News 30.4.09

Some of the documentaries specifically cover these events, and some are filmed during them, but are transmitted later. I examine how they cover the same events as the news, and analyse them to get an idea of the dominant discourses in the television coverage of the British military occupation. I list the titles below, with an explanatory sentence taken from the reporter's or voice over introduction within the programme in quotation marks, or my own summation of the programme which does not have quote marks.

Documentaries – (those starred\* are News and Current Affairs documentaries)

## **2004**

*Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29/11/04 1930  
'The real stories of soldiers scarred by war'

## **2005**

*Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad* (BBC1 April 2005)  
6 part series on 1 Royal Horse Artillery's tour in Basra.

\**Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Red Caps* BBC2 10/2/05 21.50  
'6 military policemen slaughtered in a storeroom, but were they betrayed by the British Army?'  
(Rep: John Sweeney)



*\*Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV1 21.11.05

‘What’s life like for them, how are they preparing to transfer their peace keeping role, and what protection are they receiving?’

(Rep: Mike Nicholson)

*\*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21/11/05 20.00

‘The Invasion of Iraq is the greatest foreign policy disaster since Munich and our government has reacted in the identical way by going into denial’

(Rep: Peter Osborne)

## **2006**

*\*Panorama: Bringing our boys home?* BBC1 19/03/06

‘This is the story of what has happened in Southern Iraq since the British invaded 3 years ago’.

Rep: Jane Corbin)

*\*Dispatches: Battle Fatigue* C4 22/05/06 20.00

‘We tell the shocking story of an army that can’t even properly care for its own wounded, and a government that’s trying to cover it up’

(Rep: Peter Osborne)

*When our Boys Came Home* BBC2 01/06/06

‘this is the story of three British servicemen injured during the invasion of Iraq 2003’  
(no reporter Dir: Peter Gordon)

*\*Tonight: War Wounds* ITV1 30/10/06 20.00

Follow up from earlier programme on plight of injured troops. Cover up by MoD

(Rep: Trevor McDonald)

## **2007**

*\*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19/02/07

“We talk to families to each lost a son, in each year of the war so far”

(Rep: Jane Corbin)

*\*Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26/03/07

‘Tonight soldiers on the run’

(Rep: Alex Millar)

*\*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10/12/07

‘What is the truth about the end of our occupation of Basra?... was it really an orderly withdrawal, or were we driven out and what was the price we paid to end the body count?’

(Rep: Jane Corbin)

*\*Panorama: Basra – The Legacy* BBC1 17/12/07

‘As Britain hands over control of Basra to Iraqi security forces, what are we leaving behind?’

(Rep; Jane Corbin)

## 2008

*\*Dispatches: Iraq – The Betrayal* C4 17/03/08

‘The Iraq invasion was supposed to herald the new dawn of liberal democracy. 5 years on and our failure has left the reputation of America and Britain in tatters’.  
(Rep: Peter Osborne)

*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty* ITV4 June/July

‘In this series, I’ll be telling the heroes’ stories, acts of courage, and bravery that are mostly unknown until now’.  
(Rep: Andy McNab)

*\*Despatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13/12/08

‘Is the legacy of our involvement in this war to be a return to civil war and the end of America’s ambition to lead the world?’  
(Rep: Peter Osborne)

## 2009

*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19/06/09 0030

No reporter, different accounts of the war from soldiers and their families.

*Iraq 2003-2009* BBC1 09/10/09 10.30

Outside Broadcast event of St Paul’s memorial service to those who took part in the British military campaign in Iraq.  
(Rep: Huw Edwards)

*Brothers in Arms* Sky TV 17/11/09 23.00

‘This is a story about a band of soldiers who were the first to go into battle...’  
(no reporter)

*\*Dispatches: Battle Scarred* C4 07/09/09

‘What’s the true cost of war’  
(rep: David Modell)

I was not able to get hold of copies of the BBC News 24 programmes *Our World: Basra Farewell*, *Back from the Front*, and *Covering Iraq*. Arguably, these were not made for a domestic audience and thus would not have fitted comfortably with the documentaries which were for transmission in the UK. I also could not obtain a copy of the ITV series *The Real Redcaps*, which was transmitted in April 2005 about the Royal Military Police and made before the RMP’s were killed.

It was also impossible to view C4’s *My Crazy Media Life: My Brother, the boy who went to war* tx: 6/6/2007, and Carlton TV’s *Above and Beyond* tx. 5/8/2008.



## **Chapter 6: What happened in Iraq: Findings of The Chilcot Inquiry**

As stated<sup>50</sup>, my time in Iraq in 2009 made me aware that there was much that was happening in Iraq which wasn't being reported in the mainstream British media and on British network television. Following Foucault (1996), one has to examine not only what is said but also look at the silences in the discourse. He also states that silences should not be assigned one cause, but rather a 'whole play of dependencies' from which I hope to 'bring out the bundle of polymorphous correlations (1996: 38). Thus, in this section I look at what was reported from other sources apart from the news and documentaries that I consider later, to find out what information might have been available to programme makers, and discover different interpretations of events from that in my selected news and documentaries chosen. I have made some general assumptions about the lack of coverage of the media from my knowledge of the subject and from an initial view of the material, so I had a better idea of where to look in the literature. I will re-visit the television news and documentary coverage again in my research findings, but set out the broad outline as background for comparison.

The comparative material is taken from the literature on the occupation of Iraq which is limited. Thus a major source of information is the Chilcot Inquiry. The Inquiry opened on 30 July 2009, its aim as stated by the chairman was to consider

the UK's involvement in Iraq, including the way decisions were made and actions taken, to establish, as accurately as possible, what happened and to identify the lessons that can be learned (Chilcot 2010).

It will thus be used for the same purpose, to try and establish what happened to compare events to what was reported in the news.

I am not claiming that this account is the 'truth'. It is another version of events. Much material, especially in times of war only becomes available some time after the war has ended, but much of the information divulged at the Chilcot Inquiry was known or suspected by journalists. It is not the brief here to examine what the

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<sup>50</sup> Introduction

producers did or did not know, but to identify and explain how the dominant discourses in news and current affairs excluded certain events and issues which might have been used by the producers, and to find out how the genre of news and current affairs might have contributed to this.

There have been many studies of the invasion of the war in Iraq, but as stated, this work looks at events after the invasion, at the occupation by the military of Iraq. I thus first look at what is understood to be an occupation in section 2. Tied up with this understanding and an important issue for programme makers and the military is what was the actual role of the army in Iraq. If, as stated by authors such as North (2009) and Ledwidge (2011), the British military failed in their role as occupiers, it is necessary to understand as far as possible what this role was, and how the news and documentaries interpreted it. The role they are portrayed in, as for example as warriors, peace-keepers, politicians or administrators helps define the discourse. If it was a primarily military occupation, then the military bears the responsibility for its outcome, and if the intentions voiced by Jack Straw and General Sir Mike Jackson were not met, then panegyric discourse of soldiers as heroes might be tempered. It is also important to see whether and how far the changing nature of war and of the conflict in Iraq has been reflected in the news and documentary coverage, as this impacts on the role of the military.

When I was in Basra in 2004 I understood the military's role to be very much like that of what I knew of the colonial administration of the British Empire<sup>51</sup>, a mixture of security, politics and administration. This role seems not to be fully explained in the literature of the occupation, and thus forms one of the silences I will look at, and later investigate whether it is covered in the television and news media. The role of the military during occupation was generally seen as a humanitarian role, to carry out 'reconstruction' and nation-building, but other tasks were assigned to them by the media, mainly their more traditional role, as war fighters, to defeat an enemy and effect regime change. Combined with these roles, the military was involved in counter-insurgency, which is a mixture of the both, and which requires an understanding of the politics of the country, and of the nature of military strategy. It

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<sup>51</sup> My father was a District Commissioner in the Colonial Service in Africa.

is perhaps these last two roles of the military that the media did not understand, and which I examine in the first two sections.

I then examine major issues covered by the Chilcot Inquiry which impact on the role of the British in Iraq and which are picked out by the Inquiry as being of importance in 'identifying the lessons which can be learned' (Chilcot 2010), and thus could also have been issues picked up by the media. The major issues brought up in the Chilcot Inquiry are concerned with the 'humanitarian' role of the military, that is, the training of the Iraqi Security Forces by the British Army, in Section 3. The next major issue covered in section 4 is that the perceived shortage of soldiers and equipment in Iraq might have been because the military decided to fight two major wars at the same time with one army, and that the perceived shortage was the responsibility of the military as much as the politicians. Section 5 deals with the military strategy of the British, which was markedly different from that of the US. It is in the adoption of counterinsurgency measures that the British might also have seen to have failed where the Americans were perceived to have been largely successful. Connected to this are questions about the relationship with the US, the senior partner in the alliance. Section 6 looks at the 'special relationship' where at the Chilcot Inquiry is it apparent that the US played the senior role and on the whole the British had a very junior part in the decisions about the ruling of the country. The nature of this relationship is not clear even from the Chilcot Inquiry, but it is important to analyse it in both media formats as it impacts on the judgement about the role of the British military in Iraq. In section 7 I look at issues of finance, and at the contradictions in the debate about whether the shortage of funding was due to its administration or to a basic shortage of funding.

However, before considering the ensuing themes it is necessary to look at what the British called their invasion of Iraq so as to consider the role of the British. It is called an 'operation', a 'war' and an 'occupation'. Part of the difficulties the media seemed to have with the role of the military is this problem of definition. Thus I initially look at the term 'occupation'. Hoskins & O'Loughlin (2007) write that front-line journalists have a central role in the legitimacy of war, thus a question to ask is where the legitimacy for the Occupation came from.

## **6.1 The alternative Occupation**

In the introduction, I argue that the main discourses in the coverage of war are those which justify war, and look at the justifications for war as a battle between good and evil, that it is fought for humanitarian reasons and that fighting becomes the justification for fighting. Part of the problem for the media in the coverage of the Iraq war was that those planning the war were unsure about a justification for the war and confused in their plans for what would happen after war. Officers study military history at Sandhurst, yet many seem not to have read Clausewitz who states:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish... the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive (1976: 88-89).

It is clear that most of the planning had gone into the invasion, but that there was hardly any consideration of what to do next (Ricks 2006: Etherington 2005). The Foreign Office unit responsible for post-war planning was only set up three weeks before the invasion, and a divisional plan for post-conflict operations was issued fifteen days after Basra fell (Ucko, 2010: 133). So, what was the British military actually doing in Iraq after the official end of the war? Initially it said it was nation-building. By January 2005, the army's view was that it was conducting Stability Operations, seeking to 'impose security and control over an area while employing military capabilities to restore services and support civilian agencies' (Iron in Alderson, 2009:138). Ucko writes of the 'British approach' where they wore berets and conducted a softly softly approach in their dealings with local community leaders and conducting reconstruction' was a tactical solution to a strategic problem (Ucko, 2010: 134). Their passive approach was insufficient to secure the province, and the military was 'untrained, unprepared and undermanned to play significant political, economic, social, legal and cultural role' (ibid: 136) required to reconstruct a state.

After the bombing of the Al Askari Mosque in Samarra February 2006, Maj. General John Cooper defined the campaign as one of 'counterinsurgency (Alderson, 2009: 139). The military itself was not clear about what it was doing, and the television

media, who, on the whole have little military knowledge, had even less idea. Major General Nicolas Carter, commander of 20<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade in 2004, talks about the problems of definition:

If it is not precise, there is a risk that political direction can get in a muddle. Talk of peace enforcement, with the word Peace included, can allow the wrong conclusions to be drawn. Therefore we have to use terms that capture the entirety of what is involved....What we do, what we describe, affect the outcomes for Defence. In these terms, underpinning language is critical (Carter, in Alderson 2009: 169).

The change in terminology from ‘liberation’ to ‘occupation’ might be considered an ‘irruption in the discourse’ (Foucault 1985a)<sup>52</sup> and this term carries with it the ‘rules imposed’ (Foucault 1991) by the practice of occupation. It carries with it the history of Britain’s Imperial past, and does not have the same moral certainty as liberation. Stirk (2009) argues that military occupation has come to be seen as an inherently disreputable activity. Paul Bremner, the Coalition Provincial Authority Administrator in Iraq said it was an ‘ugly word’ (ibid:1). A major factor in the coverage of recent wars such as the Bosnian, Kosovo and Iraq war, is the question of occupation and how to frame it. This has caused many problems for those who want to justify these wars. There also is confusion both as to what constitutes an occupation. Is it military and civilian or just military or civilian, which is something that is still unclear in Iraq.

Many witness statements at the Chilcot Inquiry as well as literature (Ricks 2006; Steele 2009; Fairweather 2011) indicate that this lack of clarification about the justification for going to Iraq was reflected in the planning of what to do when the allies had got to Iraq. Generals Cross, Jackson and Brims all state at the Chilcot Inquiry that they expressed anxiety at what would happen in Phase IV, the phase after the defeat of Saddam Hussein.

By late 2003 there still seemed to be no plan, and senior officers were deployed as provincial governors, but there was little or no interaction with the Foreign Office or

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<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 4



DIFD (Department for International Development) . When the Iraqi interim government was established in June 2004, the British reduced their nation-building activities and the focus was placed on Security Sector Reform (SSR).

The uncertainty and lack of a plan seems to have been a feature of most of the occupation. The UK Stabilisation Unit, which coordinated post-conflict reconstruction only began operating in Iraq in 2006, and the first provisional reconstruction team was set up later that year (Chin, 2008: 125). Chin argues that it was lack of support to the military as much as the complex environment which explains the British failure in the South, and that although engineers believed \$7.2 billion was needed to repair the region's physical infrastructure, only £500 million was made available five months into the occupation, and this was only increased to £700 million in 2007 (ibid: 125), and this is for funding up to 2012 (Macpherson, 2010). Pledges of \$33billion were secured at the Madrid Donors' Conference in 2003 from nearly 40 donors including pledges from the IMF and World Bank (ibid), but how and whether this has been spent is not within this brief.

Major General Andy Salmon who commanded British forces in southern Iraq from August 2008 to March 2009 says that he never saw a 'comprehensive strategic plan' for the South East and that he, the Consul General, the head of the Provincial Reconstruction Team and 'to a certain extent the head of the US regional embassy office, decided to ensure that we had a much more collective consensus, joined-up approach, because nobody was in charge' (Salmon, 2010: 27). Sir Roderick Lyne makes the point that it took five years for this 'joined-up' effort to come into effect, and asks which British minister was in charge of the operation. Salmon replies 'It was in the main the military guy because it became a very military oriented operation' (Salmon, 2010:32).

The 'operation' was thus predominantly military, and it would seem that it was an occupation and not just an operation. In a written statement to the Chilcot Inquiry, Jack Straw, then Foreign Secretary writes

we would be bound by the 1907 Hague Regulations as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We would therefore be considered an occupying power with responsibility for providing "public order and safety,

while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country (Straw, 2011: 18).

Sir Mike Jackson, Chief of the General Staff from January 2003 until August 2006 is also clear about his views on what he thought the occupation should entail. He describes it as

What you are trying to do is take a country from some dark past and move it into a rather better future where it has stability, where it has an economy growing and all of that. If Donald Rumsfeld didn't like the phrase 'nation building' I think it is rather apt for what you are trying to do (Jackson, 2010: 4).

This acknowledgement of responsibility for the occupation is important, as they can be taken as markers for judging the conduct and ability of the British military. This judgement contributes to the discourse of the soldiers as heroes, and whether their success justifies the war. The stated aim of the occupation was to 'provide public order and safety, while respecting ... the laws in force in the country' (1907 Hague Regulations). If this was not achieved, then the occupation, and thus the British military can be judged to have failed and has ramifications on how the soldiers are presented by the media.

Problems of terminology did not just apply to defining the political role of the British and Coalition in Iraq, but also of what sort of war they were fighting when they were being invaders, occupiers or co-rulers, and it is here that the media encountered the major problem in the coverage of the war. It will thus be important to look at what terms are used to describe what the British military is doing in Iraq, at what the media perceive to be their role, but then also to examine what the military thought they were doing in Iraq. In the next section I look at what the roles assigned to the military by the Chilcot Inquiry and some of the literature.

## **6.2. What were the British doing in Iraq?**

If authors and the press are confused about what was the role of the military in occupied Iraq, it is a pale reflection of the confusion of role as understood by the military and government themselves. This seems to have originated in part from the confusion as to the British role overall in Iraq. It was as late as October 2003 that

Britain realised that they would be put in charge of the South (Hoon. 2010). However, Sir Hilary Synnott, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority<sup>53</sup> (CPA) South remarked at the Chilcot Inquiry that as the occupying powers under the UN Security Council Resolution it did surprise him that the British had not anticipated having a high degree of civilian authority in the South (Synnott, 2009:11). He believes that this failure was compounded by the fact that the UK never established an effective governmental mechanism to coordinate British resources, that the civilian effort was inadequate so leaving the ‘hard pressed military with too much to do in fields where it had limited expertise’ (Synnott interviewed by Norton-Taylor in *The Guardian* 17.4.2009).

It also seems that the military did not expect or seem to want a major or long term campaign in Iraq. Jackson states that ‘In 2004 the British planning assumptions were that we would be either out of Iraq or down to a training team, a large training team basis, but we would not be conducting operations’ (Jackson, 2010: 52).

When Rory Stewart arrived in Iraq as Deputy Governorate Coordinator of Maysan province for the Coalition Provincial Authority he was told by General Lamb that the military ‘was forced to perform political and economic roles that were better done by civilians’ but Lamb referred to himself as the de-facto governor of the province (Stewart 2006: 25). Alderson writes that for most of 1 Mechanised Brigade’s tour<sup>54</sup> military operations focussed on Security Sector Reform (SSR), ‘This was despite the Army having no formal doctrine or conducting any training for it ...the range of activities required soldiers to conduct traditional security operations as well as acting as diplomats, local administration advisors, infrastructure consultants and economic development advisors’ (Alderson, 2009:145).

In June with the hand over to an interim Iraqi government, Lt. General Jonathon Riley took over as GOC MND SE (General Officer Commanding, Multi National Division South East). He says that reconstruction was not strictly speaking his task, but his responsibility was for coordinating day to day operations with the coalition

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<sup>53</sup> The governing body established by the Coalition on May 13th under the guidance of Paul Bremer to transition the country to democracy. It was dissolved on June 28th 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Telic 4, six months from April 2004

forces on the ground in close partnership with the Iraqis, and ‘interface with the national and provincial governors’ (Riley, 2009: 11). In an interview with Colonel Alderson, Gen Riley states ‘Unlike during war fighting operations, I knew that we had to achieve effect in a different way and there was a need to engage with the local people’ (Alderson, 2009: 140).

Thus the military does not just have a military role, but is closely involved in political negotiations and in the administration of the South East, all be it unwillingly. As stated in the previous section, the military were the occupiers. They were not just involved in the provision of security but involved in the government of the south of Iraq and again as occupiers had a responsibility to the country they occupied. For example, the military worked with DIFD in implementing ‘Quick Impact Projects’ in the initial year of the occupation. These were designed to win hearts and minds of the local population and so improve the security situation, and were behind the Emergency Structure Programme developed by the military and Hilary Synnott, the Regional Coordinator of the CPA. This programme involved forty different projects largely identified by the Royal Engineers which helped to improve the supply of power, and water supplies in Basra (Drummond. 2009).

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams introduced in 2006 were also made up of the military and civilians. In 2007 after the Iraqis had elected their government, the military was still very much involved in politics. Major General Jonathan Shaw, Commander MNF SE liaised closely with the British Consul General on the political plan for the Southern Iraq Steering Group, where he worked up the execution of the plans for this group and his office was the coordinating headquarters for the organisation, and where the orders originated (Shaw, 2010: 36). Des Browne, the Secretary of State for Defence from May to October 2008 states that he

accepted shared responsibility for development of this country (Iraq) and its governance and its ability to look after its own security, and latterly I became involved in a whole list of other things including economic development and.. so did the troops that we deployed (Browne, 2010: 6).

These statements emphasise that the role of the British military throughout the duration of the occupation was not just that of patrolling and fighting. They were also involved in politics and certainly in the early days in actually governing the

country and working closely with civilians, both British and Iraqi, and part of the research in this study is to see if this discourse of them as administrators of the region surfaces in the documentary and news coverage.

### **6.3 The Humanitarian role of the British military**

The justification for war in Iraq and other wars has been war for humanitarian purposes<sup>55</sup>. An important issue in the Chilcot Inquiry was to look at the role of the British military as trainers of the Iraqi forces. The efficacy of the British in establishing a functional security force is an important factor for the Chilcot Inquiry, and also a role that I consider when looking at the role of the British military portrayed in the news and documentaries.

When I was in Basra filming 1 Royal Horse Artillery (1RHA) in August 2004 their role was in setting up and training the Iraqi police. It was clear then that the Iraqi police were being infiltrated by the militia. DVD's being sold on the streets showed police marching with the Mahdi army, and the Chief of Police refused to take action against the Mahdi army when they took Basra in the summer of 2004. At the Chilcot Inquiry, Hoon was asked when he was told that the police training wasn't working, he replied 'When the message came back really that, without more help from those who are more expert in this field, we are not the right people to do this job' (Hoon, 2010: 169). Although the responsibility for the police was in fact given to the Foreign Office, Lt General Jonathon Riley admits that it was not fair to have given them this responsibility, as 'they had little experience of it' (Riley, 2009: 28). In 2005 it was given back to the MoD. The 12-month Iraqi Police Service development strategy acknowledged that the military 'should play a key role in 'generic' policing areas' (infrastructure, equipment, non-specialist training) (Smith 2010:2).

On May 31<sup>st</sup> 2005 *The Guardian* reported that the Chief of Police, General Hassan al-Sade only trusted a quarter of his force, and that half of it was secretly working for 'political parties'. The events of September 19<sup>th</sup> should perhaps not have come

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<sup>55</sup> See section 2:1

as such a surprise to the television media. The British forces stormed the Jamiat Police station, the Headquarters of the Serious Crimes Unit who had captured two SAS operatives. By this time the British were not allowed into the station, it was apparent that the police and this unit in particular were being run by the militia. After this incident the Governor of Basra Mohammed al-Waeli, ordered the police force to end all cooperation with the British (Urban, 2010: 208). At the Chilcot Inquiry Sir Roderick Lyne asked General Houghton who was senior British military representative from October 2005 to March 2006, why it had taken two and a half years to realise the corruption of the police, he replied ‘ I don’t think that we had a full understanding of that at the back end of 2005. That was more revealed to us incrementally, as 2006 ensued’ (Houghton. 2009). Governor al-Waeli’s non cooperation with the British military and the fact that Maliki declared a month long state of emergency in Basra in May 2006, should have given General Houghton some idea that things were not well. More than one hundred people were killed in the space of a month (HC 110: 2007).

By 2006 Lt General Sir Richard Shirreff admits that the specialist police units were ‘significantly infiltrated by the militia, and of course the linkage between the militia, Iranian-backed, Iranian-equipped, trained, directed in many cases meant that the specialist police units were a serious problem’ (Shirreff, 2010: 28). According to a militia leader, ‘80 percent of assassinations in 2006 were committed by individuals wearing police uniforms, carrying police guns and using police cars (Fairweather, 2011: 13). North writes that by May 2006 one person was being murdered in Basra every hour (2009:104). He adds ‘The British had long since lost their grip, resembling a somewhat ineffectual referee in a game where the players had abandoned the ball and were beating each other up’ (ibid: 104). But by then it seems that the Police were understood to be an Iraqi problem, and the fact that they had been appointed and trained by the British military, with some British police involvement seems to have been forgotten, although there was some acknowledgement at the Chilcot Inquiry from General Barney White-Spunner that they did err in their method of training the police as ‘home counties’ policemen, and that something slightly ‘more robust’ was needed (White-Spunner, 2010: 43). They seemed to have learned more robust methods by themselves.

It would thus seem from the Inquiry and from the literature mentioned above, that the British army did have a significant humanitarian role as trainers for the Iraqi security forces. However, there is also evidence that in spite of this training the police force was infiltrated by the militias and became part of the violence, rather than a constraint on the violence. The reporting of this role would contribute to the discourse of the soldiers as nation-builders, although the subsequent behaviour of the police and security forces would also signify a problem for the humanitarian justification for involvement in Iraq.

According to North the MoD got round this problem by adopting an ‘insidious yet seductive doctrine’ (2009:86) which was that the security for British forces had deteriorated, while it had improved for local people, ‘a spurious justification for British withdrawal’ (ibid). The narrative of this ‘exit strategy’ was that the British forces should be withdrawn as they were causing violence and were redundant as the training of the Iraqi security forces was successful and any further violence was an Iraqi problem.

An alternative explanation was available in a report to the House of Commons which read:

The initial goal of UK Forces in South Eastern Iraq was to establish the security necessary for the development of representative political institutions and for economic reconstruction. Although progress has been made, this goal remains unfulfilled (HC110, 2007: 37).

In the next section I examine another area of inquiry at the Chilcot Inquiry which also affected the role and performance of the military in Iraq, and which is thus also a subject which I expect to be raised in the television coverage of the British military. This is the fact that the army was not only present in Iraq, but fighting in Afghanistan and which had implications on the coverage of issues such as the shortage of equipment and men in Iraq.

#### **6.4. Fighting on two fronts.**

The media’s construction of the role of the military as fighters, politicians, builders and police will be examined, but of equal if not greater importance from the strategic

and political point of view is the question of whether there were enough soldiers to carry out all of these tasks. How the apparent shortage of soldiers is presented by the media is important, as if blame lies with the politicians who sent the soldiers to fight with not enough equipment, it absolves the army from responsibility and intensifies the discourse of betrayal of the soldiers. At the Chilcot Inquiry this problem is seen as a problem of supply but equally as a question of whether the decision to engage one army in two theatres was a strategic one. The Inquiry then attempts to establish who took this decision.

A major reason for the insistence on withdrawing from Iraq was that troops were needed for Afghanistan. A main assumption voiced is that the troops were underfunded and thus badly provisioned to fight on two fronts. At the Inquiry an alternative interpretation is also offered which is that the decision to fight on two fronts with a limited budget was bad housekeeping, and hence the questioning from the panel as to who was responsible for this decision.

The decision had strategic ramifications. James Tansley, the Consul General in Basra from the end of Sept 2005 to April 2006 mentions that there was considerable pressure from the MoD to make an early move in both Muthanna and Maysan provinces to free up troops to go to Afghanistan. Maysan borders Iran, and the increasing Iranian influence contributed to the escalation in violence in 2006-2007 (HC 982:6)

In his article for RUSI, King states that by 2006 the government and the MoD were focused on Afghanistan, 'having dismissed Basra as a lost cause' (King 2009). The problems of overstretch, that is fighting on two fronts, is raised at the Inquiry in the questioning of Dr John Reid Secretary of State for Defence May 2005 until May 2006. He states firmly that he took advice from General Mike Walker, and General Mike Jackson who said the military could operate on both fronts, and emphasised that the decision to go to Afghanistan would not take troops out of Iraq (Reid. 2010). Sir Kevin Tebbit, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence July 1998 to November 2005 also understood that the Chiefs of Staff felt they were able to run both theatres, although he had concerns (Tebbit. 2010).



In contrast, Geoff Hoon, the Minister of Defence felt that it would have been better to have drawn down numbers in Iraq before committing to a NATO operation in Afghanistan (Hoon. 2010). He is backed up by vice Admiral Charles Style, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, January 2006 to June 2007, Air Chief marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, Chief of the Defence Staff from July 2006 to April 2009, and Lt. General Sir Richard Shirreff, Commander MND SE who all say they felt that Afghanistan impacted on their activity in Iraq whether it was on the availability of troop numbers, or of equipment such as the unmanned aerial devices and helicopters. They do not say who took the decision, but seemed to feel it had a deleterious effect on operations in Iraq, both in terms of numbers and moral. Shirreff quotes a letter that he wrote saying that ‘it beggars belief that nearly three and a half years after the start of this campaign, we still have no UAV capable of flying in south east Iraq’. He goes on to say that he thought it was because the MoD was incapable of generating the drive and energy to deliver them (Shirreff, 2010: 36), not that they could not be obtained.

General Sir Richard Dannatt also thought that the army was being asked to do too much by operating in two major theatres, and stated that he was ‘totally unaware’ of the decision taken in 2004 to send the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps to Afghanistan in 2006 (Dannatt, 2010:13), which says much for the system of decision making in the British military. General Sir Mike Jackson, who as Chief of the Defence Staff was in charge of the army so must have been involved in any major decisions regarding military engagements, side-steps the question of whether the demand on the army in Afghanistan affected operations in Iraq by saying that in his opinion the army did cope with the pressure. At the Inquiry, Sir Roderick Lyne states that John Reid asked for specific assurances that ‘we could handle both situations from the Chiefs of Staff’ (Jackson, 2010: 67). He was told by the Chief of Defence Staff (General Sir Mike Jackson) in writing on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 that they could. Lyne adds ‘so we had committed ourselves to an exit strategy and deprived ourselves of the option, if we wanted it, or making a substantial reinforcement to deal with losing control of law and order in Basra?’ (ibid). Jackson doesn’t answer the specific question, but again repeats that the army did cope.

Dannatt believed the decision to send troops to Afghanistan did have ramifications, and talked about a 'perfect storm' scenario in 2006 when the insurgency became uncontrollable in Iraq, and the army had to send troops to Afghanistan. Sir Roderic Lyne asks him 'What at a strategic level in 2006 was the United Kingdom able to do or seeking to do in Iraq? Dannatt replies, 'I don't think nationally we had sorted out what our future long-term intentions were with regard to Iraq, what relationship we wanted to have as far as Iraq was concerned' (Dannatt, 2010: 79). He says that in his three years as Chief of the General Staff, he wasn't able to voice his concerns about the pressure that the army was under, as he never attended a Cabinet or a Cabinet Subcommittee, and only had a one-to-one discussion with Blair in his last month as Prime Minister (Dannatt, 2010: 90).

From the Chilcot Inquiry it thus seems that the British army was involved in a major expedition which was not agreed to by senior members of the armed forces, and once the decision was taken they could not change their mind even though it was affecting operations in Iraq. The lack of equipment in Iraq can thus be seen to be in part because of this decision to fight on two fronts, rather than a fault of the politicians for not providing the MoD with sufficient money. The lack of communication between the CoGS and the Prime Minister, and the seeming lack of consultation between senior military officers when making major are thus major areas which affect the actions of the British military, and will also be an subject to explore in the television news and documentaries.

## **6.5 Strategy**

As stated above, the demand to fight on two fronts cannot but have had an effect on the military's role in Iraq. What is also important to consider when looking at this role is the conduct of war fighting, arguably its main function and the reason for the military's existence. It would seem axiomatic that when making a programme or looking at an organisation conducting its business, a main question should be, how does it work and is it effective? So some investigation or analysis of the military strategy, of the tactics of fighting should be undertaken. This is of even more interest when it became clear in Iraq that British and American military strategy was diverging, and the US choice of strategy seemed to be more effective.

Not only were the Coalition forces unsure about what was going on in the country with regards to insurgency and violence, but there were also various interpretations as to how to deal with it within the military itself which lead to further confusion. Added to this was the lack of understanding by much of the media of Iraqi politics, of the political role the military had to play and the nature of counter-insurgency.

It is perhaps both the nature of conflict, and the particular conflict in Iraq which posed problems for the press. Major General Jonathan Shaw, the commander of the Multi-National Force from January to August 2007 talked of dealing with the ‘Shia Polity’ at the Chilcot Inquiry. He refers to Charles Tripp’s analysis (2007) of the ‘Shadow State’ of Iraq, that is the militias who actually ran Iraq, and the ‘dark state’, that is the people who made themselves illegal by their action but who were also part of the shadow state. It was the shadow state that had to be dealt with and ‘reconciled’ with the de jure state if Iraq was to gain any semblance of self-government. It was not just the press and academia which had difficulties in understanding Iraqi politics. King writes that one of the main failings by the British military was their interpretation of the Shia insurgency in Basra as criminality (King 2009)<sup>56</sup>, and thus their reaction<sup>56</sup> to it. The British interpretation of criminality rather than insurgency was counter to the interpretation of the US, and the policy of reducing force levels ran counter to classic counterinsurgency theory (Alderson 2009).

Betz & Cormack write ‘The British Army has not implemented a proper counter-insurgency campaign in either theatre of operations (that is Iraq and Afghanistan), whether this accounts for the whole or just part of the strategic failure is another question’ (2009: 323). Much of the blame for this ‘strategic hole into which the Army has fallen’ they argue, lies with ‘the attitude of the British Government which is in part a reflection of public opinion’s hostility to the invasion of Iraq’ (ibid:321). They add also with reference to Afghanistan,

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<sup>56</sup> In the report to the House of Commons Defence Committee, it states ‘In South Eastern Iraq, there was no sectarian insurgency... Instead the violence was propagated by Shia gangsterism and Iranian-backed militias. .... Academic witnesses to our inquiry agreed that in South eastern Iraq the problem was the battle over resources rather than sectarianism (HC 2007)

Ongoing British operations have become like the crazy aunt living in the attic, a familial embarrassment nobody wants to talk about. The government lacks the will to escalate the situation in the hopes of achieving some sort of victory (however defined...) or to bear the diplomatic impact of cutting its losses and running. As a result, the Army is committed just enough to lose (ibid: 327).

Rangwala also points to the seeming lack of commitment by the British military, both because of the unwillingness to suffer extensive casualties for a cause that lacked popularity with the British electorate, but also he says because of a belief that Iraqi society could not be transformed by a short term military occupation (Rangwala, 2007: 298). The British strategy of selective withdrawal can be compared to the American strategy of the surge, and the 'Sahwa' or Awakening movement, and authors such as North (2009) compare these and find the British strategy lacking.<sup>57</sup> Kilcullen confirms that there are sharp differences between the UK and USA who held divergent strategic views over relative priorities, and indeed the conceptual basis for the war (on terrorism) and that in the United Kingdom 'Iraq and Afghanistan were regarded as alliance commitments rather than as part of the counterterrorism strategy' (Kilcullen, 2009: 280). Prof. Clarke of RUSI states that

The Pentagon and Congress have become pretty sceptical about UK military contributions even though they value them from a political point of view. The army needs to get the record straight with its American counterpart and recover some lost reputation in Washington (Norton-Taylor, *The Guardian* 17.4.2009).

It is noticeable that assumptions are made in the press about the superiority of British military strategy and references made to its past imperial history, but that even when the two countries began to follow a different military strategy, the ability of the British military was not questioned. As stated in the introduction, the question that Britain might have failed strategically was raised as the opinion of an American Colonel, and not as the opinion of the newspapers.<sup>58</sup> The question of strategy is complicated by the differences of opinion which were also going on within the British military itself, and how this was manifested.

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<sup>57</sup> A headline from *The Washington Post* 7 August 2007. reads 'As British leave, Basra deteriorates' and they quote a senior US intelligence official as saying that 'the British have basically been defeated in the south'.

<sup>58</sup> *The Telegraph* 8/8/2007

Vice Admiral Charles Style, DCDS (Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff) January 2006 to June 2007 admitted to the Chilcot Inquiry that ‘if you go back to the original overarching strategic objectives we had from .... five years ago, it was a pretty substantial aspiration ...our realistic sense of what was going to be achievable got considerably reduced in real terms over time’ (Style, 2010: 39). Lt General Sir Richard Shirreff seemed to think that in order to achieve transition to Iraqi control in the south, a surge was needed in force numbers to achieve security<sup>59</sup>. Dr John Reid, Secretary of Defence from May 2005 to May 2006 disagrees and actually refers to Shirreff’s strategy saying ‘I think that was an abnormal view, that this would be solved with masses of troops and guns charging into Basra. I don’t think that was the general view re counter-insurgency (Reid, 2010: 70). King writes that the favoured British military tactic was short-term aggressive raiding tactics which alienated moderate Basrawis and hardened the JAM<sup>60</sup> against the British without achieving their defeat, and that this strategy was ‘deeply embedded in the British military culture’ (King 2009). The evidence of the disagreement of what strategy to follow can be seen also in Operation Sinbad, conducted in 2007 when General Sir Richard Sherriff seemed to be attempting his version of the US surge.

Much of the success of the American’s strategy (as in the counterinsurgency operation in Tal Afar by Colonel McMasters (Ledwidge 2011) laid out in their manual FM 3-24 can be attributed to the adoption of past British counter-insurgency tactics, yet many of these seem to have been forgotten by the British themselves. Urban notes that SAS and M16 personnel who visited Basra from October 2003 into the following year, ‘talk with despair about the general half-heartedness of the operation’ and of ‘a critical mass of complacency in an officer corps formed in Northern Ireland and the Balkans’ which contributed to the ‘lack of energy with which intelligence gathering or training the Iraqi police was conducted’ (Urban, 2010: 42). Mockaitis writes that British approach to counterinsurgency was ‘a matter of broad principles transmitted informally from one generation of soldiers and civil servants to the next’ (1990: 188). This cult of the amateur and the army’s

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<sup>59</sup> Much along the lines of the American ‘surge’ and counter insurgency strategy.

<sup>60</sup> Jaysh Al Mahdi, the military wing of the Sadrists.

disdain for doctrine contributed to their inability to apply to Iraq strategy which had worked in previous insurgencies, such as Malaya (Ledwidge 2011).

Colonel Peter Mansoor of the US army writes:

Rather than protecting the Iraqi people in Basra and thereby insulating them from militia violence and intimidation, British political and military leaders had abdicated responsibility for their security – the exact opposite of what was happening in Baghdad and elsewhere, as US forces were moving off their large forward operating bases to position themselves among the Iraqi people where they lived (*British Army Review* 146:11).

The failure of the British counterinsurgency strategy compared to the later success of the American surge is outlined in literature (North 2009, Ledwidge 2011, King 2009). Whether the television media picks this up will be examined.

## **6.6. The Special Relationship**

The relationship between the US military and British military was an issue under media consideration since the invasion of Iraq, with criticism of Blair's dog like devotion to Bush. It becomes an issue at the Inquiry, where the chain of command of the alliance is clearly set out. Most of the people questioned at the Chilcot Inquiry stress their good relations with the Americans, but it would seem that the British were in a subordinate role. Ledwidge writes of the Government's self-delusion that accompanying the US into Iraq 'might provide leverage and a ticket to the big league' (2011), and Generals Williams and Lamb cite the 'almost pathological national ego-based problem with operating as a junior partner' (Williams & Lamb 2010:41). However the extent of the dependency on the US and the extent of the subordination seem at first glance to be another silence in the media discourse on the British military presence in Iraq. In an article looking at the political economic relationship between the UK and US Halperin shows how dependent the UK is on the American economy. The US is Britain's biggest investor, British Aerospace derives 'more of its income from the US defence Department than from the British Ministry of Defence and two-thirds of the banks (and bank capital) of the City of London are non British, the bulk American' (Halperin, 2011: 215). She argues that the Anglo-American invasion was fought for

the benefit of their corporate interests, and argues that Britain is economically dependent on the USA (ibid 2011).

I hope to establish whether this unequal relationship which was manifest in the occupation of Iraq is explored by the media or whether the comforting assumption of a ‘partnership of equals’ is imposed by the television media. Cracks do appear at the Inquiry. Des Browne, admits that he wasn’t told of the response to the Baker Hamilton report, ‘nor about the surge until just before it was implemented’<sup>61</sup>(Browne, 2010: 33). This implies that however good the professional relationships were with Bob Gates, the Defence Secretary and General Petraeus (ibid: 29) the US still did not feel it necessary to discuss with their chief ally their plans for a complete change of strategy which would impact on the entire occupation. What is less covered are the fears of the US with regards to the deterioration of security in the south and the infiltration of Iranian influence, a major worry to the US forces, and what pressure the British government and military might have been put under to sort out the situation.

King echoes Halperin (2011) by arguing that one of the unstated but decisive reasons for invading Iraq was the strategic importance of the transatlantic link, ‘Britain went to war in order to sustain the alliance with the United States and all the political and military benefits which flowed there from’ (2009: 49). If this is the case, it provides if not legitimacy, then a frame for the war, and the relations between the two countries would be an important consideration in the television coverage of the British military. I will thus also examine the coverage of the relationship and the divergence in military strategy between the US and Britain.

## **6.7. Cost**

A feature in the discourse of the suffering soldier, which has become more dominant since the Iraq war, is the question of military spending. I would suggest that there

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<sup>61</sup> The Baker-Hamilton report basically proposed a phased withdrawal of forces from Iraq, much along the lines planned by the British. However, after the intervention of General Petraeus ‘the surge’ was implemented and instead 20,000 extra troops were sent to Baghdad and Anbar province.

are two ways the subject of military budgets are covered, and it will be interesting to see how far the one takes precedence over the other in the documentaries and news I look at. The first and pertinent to all war is the myth of spectacular war ‘manufactured in part in large part, as a desperate measure to help provide a *raison d’être* for the (increasingly out of control) military industrial complexes in the US and UK’ (Keeble, 2004: 43).

A feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century war, or the ‘information war’ mentioned by Tumber & Webster is ‘sustained efforts to dovetail industrial production and the military struggle’ (2006: 27). Lewis notes that even in the First Gulf war ‘the informational climate that associates the military budget with moderation rather than excess’ was part of the narrative discourse. (Lewis, 2001: 203). As noted, this was also part of the discourse of the war in Kosovo, and was also evident in the Iraq war, where at the beginning of the war there were numerous stories about the lack of equipment and shortages of body armour and boots for the soldiers, not that each milan 2 anti tank missile round cost £12,000 and that to date the army has bought 50,000 of them ([www.armedforces.co.uk](http://www.armedforces.co.uk)). The emphasis on kit and equipment might also be attributable to the strength of the scientific discourse, where it is believed that technology is the answer to a problem, that better and more scientific equipment will save lives, also take more lives. If it is assumed that better weapons will save lives then it becomes harder to question the cost of that equipment, and other factors such as strategy, and intelligence gathering which also play a factor in saving lives, are not questioned.

The question of funding arose in the Chilcot Inquiry. In his evidence, Sir Bill Jeffrey, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence since 2005 said it was not the case that the budget for the MoD had been underfunded or cut, but that ‘but that we have a very serious management issue, which we have been trying to work through in the last few years’ (Jeffrey, 2010: 12). Part of the problems of management seems to be the complication of budget allocation from a resource into a cash source, but also that the complexity of the funding mechanism. As well as the budget which the MoD gets as part of the spending review, there are three streams of additional funding. The ‘conflict pool’ for the relevant departments, managed by the FCO and DifD and the MoD for spending on conflict prevention and stabilisation



(MacPherson, 2010: 2), and the Reserve which pays for additional cost of military operations, such as operational allowances, consumption of munitions, supplies etc (ibid:2), and special reserve. Included in the reserve budget are UOR's, Urgent Operation Requirements for 'equipment enhancements that have arisen due to the particular demands in a specific operational theatre' (Macpherson, 2010: 2).

Professor Malcolm Chalmers from RUSI states that the 'core' budget, 'has grown by about 1% per year' (*Channel 4 News*, 5/3/2010), and £7.3 billion has been spent since operations in Iraq and Afghanistan began (MoD website)<sup>62</sup>. Sir Lawrence Freedman quotes '£2 billion worth of UOR's were provided to UK forces for operations to Iraq' (O'Donoghue, 2010: 55). The light armoured vehicles, the Mastiff's bought temporarily to replace the snatches came from this budget, and according to General Sir Kevin O'Donoghue, chief of Defence Logistics from 2005, the requirement reached him in June 2006, and the first four vehicles were in theatre by December 2006 (O'Donoghue, 2010: 84). In relation to the debate about the procurement of helicopters, another 'lack' pointed out by the media, Sir Peter Spencer, the Chief of Defence procurement May 2003-March 2007, states:

The treasury didn't say, 'You can't buy helicopters'. The treasury said, 'Here is your sum of money'. So those are the key questions to tax the whole of the top leadership and defence as to where those priorities lie (Spencer, 2010: 60).

Thus it would not seem to be so much a question of lack of money, but how it was spent. Richard North argues that the Generals, Jackson, Danatt and the Ministry of Defence were intent on arming the military for a post-cold war, the Future Rapid Effects System or FRES, a vast electronic communications network. Huge sums were allocated to developing this system which North calls a 'fantasy'. (North, 2009: 235). He concludes:

Up to the end of November 2008 the total expenditure on the FRES programme had been £155.2 million of which some £132 million had been spent on the utility vehicle project – with nothing at all to show for the money (ibid: 243).

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<sup>62</sup> This is adding the years 2003-2010 spending in Iraq noted on the MoD facts and figures website which comes to £7,306 million.

In North's opinion the use of the Snatch vehicle (a lightly armoured land-rover used in Northern Ireland) epitomised the tragic failure of the wrong war being fought, and its frequent appearance in the media signified the typical approach to military procurement by the media 'ill-informed, inaccurate and missing the point... It never challenged the strategic, tactical or technical assumptions on which decisions were based' (North, 2009: 223). For him equipment became a political stick with which to beat the government. This would also perhaps explain the dichotomy of a huge over-spend by the Ministry of Defence with an ill-equipped and underfunded army. At the Chilcot Inquiry John Hutton, the Secretary for Defence from October 2008 to June 2009 admitted that FRES was a 'shambles' and that ten years into it 'we still haven't got a single vehicle' (Hutton, 2010: 24).

Thus, it was not that the money was lacking, but that the decisions of where to spend it were lacking, and again the discourse of the betrayed or suffering soldier who had been denied proper equipment, meant that questions about how much money had actually been spent<sup>63</sup>, and who was deciding to throw it away on procurements like FRES, or why the procurement system in place wasn't working, were never asked.

It was not just the lack of questioning about how the money was spent, but also on why the money has to be spent. Lewis points to the role the media play in creating a climate in which 'it is difficult to countenance cutting military budgets' and their function in diminishing opposition to war, and sidelining the question of why we 'spend so much on military power when there are so many other pressing public spending needs' (Lewis, 2008: 111). This informs the discourse of 'supporting the troops' and part of the cause of their suffering is lack of proper equipment which turns them into betrayed heroes.

War is always about betrayal. It is about the betrayal of the young by the old, idealists by cynics and finally soldiers by politicians... We prefer the myth of war, the myth of glory, honour, patriotism and heroism, words that in the terror and brutality of combat are empty and meaningless (Hedges 2004 as quoted by Woodward et al 2009:220).

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<sup>63</sup> The knock-on costs from the war were also not queried. For example in the Chilcot Inquiry, Lady Manningham-Butler states she had to ask PM for a doubling of her budget to deal with threats from Iraq, 'This is unheard of, it's certainly unheard of today' (Manningham-Butler 2010: 27).

The realities of the Strategic Defence Review and the shift in budget allocations from a cash to a resource allocation are perhaps more difficult to understand and explain to a mathematically challenged audience. They also have less news values than a portrayal of ‘betrayed heroes’.

### **6.8. Summary**

In other sections of the media other opinions surfaced. In *The Independent*, Patrick Cockburn wrote ‘Britain’s long campaign in Iraq achieved almost nothing’ (19 December 2008). ‘Our troops had few friends in Basra’ (North, 2009: 204). North believes that the major fault of the defeat in Iraq lay with the politicians and Blair, but that the army was not without fault. ‘Its equipment was wrong, its tactics were wrong, and in the final analysis, it lost faith in its mission and gave up.’ (Ibid: 227). For him the media was also to blame writing that it ‘failed in its most fundamental task of reporting the news, and its analysis was too often trivial or non-existent.’ (ibid: 251). The MoD is also severely criticised as being economical with the truth in that ‘major actions went unrecorded simply because the MoD never gave any details of them and if it has any complaints as to the way information was handled, it need only look at itself’ (ibid: 253).

The judgement about whether the occupation was a success or a failure is a difficult decision for the television media to make as the rules of occupation are not clear. As in the war itself, what constitutes success or failure? Michalski & Gow state that ‘very often weak obscure or even doubted bases for legitimacy can be overcome simply by good performance... as belief that something is being done for the right reason can mitigate poor performance’ (2007: 203).

Politicians and Generals criticise the media’s understanding of war (Reid 2010, Shaw 2010). Shaw writes that war must now ‘nestle in the interstices of polity, economy and culture (2005: 55) and that the idea that a war can be ‘packaged as a discrete political project, managed successfully and brought to a tidy conclusion, has been dealt a massive blow’ (2005:140). So it is with occupation. Previous frames and discourses used by the media do not fit the Iraq war or adequately explain the occupation.

In Iraq it would seem that both the performance and the legitimacy of the occupation are in doubt, which might explain the silences in the reporting of both. Certainly, according to Rupert Smith (2005), performance is in doubt because the utility of the force is in doubt. Conventional war, that is, where the clash of arms decides the outcome no longer exists; the utility of military forces in the occupation of Iraq depends on the ability of the force to adapt to complex political contexts and engage non-state opponents. Stirk (2009) writes, there are variations in views of the extent of obligations of occupiers, but historically an existence of an obligation on the part of the occupiers was enshrined in the Hague Regulations of 1907, article 43, as mentioned in the introduction. During his speech to Parliament on 18 December 2008 Prime Minister Gordon Brown outlined the mission objective in Iraq, saying that the UK seeks ‘security for the region, democracy in Iraq, and reconstruction to help the Iraqi people’ (Parliament 2008). Whether this was or is achievable still remains to be seen, but it can be argued that when the British forces left in 2009 in terms of evidence from the Chilcot Inquiry and other sources, it had not been achieved. It is also evident from the Chilcot Inquiry and other sources mentioned, that the role of the British forces was not only that of war-fighting, but also of training and governing, where an understanding of Iraqi politics was crucial to involvement in Iraq. It is not just the military which will have to adapt to a new way of conducting war, but the media will have to adapt to understanding how this war is fought, and how to report it.

## **Chapter 7: Findings in News and Documentaries**

Both documentary and news are grounded in reality as discourses of sobriety (Nichols 1991). My purpose in including an account of events in Iraq from the Chilcot Inquiry and other sources is to use a version of reality of the British military in Iraq against which to explore that portrayed by the television news and documentaries, and to look at how the dominant discourses in the latter ‘seduced, manipulated and silenced’ the alternative discourses (Dedaic 2006). In exploring these discourses I also aim to look at how the genres of news and television help or hinder this process and thus indicate shifts in these two genres.

As seen in the literature on the media coverage of war, in the presentation of war the media uses discourses such as the battle against evil<sup>64</sup>, fighting to do good<sup>65</sup> preventative war, and fighting looking for a purpose<sup>66</sup>. These themes are also manifest in the programmes studied, and the research undertaken in this Chapter is to identify these themes and the justifications for the war and occupation. I thus organise the issues in this chapter in the same pattern, looking at the major themes for justifying the occupation. The themes attempt to give legitimacy to the occupation (Ryman 2004) but also point to where strategy of the British military lies. Sovacool and Halfon write ‘Discourses bound the range of the possible, of reality, and as such ‘frame certain problems’, simultaneously forming the context in which phenomena are understood and presenting solutions to the problems that result’ (2007:225). The discourse therefore allows and constructs certain frames and excludes others, so it is important to identify the spoken and visual discourse, and the silent.

In the first section, I examine war legitimacy which asks the question why is the military in Iraq? I then examine the Manichean struggle of good against evil by looking at who the soldiers are fighting and at the representation of the ‘enemy’, as it is in this dichotomy that the soldier is positioned as war-fighter, peace-bringer or

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<sup>64</sup> see section 2.1

<sup>65</sup> See section 2.2

<sup>66</sup> See section 2.3

nation-builder, and the justification of the occupation as a humanitarian exercise can be examined. The following two sections expand this discourse as it would seem that as the media becomes more ambivalent about the justification of the occupation, the soldiers become its victims so questions about their role and purpose in the occupation are avoided. The military is still seen to be in Iraq for humanitarian reasons, albeit as victims, but the next section looks at an interwoven dominant theme, that is the discourse of the withdrawal strategy. This theme is the narration that the purpose of the military is basically humanitarian, which is training the Iraqi security forces, but also that they are dying because they are fighting which should be avoided. To accomplish this the British should leave Iraq having achieved the purpose for being there. Again no uncomfortable questions are asked about their role and responsibilities as occupiers.

The literature review<sup>67</sup> looked at how the media deals with death in war, and this theme is also investigated in the selected programmes to examine how the deaths of the soldiers positions the legitimacy and meaning of the occupation and the discourse surrounding the soldiers. Interwoven with the discourse of death is an assumption of risk and cost of war. In the following section I look at the concept of 'mathmaticized morality' (Beck 2000) where the value of deaths is judged by the seeming success of the occupation by many contributors, and the cost of the occupation becomes part of the discourse of mathmaticized morality. This elision of cost into a moral concept also deters questioning about financial costs of the occupation, and will be examined in this section.

I examine the dominant discourses and the communicative design first by presenting findings from the documentaries, then from the news. At the end of this chapter I sum up the findings, and at the end of the next chapter look at the general conclusions and effects of the dominant discourses. As this is a study in two parts, I will not draw over-all conclusion until all findings are presented. To conclude, I

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<sup>67</sup> Section 2.7

explore how these findings might contribute to the discourse and resist it, and also point out how the discourse itself might have affected changes in the genre.

### **7.1.War legitimacy: Why ‘we’ are in Iraq:**

Part of this study has been to look at the reasons given by the media for the justification for war, as examined in the literature review in Chapter 2. Foucault states that the system of the law is one of the major authorities of delineation in a discourse (2004)<sup>68</sup> and it is the justification for war and occupation which underlies the construction of the programmes about the British military.

The documentaries span a period of six years and it is perhaps to be expected that the issues raised would change with the unfolding of events in Iraq, but I first examine the basic question of why the British military was there, to establish a major theme of how the war/occupation is framed.

#### **7.1.a. Why are ‘we’ in Iraq in Documentaries**

In the documentaries, I look at the explanations given by both reporter in voice over or to camera, and the reasons given by those interviews as to what the military is doing in Iraq. Humanitarian reasons are the most often voiced. I list the reasons in descending order of popularity<sup>69</sup>:

1. Training and peace<sup>70</sup>.
2. No reason is given<sup>71</sup>
3. For fighting and peace-giving<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See p. 87 above

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix section 2.

<sup>70</sup> (*Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad* BBC 1. April 2005: *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05.; *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06: *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06, *Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008: *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

<sup>71</sup> (*Dispatches: Battle Fatigue* C4 22.5.06; *Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07: *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal* C4 17.3.08.18).

<sup>72</sup> (*Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 1.11.09 *Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty* Ep 2. 2008: *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

4. The British shouldn't be there<sup>73</sup>
5. To occupy<sup>74</sup>
6. It's a noble cause, not stated<sup>75</sup>
7. Being there to give it back<sup>76</sup>

The programmes which give the most detailed explanation are from the documentary stable.<sup>77</sup> *Soldier Husband, Daughter Dad* (BBC 2005) has actuality which shows the soldiers training the Iraqi Security Forces which also gives their presence context.

The reasons for being in Iraq roughly keep track with the change in military strategy, that is, Security Sector Reform, counter-insurgency and withdrawal, as outlined by Alderson (2009). In the documentaries in the early years the British are there to provide training for the Iraqi security forces and to make Iraq a 'better place'.<sup>78</sup> Doubts creep in as the situation in Basra deteriorates<sup>79</sup>. General Binns, commander of the British forces in Iraq, states 'We turned from an army of liberation into an army of occupation' (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07), but by the end of the British occupation Binns is quoted as saying 'I came to rid Basra of its enemies and now formally hand Basra back to its friends' (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08). After the Charge of the Knights, when security is restored in Basra, the reasons for being there return to a humanitarian theme, which is, the

<sup>73</sup> (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06; *Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07; *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08).

<sup>74</sup> (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07; *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

<sup>75</sup> (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07).

<sup>76</sup> (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08).

<sup>77</sup> *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* (BBC1 2005) and *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09.

<sup>78</sup> (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad*.BBC1 2005, *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05; *Dispatches: Iraq – The Reckoning*. C4 21.11.05; *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06 *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06).

<sup>79</sup> (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07; *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07)



establishment of democracy and these reasons comply with the exit strategy as outlined above.<sup>80</sup> ‘Our job in Basra was for Iraq to be run by the Iraqis and that is what is happening’ (Milliband. *Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08) and ‘We didn’t go there to kill people, we were there to help people, to get rid of somebody, but there’s obviously people that disagree with that’ (Zaman. *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq*. BBC4 19.6.09). Occasional doubts about the British presence are raised, for example, reporter Peter Osborne assigns the reason for the British presence in Iraq because of an ‘AWOL President and a delusional Prime Minister’ (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08), and newscaster Huw Edwards calls the occupation ‘the most controversial episodes in British foreign policy since the Second World War... Blair went in as he wanted to be friends with Bush’ (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09).

Another approach to looking at the military’s role is by looking at how the media view the Iraqis, as it can be argued that it is in their dealings with the Iraqis that the role of the military is also defined. For example, in the early days of the occupation when the military defined their role as ‘nation building’, and when the military perhaps felt it had to work with the Iraqis, and therefore have a sympathetic view of them, the Iraqis are referred to as ‘locals’, ‘Iraqis’, and ‘people’.<sup>81</sup> As the role of the military becomes that of SSR (Security Sector Reform) Peter Osborne, the reporter on *Dispatches*, talks of the ‘heavily armed home grown militia, waging a vicious battle with each other and coalition troops’, ‘traditional Islamic extremists’, Iraqis’<sup>82</sup> By 2005/2006 the description ‘militia’ is increasingly used<sup>83</sup>. In 2007 Jane Corbin, the reporter on *Panorama* describes the Iraqis as ‘dark forces stirring’, ‘suicide bombers’, ‘sectarian slaughter’, ‘the enemy’, ‘Shia militia’ and ‘death squads’.<sup>84</sup> By

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<sup>80</sup> See p.134

<sup>81</sup> (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05)

<sup>82</sup> (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05)

<sup>83</sup> (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05; *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06)

<sup>84</sup> (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07, *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07) .

2009 after the Charge of the Knights, and the restoration of security in Basra, as well as ‘elements of the militia’<sup>85</sup>, the Iraqis are referred to as ‘Iraqi people’, ‘Iraqis’, ‘the population’, ‘military groups’, ‘different insurgency groups’, and ‘the militia’<sup>86</sup>. So they are again part of the humanistic endeavour, perhaps worth saving and also more peaceful, which could imply the role of the British forces was now finished, so they could come home as part of the withdrawal strategy.

Looking at how the Iraqi’s are described throws some light on what role the programmes and the military saw the Iraqis taking and by association the role of the military, that is, as their enemy to be fought, or their friend to be helped. However, this still reveals a lack of clear determination as to what this role is and thus the purpose of their presence. Part of the difficulty in determining a fixed role for the military is that the Iraqis also had no fixed role, and their multitude of roles as citizen, insurgent, security forces, friend and foe did not sit comfortably into the binary framing of war. The documentaries echo the roles that the military themselves considered to be their reasons for being in Iraq, but it is a faint echo which describes or explains little. I will look at the portrayal of the Iraqis as ‘the enemy’ later.

It would thus seem that the reasons given for the military presence in Iraq roughly coincide with the change in military strategy, from nation building in the early years, to counter-insurgency, from 2007 onwards, to withdrawal. Some of the families of dead soldiers interviewed in the later documentaries talk about what their relatives were doing in earlier campaigns, so the reasons for being in Iraq do not correspond on exact time-lines, for example the commentary about Simon Miller (one of the six RMP’s killed) who ‘was helping to keep the peace’ (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09) refers to 2004, even though the programme is transmitted in 2009.

One explanation for the silence in explanation of what the military is doing is the assumption that the military is in Iraq, because war is in Iraq, and that is what

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<sup>85</sup> *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09

<sup>86</sup> *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09

happens in war, so no reason has to be given. Soldiers die or suffer bravely because that's what they do, and no more questions are asked<sup>87</sup>. This can be illustrated by the soldier's father Colin Redpath's answer to the question of why 'we are still there? 'Because we were already there, and it's not the time to be thinking why we shouldn't be there, we are there, we should get on and do the job, we have to support the troops' (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09). This refrain is like the lyrics of the World War One song 'We're here because we're here because we're here' (copyright unknown). Another reason for the lack of direct questions as to why the British military is in Iraq is that perhaps no-one would answer the question.

Some of the reasons given for being in Iraq are also given in very general terms without much explanation of exactly what they mean. For example, for the purposes of television how do you show someone 'establishing democracy'? It is a useful term to convey the purported humanitarian aim of the occupation, but there is no further investigation or interest in the elections in Iraq or the setting up of government to enable the viewer to come to some conclusion about the 'establishment of democracy'. *Panorama* for example, talks of 'free elections', and of the militias being the armed wing of the political parties 'elected to power in the new democracy Britain and America brought to Iraq' (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07), but Corbin does not say that the Sadrist refused to participate in the 2005 provincial elections, thus raising doubts about how effective the democracy was, or whether it was in fact democracy. In fact the victorious Islamic coalition failed to agree on the appointment of a governor of Basra, allowing the election by default of Governor Wa'ili whose Fadhila party had gained only 13 of the 41 seats, which can hardly be translated as a democratic success. *Dispatches* does offer a voice of caution by stating 'Far from handing over to a democratic and peaceful Iraq, the British have been driven out by local militias'<sup>88</sup>, but the connection between establishing a democracy and the role of the military is not specifically made, it is merely implied that the British should have handed over a democracy.

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<sup>87</sup> See section 2.4 on war looking for a purpose

<sup>88</sup> *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08: *Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08

The documentaries examined thus roughly echo the chronological military strategy of trying to impose security, of counter-insurgency and after the Charge of the Knights of working with the Iraqis to train forces and hand over to the Iraqis. The themes are also those covered in the literature review, that is being in Iraq for humanitarian reasons, providing security and fighting the good fight, but as the insurgency grows, they are there because that is what soldiers do, but are contributing to the violence so should return to the UK. However, there is a silence in the detail of what they are doing, in the description of what they do as occupiers, administrators and law enforcers. I now look at news to examine the coverage of the same issue, that is, the role of the British military in Iraq.

### **7.1.b. Why are ‘we’ in Iraq in News**

The storming of the Jamiat police station was a dramatic televisual event which indicated the deterioration of relations between the Iraqi police and the British military, and the infiltration of the security services by the Iraqi militia. The withdrawal of the remaining military unit from Basra Palace in September 2007, and the charge of the Knights (CoTK) in March 2008 were seen by the Iraqis and many Americans as evidence of a British military defeat. The next two major events are the hand-over to the Americans and the withdrawal of all British forces, except for a small naval training team in Basra.

There is no overall discussion of what the British military was actually doing in Iraq, their reasons for being there, or an explanation of the strategy which explained their actions. As in the war and of the moral paradox in Kosovo, Freedman writes ‘It was always easier to proclaim the morality of the ends pursued than of the means deployed’ (2000: 341). Their specific role at the time of the news item covered is often mentioned, although a sum-up of the six year period the British were in Iraq is given in April 2009, when the British handed over to the American forces

The television news items studied actually give a greater range of descriptions than documentaries as to why the military is there.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> See Appendix section 6.

- 1 Training<sup>90</sup>
  1. To occupy<sup>91</sup>
  2. Dying<sup>92</sup>
  3. Supporting the Iraqi forces<sup>93</sup>
  4. They are there to withdraw<sup>94</sup>
  5. To supply convoys<sup>95</sup>
  6. Because of the relationship with the US<sup>96</sup>
  7. Rebuilding<sup>97</sup>
  8. To fight<sup>98</sup>
  9. To watch/patrol<sup>99</sup>
  10. For security<sup>100</sup>
  11. As a colonial enterprise<sup>101</sup>
  12. As a mistake<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 19.9.05, BBC *News* 19.9.05, BBC *News* 20.9.05, C4 *News* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 26.3.08, BBC *News* 3.9.07, BBC *Newsnight* 3.9.07, BBC *News* 25.3.08, BBC *News* 27.3.08, C4 *News* 25.3.08, BBC *Newsnight* 27.3.08, ITV *News* 25.3.08, ITV *News* 1.4.08, C4 *News* 1.4.08, BBC *News* 31.3.09, ITV *News* 30.4.09)

<sup>91</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 20.9.05, ITV *News* 19.9.05, ITV *News* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 20.9.07, C4 *News* 3.9.07, BBC *News* 26.3.08, BBC *News* 30.4.09

<sup>92</sup> ITV *News* 26.3.08, C4 *News* 26.3.08, BBC *News* 31.3.09, ITV *News* 31.3.09, C4 *News* 30.4.09, BBC *News* 30.4.09, ITV *News* 30.4.09

<sup>93</sup> C4 *News* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 3.9.07, BBC *Newsnight* 3.9.07, C4 *News* 25.3.08, C4 *News* 29.3.08, BBC *Newsnight* 27.3.08, ITV *News* 1.4.08.

<sup>94</sup> BBC *News* 20.09.05, BBC *News* 2.3.07, BBC *Newsnight* 3.9.07; ITV *News* 1.4.08, BBC *News* 31.3.09, BBC *News* 30.4.09

<sup>95</sup> BBC *News* 26.3.08, BBC *News* 3.9.07, BBC *News* 28.3.08, BBC *Newsnight* 27.3.08)

<sup>96</sup> *Newsnight* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 3.9.07, C4 *News* 1.4.08, BBC *News* 1.4.08)

<sup>97</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 19.9.05, BBC *News* 30.4.09, ITV *News* 30.4.09

<sup>98</sup> BBC *News* 29.3.08, C4 *News* 31.3.09

<sup>99</sup> BBC *News* 21.9.05, BBC *News* 26.3.08, BBC *News* 27.3.08

<sup>100</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 19.9.05, ITV *News* 2.9.07

<sup>101</sup> BBC *News* 3.9.07

From 2005 the occupation was being couched in terms of a humanistic endeavour to strengthen the ‘withdrawal strategy’ as mentioned below where the training role of the British military is stressed. The confusion about the role of the military in the incident at the Jamiat police station is overcome by the presentation of the attack on the British as executed by a Shia militia which had infiltrated the police. It was seen as retaliation for the arrest by the British military of one of their leaders earlier in the week. It is also framed in terms of domestic policy with an appearance by Menzies Campbell (then leader of that party) as the Liberal Democrats conference was occurring that week<sup>103</sup>. The humanitarian theme is dominant, with ‘occupation’ as second description as to what the British are doing in Iraq, but the third and fifth most cited reasons fit into the third justification for war noted in chapter 2, that is being there because they are fighting. As in the documentaries, this thus requires no other justification for being there.

In the final batch of news, the coverage of the British military exit from Iraq, the role of the military is not really considered. The dominant theme is one of death, and of the sacrificing or suffering soldier, but ITV and C4 coverage both had reports from the city of Basra on the conditions of the city, implying that the military had been there for nation building and reconstruction. The conclusions to both of these reports were that they had failed. The theme of reconstruction might also have been influenced by the well timed (in terms of PR) economic conference that was being held in London at the same time as the hand over, with the Prime Ministers of Iraq and the UK in attendance. Attention was thus diverted from looking at the past to looking to the future of Iraq, but the elision of the two events, of looking to the economic future of Iraq implies that the role of the British military had been reconstruction, and nation building for humanitarian purposes, even if they had not been totally successful. The implication was that Iraq had progressed to the point where they could be successful, and thus perhaps by sleight of hand, the intervention had been a success.

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<sup>102</sup> C4 *News* 23.9.05

<sup>103</sup> ITN 19.9.05, BBC *News* 19.9.05, C4 *News* 19.9.05)

It is noticeable that in the 2009 coverage the word ‘occupation’ is rarely mentioned. The terms used to describe the occupation are: endeavour, deployment, controversial campaign, campaign<sup>104</sup>; operation, British been in command of Basra<sup>105</sup>; conflicted adventure, long painful aftermath (after the invasion), combat operations<sup>106</sup>; one of Britain’s most controversial engagements<sup>107</sup>; six troubled years, combat operations, combat mission, one of Britain’s most challenging operations, operation<sup>108</sup>; Combat operations, military operation, Britain’s six year mission<sup>109</sup>. The noun ‘occupation’ is only used three times in the six news reports of 2009 that I examined: ‘Six years of occupation’<sup>110</sup>, ‘occupation and invasion’<sup>111</sup>, and ‘controversial occupation.’<sup>112</sup> This might be a reflection of Stirke’s belief that the word occupation is seen as inherently disreputable (2009), or a conscious echo of specifically military terminology, which implies that the period was still seen as a continuation of the war by the media and primarily a military rather than a political exercise.

## **7.2. The Manichean Struggle: Who are ‘we’ fighting?**

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, the binary oppositional narrative of good versus evil positions the hero as the centrifugal force in the story (Nichols 1991). However, after the disposal of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqis are no longer the ‘enemy’, and justification for the war becomes humanitarian: but an army whose purpose is to fight must have someone to fight against. So in a humanitarian war, and in an

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<sup>104</sup> BBC *News* 31.3.09

<sup>105</sup> C4 *News* 31.3.09

<sup>106</sup> C4 *News* 30.4.09

<sup>107</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 30.4.09

<sup>108</sup> BBC *News* 30.4.09

<sup>109</sup> ITV *News* 30.4.09

<sup>110</sup> ITV *News* 30.4.09

<sup>111</sup> C4 *News* 30.4.09

<sup>112</sup> C4 *News* 31.3.09

occupation, who the protagonists are becomes slightly more complex. If the British army was in Iraq to help the Iraqis then killing them does not fit comfortably into the post 2003 framework. Yet soldiers were being killed by an enemy and were also killing them. The confusion over the justification of the invasion and over the occupation is reflected in the portrayal of the enemy in the documentaries, and contributes to the dominance of the discourse of the suffering soldier, where the soldier becomes the passive victim, the subject of betrayal and object of the programme. As in language, the identity of the perpetrator is thus hidden, and awkward questions do not have to be faced as to who the Iraqi enemy is. The lack of knowledge about the situation in Iraq (for example was the enemy a nationalist, a criminal, terrorist or an Islamist) made the use of the passive much more convenient.

As the soldiers became the victims, the enemy also becomes a confusion of the 'army' and the MoD or 'government', that is the politicians who betray the soldiers in matters of providing care and equipment for them. News seems clearer about the responsibility as to decision making, but in terms of the effect of these decisions the Iraqis and subjects of the occupation disappear. Few Iraqis speak in documentaries or news.

The lack of narrative on behalf of the Iraqis might also be attributable to what Hoskins and O'Loughlin describe as tools to distinguish between 'us' and 'them', which they write is where 'we' claim a notion of historical progress that 'tells 'our' story, but not 'their' story, to suggest that 'they' stand outside or attempt to obstruct historical progress' (2010:174). If the role of the coalition was a civilizing mission

to bring notions of democracy to those who are characterised as pre-modern, who have not yet entered into the secular terms of the liberal state, and whose notions of religion are invariably considered childish, fanatic or structured according to ostensibly irrational and primitive taboos (Butler, 2009:14).

then they could be deemed as not being able to contribute to the re-building of democracy, and so were unidentified and left out of the narrative of this process.



### **7.2.a Who are ‘we’ fighting in Documentaries?**

In the documentaries, three major protagonists for the British soldier are identified. The first is the British government and politician. This is a major theme in half of the documentaries<sup>113</sup>. This discourse is clear in the identification of who was responsible for the war. It then becomes part of a domestic political strategy to discredit Blair and the Labour Party, and part of a familiar discourse of blame, or of a judgement about the ability of a government to achieve goals set (Mermin 1999). This becomes more dominant as questions about Blair’s role in the invasion increased in the media in general. The second is the ‘army’, a confused amalgam of senior officers and the Ministry of Defence, and the third, as Basra descended into violence and the British lost all control in the south, the ‘militias’. The first two discourses feed into the discourse of the ‘suffering soldier’ as the protagonists are from their ‘own side’, so they are betrayed by those who are supposed to be helping them.

Documentaries by the nature of their production are transmitted after the events that are filmed, and it was not until a year and a half after Bush announced that major combat in Iraq was over (May 2003) that the first documentary appeared in Britain on the British military. This was about the fate of the soldiers who had taken part in the invasion, ‘The real story of soldiers scarred by war’ and their treatment when they returned home (*Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29.11.04). The programme’s format is of an investigation and the findings point the blame at the MoD/army. Both the reporter and contributors cite the MoD and the army as not providing adequate medical care for the victims of the conflict, and in this programme, like the others which do the same, they confuse the origin of the responsibility for this dereliction. Is it the MoD as part of the government, as civil servants, or is it the senior officers in the army who work at the MoD? This confusion allows the MoD to say in response to the programme’s accusation of lack

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<sup>113</sup> *Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29.11.04, *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05, *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06, *Dispatches: Battle Fatigue* C4 22.5.06, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06, *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09-2009.

of care ‘Damian has received the full support of the army’ (*Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05). Responsibility is handed over by the MoD to the army as a separate organisation. This also allows the army to point a finger at the Government when the discussion about equipment and funding arises. It is the fault of the MoD, that is the government, for not providing enough equipment, but it is not seen as the fault of the army for deciding how and where to spend the money, that is on what equipment to buy, or not to buy. This division between the political masters and the army emerges with the arrival of General Sir Richard Dannatt as Chief of the Defence Staff in October 2006 and his criticisms of government policy and strategy in Iraq and towards the treatment of the wounded British (Ellner 2010).

However, Andrew Gilligan talks of the soldiers being betrayed, ‘failed by the government, by the legal system and even by its own leaders’, and that the soldiers ‘should have the nation’s backing’, as they made ‘sacrifices on our behalf’ (*Dispatches: Battle Fatigue* C4 22.5.06). The soldiers also are now denied ‘our help’ and ‘we have a duty’ to support them because of the ‘legal contract’<sup>114</sup> to do so. Most of the documentaries do not specify what should be done, or who should do it, but criticise the Government and the ‘army’ for not doing enough in a diagnostic framework. These are often framed as an investigative programme where the reporter’s role is to uncover the failure in responsibility by the government and the ‘army’. The ‘enemy’ in the documentaries becomes the army itself, but who exactly the ‘army’ is, is never specified.

The fate of the Iraqis becomes part of the discourse of betrayal, of a country betrayed by British politicians in spite of the ‘bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces’ (*Vine: Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). As the occupation continues, the British military is not responsible, as their withdrawal strategy claims that what is happening is now in the hands of the Iraqis, and an internal matter to be sorted out by their security forces and government. The discourse of betrayed

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<sup>114</sup> It is not a legal contract, but a covenant.

Iraqis by the British government becomes stronger as the security situation deteriorated in Basra<sup>115</sup>, but it is not the soldiers who are responsible for this.

Both *Panorama* and *Dispatches* cover the betrayal of the Iraqis. The former in ‘The Legacy’ where Corbin ‘reveals the true legacy Britain is leaving the people of Basra’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). At the end of the programme, the responsibility is laid in the hands of the government, again foregrounding domestic politics. The coverage of the fate of the translators becomes an issue to criticise the government as Corbin states that Denmark has given eleven of their interpreters asylum, but that after public outcry the UK has now promised to let some settle in Britain’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). One of the translators says ‘We feel that the British forces are responsible for our lives’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07), but the juxtaposition of General Binns next to this charge refutes this argument. He states, ‘where the government has indicated, we’re discharging our moral obligation’ (Binns, *Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07).

The tricky problem also arises that the lack of security provided by the British leads to the abandonment of the Basrawi citizens to the militia, and they too are made responsible for the situation leading to the betrayal. Corbin states, ‘now the British are bowing out, handing over to Basra and its problems to the Iraqis’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07), but then excuses the British forces by stating ‘further north the American troops took them (the militias) on, but the British army lacked the man power and the political will back home’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). So, the increasing violence in Basra is laid at the feet of the militia who forced people to leave Basra, ‘hundreds ...lawyers, professors, educated people Basra couldn’t afford to lose’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07)<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 9.2.07; *Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07; *Panorama: On Whose Orders* BBC1 25.2.08; *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08; *Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08)

<sup>116</sup> This rather contradicts General Jonathan Shaw’s argument that 90% of the violence was focused on the British forces in Basra (Shaw 2010)

This contrapuntal reading of the betrayal (Said 2001) is a reflection of the many and sometimes discordant voices which provide meaning together, thus enriching the discourse of betrayal. The betrayed are the soldiers, the Iraqis and the British public which all mesh to provide a dominant discourse of general betrayal. It is not just the Iraqis and the soldiers who have been betrayed, but also the British public<sup>117</sup>. The betrayers are mostly the government, but towards the middle of the occupation Tony Blair and Gordon Brown become the main perpetrators of this betrayal. For example in *Dispatches* which is actually subtitled 'the Betrayal', Peter Osborne states that the public have been 'deceived about the reasons for entering the war and about what is left behind' (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08), and that 'the Government told us that the Iraq war would make us safer, but we have brought back the cult of the suicide bomber to Britain' (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08). This forms part of the tactic of using foreign politics for domestic political uses, in that the war forms a mechanism of criticism of Tony Blair and politicians. The Iraqi, British public and British army are united in their fate and their betrayal by the politicians. For example Sue Smith, the mother of a dead soldier says 'I feel sorry for the Iraqi people. I sit and cry when I see how they have been massacred. Philip's blood runs on them streets, the same as theirs' (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07). The dead are thus united, and the guilt about the legitimacy of killing Iraqis can be spread and assuaged.

As part of the discourse of betrayal, it is also important to look at how the Iraqis are portrayed. How the Iraqis are defined also illuminates the role of the army. Foucault (1979) suggests that the discursive formations are made up of who can speak, and of what. The Iraqis who thought that the British were invaders and hostile occupiers, had no authority to speak when the concept of the humanitarian war/occupation was being discussed. The concept and the statement were unintelligible together, so the Iraqis were silenced. When the Iraqis are 'the enemy', hostile and fighting the British army, then the role of the military can be

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<sup>117</sup> *Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29.11.04, *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05; *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05, *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06, *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06, *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07, *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08)

seen to be that of a traditional war fighting protagonist, and they would be allowed to speak, if the reporters could find them. If they are portrayed as needing ‘our’ help, as recipients of coalition help and seekers of democracy, their position as ‘the enemy’ lessens, and they become beneficiaries of humanitarian efforts by the military. As discussed in the literature review, the invasion was later portrayed as a ‘humanitarian war’ (Boyd Barret 2007). This continues into the occupation, where the humanitarian/nation building role of the British army is also highlighted. Five of the documentaries made before the major violence became apparent<sup>118</sup> all give reasons such as ‘training, and keeping the peace’ for reasons why the military is there. As the British military loses control of the south, the descriptions of the Iraqis change to ‘militia’ and ‘insurgents’, implying their illegality and thus the irrational nature of their fight against the ‘humanitarian’ occupiers and perhaps shows the confusion as to what was driving the insurgency.

The fact that Iraq had had a proficient army which had been fighting for 30 years was never questioned. Michael Nicholson says ‘drill doesn’t come naturally to these men’ (*Tonight: Our Boys in Basra*. ITV 21.11.05), and the assumption throughout is that the civilised ‘better’ army will teach the Iraqis how to be good soldiers. What is not explained is that the army the British is training is not the original Iraqi army which fought the coalition. After the army was disbanded, and the anti-Baath policy was introduced many ex-soldiers could not re-apply, so many of those recruited were possibly not the best army material. This is apparent in the series on IRHA who are in Basra training the new Iraqi army. For example, Sgt Chris Downing says ‘the British army’s got one of the best standards in the world, the Iraqi army probably the worst, and we’re somewhere in the middle’ (*Soldier Husband Daughter Dad : 5* BBC1 2005). The failure to explain the context feeds into the humanitarian discourse of a people and country needing help from the West.

In a slightly different vein, in the early interviews with Iraqis, they too are shown as believing that they need the British troops to maintain security, although this is mostly perhaps because after the disbanding of the Iraqi security forces, there was no

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118 *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* BBC1 April 2005, *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra*. ITV 21.11.05: *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06

alternative. The interview is used as evidence that the Iraqis were supporting the 'British' forces, whereas perhaps they were supporting any force which could provide security, which they did later to the militia when the British forces did not provide the security they had hoped for. An Iraqi whose brothers were executed by Saddam, Haider Abboud Sahi, states 'if it wasn't for the British army's intervention the violence in Basra would not have been stopped... as long as our government is weak their presence is necessary' (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06).

Initially thus the Iraqis are represented as needing the help of the British, and of being unable to help themselves. In the earlier programmes the Iraqis are mostly described as 'locals, Iraqis and people'<sup>119</sup>. As stated above, this coincides with the military's view that they were there for 'nation building' and for reconstruction. By the end of 2005 the term 'insurgent' is being used.<sup>120</sup> The Iraqis have also become 'heavily armed home grown militia'<sup>121</sup> as well as 'Iraqis', when it soon becomes clear that the aims of improving the lot of the Iraqis was not being achieved by the 'best army in the world' and the justification for the war becomes increasingly ragged. By early 2006, those attacking the British are identified as the 'militia', as well as the 'Shia population', which is then categorised as 'Shia insurgents or militia'<sup>122</sup>.

Thus as the situation deteriorated in Basra, the third enemy of the British military becomes the Iraqi militias, who are mostly portrayed as irrational, religious fundamental maniacs who are represented as impossible to defeat because they are the irrational 'other'. They fight each other as well as the British<sup>123</sup>; for example, 'heavily armed home grown militia are waging a vicious battle with each other and

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<sup>119</sup> *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05

<sup>120</sup> *Real Story with Fiona Bruce* BBC1 29.11.04, *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra*. ITV 21.11.05

<sup>121</sup> *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05

<sup>122</sup> *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06

<sup>123</sup> *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07, *Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07; *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty* Eps 1,2 and 4. ITV; *Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08; *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09).

with the coalition troops' (Marriott; *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05). Brigadier Marriott talks about the evilness of the previous regime which 'made it more difficult to give them democracy and give them their freedom because they don't know how to use it yet'<sup>124</sup>.

The portrayal of the Iraqis is obviously affected by who speaks, and the lack of Iraqis speaking is noticeable in all of the documentaries. However, in the documentaries made in the beginning of the occupation a more diverse portrayal of the Iraqis is presented. This can be seen in the investigation into the death of the Royal Military Police (Red Caps) where the crew could interview Iraqis involved in the events (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05). This can in part be attributable to the difficulty of finding Iraqis to speak to because of the safety of the production crews, but also as stated, the lack of Iraqis is also attributable to the subject matter of the majority of the documentaries, which is on their treatment when they get home.

Part of the problem for both programme makers and the military is also of identifying the enemy generally and especially as time progresses, the wider ignorance of who the enemy is. One of the officers talking about the situation in Al Majar says 'How do you identify someone who was a gunman and someone who was just in the crowd with a weapon?' (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05). Brigadier Marriott talks about the violence in Basra to Jane Corbin in 2006,

While the direct attack against the British could be for a lot of reasons. It could be that we have arrested a member of the political militia and that's reduced their power, it could be that they want us out, it could be that orders from afar have come, just poke them in the eye. There are so many different reasons (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06).

The understanding of whether the violence in Iraq was nationalist, religious or tribal was heavily debated, by the military, media and by academia (Hashim 2006). Peter

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<sup>124</sup> See Butler's comments about the Iraq war being fought as a 'civilizing mission'(Butler 2009: 14) above.)

Galbraith, for example, states ‘the fundamental reality of Iraq is that there are not very many people who consider themselves Iraqis’ (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05).<sup>125</sup> So, one of the tactics used by the documentaries to avoid the problem of identification of perpetrators, the practical difficulty of filming Iraqis and perhaps to overcome the discomfort that the humanitarian template was not fitting comfortably, is by making the violence passive. In the programmes about wounded soldiers, this is especially noticeable. They are subjects who have had violence done to them.<sup>126</sup>

All soldiers become subjects of much of the violence in Basra. This is especially the case when the soldiers recount events<sup>127</sup>. It is possibly more natural for soldiers who have experienced violence to talk about themselves as the objects of the violence and the effect it had on them, perhaps in the same way that embedded journalists in the invasion referred to themselves and the army as ‘we’, because they were both subjects to, or objects of the action.

### **7.2.b. Who are ‘we’ fighting in the News**

As with the documentaries, the depiction of ‘the enemy’ throws light on what sort of war the news thought the military was fighting, or whether it was in fact helping the Iraqis. The time span is not as wide as that examined in the documentary media, but like the documentary coverage, the main reasons for the presence of the military is also humanitarian. However, by 2007 soldiers are getting killed in greater numbers. News has the problem of portraying Iraqis who both need help from the military and want to kill them, of identifying the two kinds of protagonists, and explaining why this is so<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> It should however be noted, that Galbraith is a pro-Kurdistan ‘expert’, and the Kurds were and still are pushing for a separate state from Iraq. His argument later in the programme that the new constitution (of unity) would split the country does not perhaps come without an agenda.

<sup>126</sup> See Appendix section 5.

<sup>127</sup> *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09: *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09 and for example in the Andy McNab series (Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty. ITV June 2008

<sup>128</sup> See Appendix section 7.



In the first section of news<sup>129</sup> the enemy is seen to be the militia which has infiltrated the police, and the ‘mob’ that firebombed the soldiers who went to rescue their ‘comrades’. Dr John Reid, the Secretary for Defence states that ‘we will hand over to the Iraqis when they want us to go’ (BBC *Newsnight* 20.0.05), but the ‘mob’ are not given the right to be ‘the Iraqis who want us to go’. In these reports<sup>130</sup> the enemy is also seen as Iran who has been providing weapons and ‘influence’ across the border.

In the coverage of the withdrawal from the palace in 2007, Iraqis are also definitely trying to kill the British, but again it is not all Iraqis, but only a group defined by their religion. The BBC lists the combatants as the Shia militia who are fighting a ‘turf war’, thus not specifically against British (BBC *News* 2.9.07). C4 *News* and the BBC *News* also see the violence in terms of criminality; the British leave ‘a city secured and governed by competing militia, criminal mafias and morality police ... dominated by rival factions, militias and criminal gangs where the police are widely derided as corrupt’ (BBC *News* 3.9.07). Professor Michael Clarke states ‘Basra is influenced heavily by the militias, by tribal chief rivalries, by smuggling and by organised crime and in a sense Basra is slipping into the place it would always have been without strong central control’ (BBC *News* 3.9.07). Thus, the violence is not generally perceived to be directed against the ‘humanitarian’ soldiers, and occupation, but part of the general civil disobedience and corruption.

In the coverage of the CotK the same problems of defining the enemy and the humanitarian role of the military arises, but as stated, the humanitarian role of the British soldiers is fore-grounded as their role as trainers of the Iraqi Army is stressed. It is interesting to note however, that the forces who attacked the British in September 2005, the ‘criminal gangs,’ ‘mobs,’ ‘extremists,’ ‘those who want to destroy democracy,’ ‘terrorists,’ ‘militants’ and elements of civil disobedients<sup>131</sup> become rather less criminal when fighting the Iraqi soldiers and are referred to as

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<sup>129</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 19.9.05, BBC *Newsnight* 20.9.05, ITV *News* 19.9.05, ITV *News* 20.0.05, ITV *News* 21.9.05, BBC *News* 20.0.05)

<sup>130</sup> BBC *Newsnight* 19.9.05, BBC *Newsnight* 20.9.05, ITV *News* 20.9.05, BBC *News* 20.9.05

<sup>131</sup> See Appendix section 7.

‘armies, fighters and militias’. They become ‘militia groups, fighters from the powerful Shia militia, the Mahdi army (BBC *News* 25.3.08), Shia militia, Shia factions, rag tag militia, Shia against Shia, militia groups, militants (BBC *News* 27.3.08), militias (BBC *News* 28.3.08), Mahdi Militia (BBC *News* 29.3.08) Shia militia, military army (ITV *News* 26.3.08), ‘violent Mahdi army, militia, sprawling violent gang, Mahdi army, Iraq’s most powerful militia (C4 *News* 26.3.08), Shia militias, militias, Mahdi army (C4 *News* 28.3.08) Shiite Militia (C4 *News* 29.3.08), Mahdi army, militia, Shia factions, (BBC *Newsnight* 27.3.08) City’s militia, Mahdi army (ITV *News* 25.3.08), Shia militias (ITV *News* 1.4.08) and Shia fighters (C4 *News* 1.4.08).

This change in terminology might be an indication that as the militias are no longer fighting the British they are given more legitimacy, but also might be a reflection of the othering that was implicit in the documentaries. For example, C4 *News* describes the militia as ‘a bi-product of anarchy’ (C4 *News* 25.3.08), and when the news presents the Iraqis fighting the British they are perceived to be irrational, uncontrollable aggressors driven by religion and their foreignness (see previous paragraph and the repetition of ‘Shia’, ‘Mahdi’ and ‘militia’, as opposed to such nouns as Iraqi armies, or fighters ) but as a civil war with Iraqis fighting each other, they are perceived to be more equal, that is army and military.

The dominant impression is of an anarchic collection of individuals fighting the forces of law and order, the British trained Iraqi army. The Iraqi army could only succeed because it had been trained by the civilised British, although this started to go pear-shaped when it became clear on the third day of the CotK that the Iraqi army was in some disarray, and the spectre of civil war is raised.<sup>132</sup>

By the time of the hand-over to the Americans, the representation of the Iraqis was not couched in military terms. This was partly because Maliki was at a meeting in London and the emphasis is on the future. C4 interviewed the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Barham Salih who talked about the people of Iraq, without Saddam Hussein, who ‘now have an opportunity to harness their economic potential and

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<sup>132</sup> C4 *News* 29.3.08, BBC *Newsnight* 27.3.08)

build their lives in collaboration with their friends in the UK and elsewhere' (C4 *News* 30.4.08). Both C4 (C4 *News* 30.4.08) and the BBC (BBC *News* 30.4.09) refer to the militias and to Iran as a parting thought, and C4 and ITV (ITV *News* 30.4.09) make reference to one of the reasons for going to war, which was to get rid of Saddam Hussein. The news makes a narrative bookend of the war by ending the 'story' with one of the stated purposes of the war, and giving it a favourable ending by flagging up possible future economic ventures between the UK and Iraq, a reconciliation with a reward for all that has happened. This is also an example where the linear discourse pattern of journalism affects the reporting. The need to find cause, event and solution puts this interpretation of the war into this frame. However, war is not linear (Bousquet 2009). Clausewitz (1967) writes that war is chameleon; it does not have tidy endings and satisfactory causes and solutions. This is thus also evidence of where the format of news, as well as the understanding of war, impacts on the coverage, favouring the construction of certain discourses.

The section on documentaries examines the discourse of betrayal and the representation of the government as the enemy which was evident in many of the programmes. The betrayal was both of the soldier, the Iraqis and of the general public in the UK. This theme is not as evident in news, partly because the stories of the individual soldiers are not discussed or followed, but it does arise. After the third day of the CotK when it was seen that the Iraqi army was falling apart, Gordon Brown announced that the next tranche of soldiers to leave would be postponed and this was seen as a betrayal of a promise made the year before to bring them home, even though the situation seemed to require more soldiers. ITV headlined the news with the statement that 'The prime Minister's commitment to bring home hundreds of troops from Iraq this spring won't be met' (ITV *News* 1.4.08), C4's Jon Snow reports, 'The Prime Minister has not been able to deliver the troop cuts he wanted though officials say the draw down might get back on track soon' (C4 *News* 1.4.08). The BBC firmly ties events in Iraq to UK domestic policy, 'Gordon Brown... had high hopes that there would be a big cut in troops by now. It was to be a decisive break with the Blairite inheritance' (BBC *News* 1.4.08).

This perception of betrayal in the delay to reduce the troops is perhaps a factor in another feature seen also in documentaries, that is, the allocation of responsibility for

decisions made by the army or by the Ministry of Defence, the government. However in news, there seems to be a clearer understanding of the difference in the chain of command. This can be seen in the decision to withdraw from Basra Palace. The BBC's Alan Little states 'Downing street said military commanders took the decision (BBC *News* 2.9.07). The responsibility for a possible unpopular decision is given to the military by the Government. A division between opinions on the withdrawal is picked up by C4 *news* when Snow says 'Gordon Brown insisted it was not a defeat ... but military experts warn of a possible security vacuum' (C4 *News* 3.9.07). Des Browne, the Minister of Defence also pinpoints the responsibility for the decision not to reduce troops numbers in the second week of the CoTK on the military (which was presented as a betrayal by the Prime Minister) 'The emerging military advice based on our assessment of current conditions then...' (C4 *News* 1.4.08) and again in an interview with Jon Snow he states that the troops are 'there in the numbers they are there based on military advice' (C4 *News* 1.4.08).

The discourse of the betrayed soldier and death has religious overtones of sacrifice and duty, which is more evident in the news, as the events filmed by news are mostly of hand-over ceremonies and memorial services which resemble each other in their iconography of a table or altar, flags, with the presence of religious and official figures accompanied by talk of duty and sacrifice. The religious Christian associations of a willing sacrifice, betrayed by society who is asked by his senior officer to die to save the world is a familiar template which lurks intertwined in the 'betrayed soldier' discourse. Two programmes feature the service held to commemorate those who served in Iraq, one beginning with the service held in Iraq before the British left (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09). The ritual of the service also serves to swallow the individual into the mass of sacrificed soldiers stretching back over centuries; a stereotype that again is not questioned (Nichols 1991).

### **7.3. The Suffering Soldier**

I have examined how the role of the soldiers was established, and how the discourse of betrayal and the positioning of the enemy placed the soldier as a victim in the occupation. When looking at the documentaries on the British military over-all it is

perhaps not surprising that the discourse of the suffering soldier is the main theme which emerges. Of the twenty-eight programmes, both traditional and current-affairs documentaries (including seven programmes in one series, and three in another), eight documentaries are about the treatment of mentally and physically damaged soldiers when they get home, all critical of their treatment.

Chapter 2 looked at the emotional discourse and its role in the justification of war as a humanitarian exercise in the coverage of past wars. This regime of pity which favours the soldier can be seen as part of the increase of the media's obsession with interiority and emotionalism in news (Chouliaraki 2006: Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen 2007). The use of emotionalism is also a tool of rhetoric (Nichols 1991) as used in documentary, and a symptom of politics being replaced by psychotherapy (Kaplan 2005). This discourse makes the soldier the victim, where the programmes examine their situation and the cause for their immediate state, but they seldom offer a solution or look at reasons why the soldiers were injured or damaged in the first place.

The effect of this discourse is to displace the real victims of the war, that is civilians, so negating any further examination or justification of the war, and as quoted from Takacs above, it 'decontextualises military violence and makes political dissent difficult' (2009:88). The discourse of the damaged soldier is also familiar to the discourse of the post traumatic stress sufferers of World War 1 and the Vietnam War. This familiarity of concept gives the sufferers and therefore the war itself some legitimacy (Mestrovic 1996).

The main question asked in the documentaries studied was 'why are these soldiers suffering?' and who is to blame, either in a diagnostic framework of 'the soldiers have been betrayed, and it is wrong after all they have done' (the assumption being that they had paid something, and therefore needed to be compensated for what they had given) or the theme was motivational 'something should be done to help the soldiers who are suffering'. However, no-one took a step further back and asked whether what they were doing to become injured was legitimate, or even what *were* they doing in Iraq. Thus, the issue of what sort of war they were fighting, and of an

understanding of the nature of the war/occupation was missing. The questions about the method of war itself which lead to these injuries are not asked, and thus no other reason as to what was happening in Iraq is given, apart from the assumptions that battle and traditional war is the only action being undertaken, and thus the only solution. These assumptions form part of the silences in the discourse which I examine later in the general conclusion (Chapter 9).

### **7.3. a. The Suffering Soldier in Documentaries**

In three documentaries<sup>133</sup> one of the consequences of the betrayal of the soldiers is that many went Absent Without Leave (AWOL) where a conscious parallel is made between the World War 1 discourse of desertion and the moral judgement implied in that action. It is the main theme of the *Panorama* 'For Queen and Country' and *Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07, where the reporter Alex Miller establishes the historical discourse of deserters being considered as 'cowards, unfit to wear the Queen's uniform' and he questions primary school children from Barnsely as to what they think of deserters. The telling of the individual tales of the soldiers on the run, the consideration of their friends and family puts the programme on the side of the deserters. The inclusion of a statement by the father of one of the soldiers directly blaming Tony Blair for the lack of provision, and *Panorama*'s own 'new unpublished research seen by the programme' which suggests provision for traumatised soldiers is not enough, indicates that the dominant discourse of this programme is the suffering soldier, for whom the audience should feel sympathy.

Another result of this discourse of the suffering soldier as noted by Westwell who writes of the Vietnam war, is that by focusing on the experience of the veteran, who 'had merely done his patriotic duty in difficult circumstances, America was asked to extend understanding to these soldiers and in as much as they could be helped and healed, the war itself could be rendered less divisive' (Westwell, 2007: 151). This discourse is especially strong in Peter Gordon's documentary (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06), which is about two soldiers physically injured, and one

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<sup>133</sup> *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07, *Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07,19)

mentally injured in the war, what happened to them and how they and their families are coping. The underlying theme of the documentary is actually about coming to terms with disability, but the fact that the soldiers were injured in the war gives the film an emotional handle. This perhaps also hides another silence which is of the general treatment of disability, both physical and mental. It is assumed that soldiers should be given special treatment, rather than the fact that everyone has perhaps the right to good treatment on the NHS. It also assumes that it is war which causes trauma, not the return to the boredom, mediocrity and pointlessness of 'normal' life, or the life that the discourse prefers. The assumption that 'normal life' of family tedium and shopping in Sainsbury's is somehow better than war underlies all narratives about war veterans, but is a subject for a different study<sup>134</sup>.

However, all three contributors from this documentary (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06) are made to fit nicely into a narrative template of being helped and healed. Albert Thomson who was medically discharged from the army in 2005 ends by saying 'everything's not been wasted'; Richard Turner, a Company Sergeant Major in the Royal Marines who was suffering from PTSD says 'I've become a more compassionate person', and Daniel Twiddy, medically discharged from the Queen's royal Lancers in 2005, says 'I'm still alive, I've only lost my hearing, bits of my face and hands, but not to come out of anything worse than that is amazing really' (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06). Their stories have been mediated to fit into a recognised trope, of a narrative which ends hopefully, by which viewers can be united in their feeling for the soldiers, as they might have been divided by the war itself. This 'damage overcome' template, is as stated, reminiscent of the portrayal of Vietnam veterans. Young writes that

Vietnam has become a war of which Americans can feel proud. The pride derives from the demonstration of courage and the memory of suffering, irrespective of the cause in which the one is displayed and the other endured (Young, 2003: 261).

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<sup>134</sup> See Coker (2007:98) 'War is fast becoming a pathology .... it gives you syndromes'.

So, the viewer can take pride in the suffering of the soldier and again be united in that pride, where once they were divided over the cause which led him to the suffering. Thus the facts behind the fact that 176 young people have been killed and many more are left suffering are not questioned. It is accepted as part of war, because that is what has always happened in war. Likewise, the individual soldiers become representatives of the war. They are damaged, mostly healed, and so we can forget about them and the war in which they fought. The soldiers fight for each other, and they become the cause for which they fight.<sup>135</sup> Young also writes that Bush's wars are justified by the way they are fought for 'the man on our left and the man on our right and the enemy all around' (2003:261).

The resemblance of many of these documentaries featuring the betrayed soldiers to the genre of post-Holocaust trauma documentaries is also significant, in that the underlying suggestion is that trauma can be overcome with psychoanalysis, in that the trauma is acknowledged, the wounds are healed and the war forgotten (Takacs 2009: 97). As an adjunct to the debate about the 'real' in documentary it is worth considering that Freud said that trauma is not an experience of the real. According to Caretta, Freud describes trauma as being 'relocated inside the psyche, in the individual, fantasy life, so disavowing its historical accuracy' (Caretta, 2009; 202). Boltanski writes that emotions are socially constructed and consequently are socially and historically variable (1999:84). The suffering soldier therefore manifests the power of the discourse, as well as contributing to it. In the space between the event and its repression, its return can be constructed and mediated taking on the logic of media representation in a rational way that is acceptable to both the confessor and the listener.

Much of the trauma suffered by the damaged soldiers, especially those in Peter Gordon's film (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06), is perhaps the trauma of being an amputee, or being disabled, of being 'not normal' any more, and adjusting to the new reality. The war in Iraq caused the loss of limbs and physical damage,

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<sup>135</sup> See section 2:4, Hammond (2008) on post-modern war.



but the trauma seems to be adjusting to their present situation. This is especially the case for the wives and families, for example the wife of the Marine suffering from PTSD, who is filmed looking at a photograph of her husband in uniform at a Remembrance Parade says 'I did cry because I thought we'll never have that again' (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06). It is not actually about war, but war becomes the cause for the trauma, and it is war that can be healed through the story of the individuals. Thus the documentary claim to portray the 'reality' of the situation, the reality of post war is itself a construction of what soldiers, programme makers and viewers expect the effects of war to be, which again distances the 'reality' and responsibility of the war.

This distancing of the democratic, collective responsibility of war is evident in a *Panorama* which is also on the theme of the 'damaged soldier', where the responsibility and concern for the soldiers is placed with their families, and not with the rest of society. Jane Corbin states in the introduction, '*their* sons and daughters went off to fight for a cause the country never supported, and will return without being able to say mission accomplished' (*Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07). Likewise, in the same programme, when commenting on the inquiry into equipment, Corbin notes that complaints about faulty kit and unanswered questions about casualties 'have put families' special relationship with military leaders under colossal strain' (*Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07). In explaining the rise of violence in Basra, Corbin comments, that the event 'wasn't one the families or their boys had been prepared for'. The responsibility of war is linked to emotions about the war, in that it is those who feel emotionally for the soldiers, that is, their families who are the ones who feel responsible for them. Takacs writes that part of the rise in emotionality is that the 'experience of citizenship is an experience of shared emotionality and fellow feeling, rather than political responsibility' (2009: 91). This programme states that the war is not supported by the country (*Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07), having the effect of distancing 'us', that is *Panorama* and society, from 'them', that is the families and the soldiers and their involvement in the war and occupation, as well as distancing those who should feel politically, rather than emotionally responsible.

### **7. 3.b. The Suffering soldier in News.**

In Chapter 3 the difference between news and documentaries was examined, with documentaries examining mostly issues and news, events. The effect is that the examples of suffering soldiers post war do not arise in the television news selection researched. However, the image of the burning soldier from the incident at the Jamiat Police station in 2005 becomes an iconic image of the soldier in Iraq. ITV *news* (21.9.05) states that ‘these images have become part of the history of this conflict’, and the dramatic ordeal by fire of the warrior crew, who all survived feeds into the discourse of the suffering heroic soldier. Both the BBC (21.9.05) and ITV (21.9.05) devote a news bulletin to ‘their’ stories. The soldiers only recount what happened to them, but in earlier bulletins it is the reporters themselves who state what the soldiers are feeling or thinking: ‘clearly the crew inside (the warrior) began to worry that either their fuel or their ammunition might explode ... One soldier preferred to risk the flames and the mob only to be quickly set upon with stones and a large stick’ (James Mates ITV *News* 19.9.05), ‘it was the moment the nation feared for its troops and the moment the troops feared for their lives!’ (Penny Marshall ITV *News* 21.9.05), ‘the soldiers may have feared their own ammunition may explode (Gavin Hewitt BBC *News* 19.9.05), ‘the soldiers inside fear for their lives’ Ian Halligam C4 *News* 19.9.05). ‘Their’ story is told in terms of their emotions, not of what they were doing, why they were there, or what the consequences might be.

The danger offered to, and suffered by the British troops is frequently stated. This situation cannot be denied, but no-one states that that is an occupational hazard of being a soldier. The BBC’s Alan Little states ‘What purpose is served by keeping troops in harm’s way at all? ( BBC *News* 2.9.07), with reference to the withdrawal from Basra Palace, yet what was their purpose, if not to protect citizens from harm? The soldiers carry guns, and drive round in vehicles which are manufactured to kill yet are seen to suffer loss of lives in a discourse which assumes sympathy for this suffering: ‘after four and a half bloody years’ (BBC *News* 3.9.07), ‘After the worst year for casualties since the invasion...’ (Edwards: C4 *News* 3.9.07). The discourse

of mathematicised morality and sacrifice frames the final news items which reports the withdrawal of the British troops from Basra. The Secretary of Defence John Hutton is included talking about those ‘who paid a high price’ (BBC *News* 30.4.09); the Padre at the remembrance service states ‘remember those who paid the ultimate price’ (BBC *News* 31.3.09); commentary talks about the British ‘undermined and overwhelmed’ (Simpson: BBC *News* 30.4.09). This feeds into the discourse of the suffering soldier.

#### **7.4. The Soldier as Hero**

In documentaries, a counterpart to the framing of the suffering soldier, which illuminates this discourse, is the framing of the soldier as a hero. This template fits into the ‘war looking for a purpose’ and the emotional war discourse, as the heroic actions of the soldiers provides a purpose for war, and their emotions are foreground. The suffering hero is a familiar trope. Young writes ‘war stories ... vary by geography, but they always tell the same story: death, fear, brotherhood. Bravery, courage and the capacity to commit atrocities are not determined by the cause in which they are displayed’ (2003:21). Many of the documentaries are about individual soldiers selected to highlight an issue, but as Nichols (1991) argues, the focus on the ‘master narrative’ of the soldier as hero manages to exclude the causes of the war, and the enemy that he was fighting. Dead soldiers are also heroes which I examine in the section on death. The portrayal of victims as heroes is noted by Schlesinger et al (1983) in their study of the Nationwide programme in 1981 (BBC1, 24<sup>th</sup> Sept) which looked at the coverage of the IRA bombing of the Household Cavalry, where they note that in the coverage of terrorism, the bravery of the victims and their families is compared to the cowardly nature of the attack and ‘the unfinished business left by sudden death’ (1983:47), so this is a familiar pattern of reporting the deaths of soldiers and actions by ‘terrorists’.

I looked at the literature on the coverage of war looking for a purpose<sup>136</sup>. Part of the purpose Hammond (2007) writes about is the attraction of the hero. The heroic

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<sup>136</sup> Section 2.4

actions of soldiers gives meaning to their fighting which gives purpose to what they are doing. This is bound up in the discourse on the cost of war, which equates ‘success’ to purpose, and the mathmated morality of death.<sup>137</sup> The soldier as hero can only fail because he is betrayed, or acting on behalf of dubious politicians. His actions and the justification for what he does are not questioned, as his actions and heroism become the justification for the events.

#### **7.4.a. The Soldier as Hero in Documentaries**

In the traditional documentaries *Brothers in Arms*, and *Tour of Duty* the introductions clearly infer that soldiers are heroes. The former is introduced by commentary saying ‘This is a story about a band of soldiers who were the first to go into battle ... it will be remembered for its acts of bravery, and loss of lives’. McNab states in the generic introduction that in the series he will ‘be telling the heroes stories, acts of courage, and bravery’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008. Eps 1,2,4). He then narrates these stories, intercutting with past tense accounts from the people who had been involved in the action, and dramatic reconstructions. He does not look at the issues raised by other programmes such as the treatment of soldiers, their equipment, or the ‘betrayal’ of politicians or the purpose of the war itself. Whether the action happens in Afghanistan or Iraq is of no consequence to the ‘stories’, they are merely a convenient location in which to place the ‘acts of courage and bravery’. However, the McNab documentaries still fall into the soldier as victim model, not that of suffering victim, but as recipients of violent action meted out by militia.

*Under Siege* (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008) tells the story of how a small band of British soldiers managed to survive an onslaught by the militia, similar to the Battle of Rorke’s Drift fought by the Light Infantry against the Zulus in 1879, made famous by the film *Zulu* (1964). Karen J Hall identifies this trope as the ‘last stand narrative’ (Hall 2007). She writes that the enemy is ‘represented as generic, objectified waves of violence’ and ‘last stand defenders are so few in number that

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<sup>137</sup> See section 2.6 on the concept of mathmated morality and section 2.10 above on success

audiences have the opportunity to learn their names, histories, motivations and to identify with their cause and valour'(ibid:101). The occupier and invader becomes the victim.

As stated in chapter 5, Corner (1998) advises the researcher to differentiate between 'turn-off' and 'turn-on' violence. Both the 'last stand narrative' and Hall's (2007) other citing of Robert J Lifton's identification of 'False witness syndrome' can be seen as 'turn-on' violence, where viewers are encouraged to identify with the soldiers, and violence becomes justified. The 'False witness syndrome' can be seen in both this film and in *Hidden Enemy (Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep 4). Lifton worked with Vietnam War veterans and he noticed that it became a common practice to connect the killing of enemy soldiers with the act of memorialising fallen comrades. This connection 'works to normalise revenge killing as a justifiable, ethical and patriotic response to attacks by an enemy' (Hall 2007: 101). In *Hidden Enemy (Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep. 4) which is about the IED (Improvised Explosive Device), the principal story is about a British military unit which blows up two 'enemy' IED teams, thus satisfying the feelings of revenge for members of their unit who were killed by an IED laid by this team. McNab states in the conclusion to the operation which took out an insurgent IED team:

the lads from 2 Lancs (sic) would never say this was a revenge operation, but it must have been very satisfying to know that they'd got the IED team that blew up the Warrior just weeks before, I know it certainly was for me (*Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008).

The revenge motif also serves to turn the conflict into something personal. Thus the context of the war does not need to be explained. Killing becomes part of a story between a unit, or people and the wider reasons for the war itself is forgotten. This is also evident in the *Panorama* where the Captain that Jane Corbin had been filming is killed just after she leaves him. She states 'So often the British military have to accept their casualties without retaliating against their killers there is simply too much at stake' (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06).

The assumption that the British soldier is a hero is in every programme, and where they do wrong as in *Panorama* (On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08), it is an aberration. All the ex-soldiers interviewed are introduced, usually by a still of him in his dress uniform, wearing his medals of service and conduct, or as a group photograph in camouflage with others. This establishes the soldier's authenticity, and his right to be associated with other 'heroes'. This assumption makes it difficult to criticise the soldier's role and performance. If they are 'heroes' they must be doing good, and thus should not be criticised. Freedman writes that most research suggests that 'the public does not harbour a total intolerance of casualties, but rather finds them unacceptable if they suffered for no purpose (Freedman 2000).

This may also feed into the furore over the deaths of soldiers, as the general assumption is that they should not die if they are heroes. Michael Nicholson states 'The British Army is probably the best army in the world, but every now and then its soldiers die in battle' (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05); which is arguably an assumption that if the army is the best in the world, no-one should die, and from there lies the proposition that if you are a good soldier you don't die. For example, McNab sums up the documentary of the siege of the PWRR in Al Amarah by saying 'Y Company only lost one man during the siege of Cimic House' (*Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008. Ep. 2). This assumption that good soldiers don't get killed lies counter to the discourse that the war is worth fighting because of the deaths (Ignatieff 2000), but perhaps is more sophisticated, in that the heroic soldiers are *willing* to die, (even if they don't). The visuals of the battles which give a sense of purpose and meaning to the fight (Hammond 2007) fill the space between the not dying and the willingness to die, so amalgamating the discourses, giving them greater resonance. The emphasis on the individual and his story also contributes to this. Collectively the British army might have been seen to fail, but individually, each virtue and value can give meaning to the war.

This might explain the extreme reaction to the deaths of 'heroes', which becomes more pronounced when they die, not 'war fighting' but after war, in the occupation. They were helping the Iraqis and 'keeping the peace'. *All* soldiers who die are 'heroes', and even when they are soldiers who went absent without leave, or committed suicide, the soldiers are set up to show what good soldiers they were.

Thus whatever they did was because of external circumstances, as a reaction to ‘the enemy’, but mostly their actions were caused by their betrayal by ‘the army’ or politicians. In *Panorama* one of the soldiers who has gone AWOL, James Piotrowski is set up initially as ‘best overall guardsman 2002’ (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07), before the reporter talks of his descent into alcoholism. In *Dispatches* (Battle Scarred C4 07.09.09), suicide victim Dave Foreshaw was brave enough to receive a letter of commendation from his Colonel, establishing the fact that he was worthy of respect as a good soldier, and thus his loss weighed more on the scales of worthiness of death.

As the occupation lengthened, it became clearer that the situation in Iraq was worsening, more British soldiers were being killed and the assumption that ‘good soldiers’ could not die, was being challenged. Also the assumption that ‘heroes’ were successful in battle was not being proved as the British military gradually pulled out of Basra, leaving the city to the chaos of the militia. *Panorama* managed to get round this by introducing the programme saying ‘Despite the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces, the city and its inhabitants have been left facing an uncertain future’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). Likewise, in the Outside Broadcast programme from St. Pauls, Huw Edwards states that:

thousands of people have lost their lives in Iraq.... But tales of individual heroism and sacrifice are still being told today... many of those with us in the Cathedral showed immense courage and limitless loyalty to their comrades’ (Iraq 2003-2009 BBC1 9.10.09).

The soldiers become individuals, and the question of what the brave heroes were actually achieving collectively or not, is ignored, and if the situation in Basra is addressed, the break down in security and approaching civil war is attributed to other factors. Unheroic behaviour, or blame for failure generally forms part of the counter-discourse of the ‘enemy’. As stated, part of the discourse of the suffering or betrayed soldier is that he becomes the victim, and no longer the perpetrator of violence.

#### **7.4. b. The Soldier as Hero in News**

As with the discourse of the suffering soldier, the discourse of the soldier as hero is less marked in news. However it is still present, and again is manifest mainly in the commentary and statements from army spokesmen on the individual bravery of the soldiers. For example in the news at the time of the withdrawal from the palace in Basra, the Commanding Officer talks about the 'hard fighting' and the 'resilience and fighting spirit' shown by the soldiers (BBC *News* 3.9.07); in voice over *C4 news* from the same time states that the 'British Commander said many of his soldiers had arrived as boys and were leaving as men' (*C4 News* 3.9.07). Jon Snow later asks 'Isn't it best to say it hasn't worked (that is the occupation), the army's done the best that any army can do and must go?' (*C4 News* 3.9.07). The soldier is thus still a hero, but external circumstances have affected events which could be taken as markers of failure.

The next stage of operations covered, the CotK where the Iraqi army arrive in Basra to do what the British army failed to do and clear the militia from the city, the situation is presented as part of the discourse of the withdrawal strategy, that is as one military spokesman says 'the Iraqi army has been well trained by the British' (*C4 News* 25.3.08), 'training has been effective' (BBC *News* 27.3.08), and the British assume 'operation Overwatch' (BBC *News* 25.3.08). They have done the best that any army can do, have trained the Iraqi army and it is now time for them to go, so they are taken out of any analysis of their role.

The last section of news covered is the withdrawal of the British from Iraq, where most of the news report that the operation could be seen as a failure. However as before the following factors contributed to the soldier as hero discourse: The individual courage of the soldiers, the 'fantastic courage of men and women who served here' (Stirrup, BBC *News* 31.3.09). Secondly, the betrayal by the government 'they failed, but were never given political or material backing (Judge, *C4 News* 30.4.09). The last factor is the promotion of the withdrawal strategy, that is, that the British were leaving having successfully trained the Iraqi security forces



and should not get involved: ‘people have been killed and wounded in pursuit of producing a better future for Iraq (Jackson, *C4 News* 30.4.09); ‘they made the difference when Iraqis were not ready to do the job’ (BBC *Newsnight* 30.4.09); ‘We leave knowing we have done our job’ (soldier, *BBC News* 30.4.09)

The visuals of the news at this time as religious services in memory of ‘the fallen’ also contributes to the discourse of the soldier as hero, as this is a familiar pattern of remembrance seen on British television on Remembrance Day each year where the courage and hero status of soldiers in past wars is emphasised.

### **7.5. Violence? No Questions Asked...**

The security situation in Basra was uncontained as early as June 2004, when the Mahdi militia occupied Basra (UNHCR 2006: Chin 2008), rising to the bitter violence of late 2006 and mid 2007 when North writes that in May 2006 one person was being murdered in Basra every hour (North, 2009:104). It would seem that the deterioration in security was largely a result of the Iraqi political situation, with the infiltration of the Iraqi security services by the militias as part of a struggle for control of Basra and her resources (Cordesman 2007: North 2009: Shaw 2010). The British military could not, or did not contain the rising violence and rapidly lost control of security in Basra.

The withdrawal from Basra Palace in 2007 was portrayed by the MoD as a deliberate strategy to stabilise Basra as explained in Chapter 6. Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup said the British presence was ‘creating a spurious but tangible legitimacy for violence and for Iranian interference in support of such violence’ (Ucko, 2010: 143). However, violence against Iraqi civilians continued with an average of thirty attacks a week (HC 2007). Ucko writes ‘the notion that Britain’s final departure in autumn 2007, would free Basra from its cycle of violence seems insincere or grossly over-optimistic (Ucko, 2010: 144).

How and whether the television news and documentaries portray this violence and how it delivers the ‘exit strategy’ narrative is an important discourse as it is in this

template that the analysis of failure or success of the British military lies<sup>138</sup>, and where justification for the occupation is positioned. The perception of success or failure of the mission is important as it is argued that expectations of success are the crucial factor in explaining the public's tolerance of casualties (Gelpi 2005/6). The responsibilities of the occupying force are found in the reaction to how the violence is described, either as contained, criminal or sectarian. Also, in the reasons for leaving Iraq, lie the explanations for whether they have achieved their purpose, or whether they have failed. The dominant narration of their exit, and one adopted by the Ministry of Defence is that the ultimate purpose and goal of the British military is to hand over Iraq to the Iraqis, having achieved their humanitarian goal of training the Iraqis to govern. This was being played almost as soon as the British arrived in Basra, but as the rise in violence becomes more apparent, the exit strategy offered to and by the media becomes stronger.

Part of the discourse is that what is happening is entirely in the hands of the Iraqis, that the violence is criminal, sectarian and religious and so is the responsibility of the developing Iraqi government, not that of the British military. As the insurgency grows, the humanist discourse of the more civilized West bringing democracy and freedom to a benighted failed state becomes that of a slightly worn parent washing its hands of an unmanageable and recalcitrant teenager who deserves an ASBO.

John Reid, the Defence Secretary states

We have no long term missions. We want to be there as long as we are needed and not a day longer. The success of the Iraqis in building a democracy, that strategy for success is also the exit strategy (Reid: *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06).

The goal achieved is thus a success, whatever dire state the country that they handed over was in. This can be seen for example, when the reporter Peter Osborne asks David Milliband, then Foreign Secretary, whether the analysis that the British were driven out of Basra was right. He does not answer the question, but says 'I think that we set out very clearly when we arrived that our job in Basra was for Iraq to be run

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<sup>138</sup> See Section 2.10

by Iraqis and that is what is happening’ (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08). It is only the end result which is important. As Rory Stewart says later in the programme, ‘The aim was to get out and the only way to get out as a politician is by declaring a victory’ (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08).

I discuss the violence against the British military in the section above<sup>139</sup> on the coverage of the Iraqi’s, looking at how their description and terminology indicates the framing of the occupation as humanitarian or a result of ‘war’. However in the section below I look at how the documentaries and news report the violence as an indicator of the political situation in Basra and hence the role of the British military as providers of security as part of their responsibility as occupiers.

### **7.5. a. Violence? No Questions Asked in Documentaries**

The series on 1 RHA was filmed over a period of six months as an eight part series on both the people in the Regiment, and their wives and families left in the UK. The Regiment was in Basra from February 2004 to September 2004, and it was transmitted in 2005. Moqtada al Sadr’s uprising in Najaf in April 2004 and the subsequent efforts by the Mahdi army to take control of the south prior to the hand-over to the Iraqi government in June 2004 led to the Mahdi army taking control of Basra by August 2004. However, very little of this is evident in the series. In the first episode commentary states: ‘The Regiment is about to arrive at a time of increasing danger and uncertainty on the streets of Basra’ (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC Ep. 1. 2005), that ‘Al Amarah has been mortared over the past two nights’ and that ‘random attacks have been taking place right across the city’ (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC Ep 1. 2005). By episode four, Major Paul Bates states: ‘these people are becoming rather ingenious in their attacks, some people would say it’s turning into some sort of Austin Powers movie... what they will try and do is look for a weakness in our defences’ (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC Ep 4. 2005), and ‘That night the camp was attacked by mortars and a RPG... This was the 17<sup>th</sup> attack on the camp’ (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC

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<sup>139</sup> Section 7.2

Ep 4. 2005). No explanation for where the attacks were coming from, or why, is given. By episode five, voice-over states 'It's June 2004 and the hostility to British forces is growing as attacks on the regiment intensify. (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC Ep 5. 2005).

Episode seven, which was filmed in August 2007 features the deaths of two of the soldiers, but did not put the deaths into the context of the near loss of Basra by the British military. The event of the narrow escape by two warrior crews who were trapped in a house in Basra was featured as part an account of a battle which took place. This is also told as a reconstruction in the Andy McNab series, but here also, the wider context of the uprising is not mentioned. The infiltration of the police by the militia also remains a silence in the coverage. In the last episode Colonel Cullen states 'it's time to go, we're very tired, there is a professional desire to see things through to conclusion, but define conclusion in this environment and that's extremely difficult' (*Soldier, Husband, daughter, Dad* BBC Ep 8. 2005), a difficulty not just experienced by the soldiers.

The other traditional documentaries also mainly ignore the events in Basra. *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09 is an account of the emotions and thoughts of the families of soldiers, but no reason for the violence or wider context is given. *Brothers in Arms* Sky TV 17.11.09 has references to events, 'by the end of the year (2003) fuel shortages and power cuts led to rioting throughout the south (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09); The Sergeant Major states 'the police collapsed and it then got worse when we started to come under attack by military groups' (ibid). When the documentary reached 2006 in its narration, commentary states 'Basra palace is now the front line' (ibid) and the Sergeant Major states 'people said we were forced out of Basra palace that was never the case, you couldn't force us out of anywhere' (ibid), but the context or events leading to the retreat from the palace are not explained.

The NCA documentaries contain more detail about the situation in Basra and southern Iraq, although it is not until late 2005 that *Dispatches* states 'heavily armed militia are waging a vicious battle with each other and coalition troops' (*Dispatches: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05). Jane Corbin does report a rise in violence in the

*Panorama* 19.3.06, but again the violence is caused by the militias ‘responsible for torture and killings’ (ibid), where ‘they turned not on the coalition, but each other’, but no question is raised as to what the British military is doing about the violence.

By 2007, *Panorama* states ‘by summer 2005 it was clear we were now the enemy, and by 2006 ‘Iraq is on the brink of a civil war... the noble cause the British were told they had been fighting for had been displaced by sectarian slaughter’

(*Panorama: For Queen and Country* BBC1 19.2.07). The next *Panorama* (The battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07) blandly states that in the ‘summer of 2007 the soldiers were involved in some of the bloodiest street fighting they’d experienced in decades’. A senior British officer states ‘90% of the violence in Basra ... is directed against us’, so advancing the argument for the withdrawal strategy.

However, in the next *Panorama* (The legacy BBC1 17.12.07), Corbin investigates the ‘terrible rumours of things happening... women being brutally killed, torture and ethnic cleansing and thousands of people who work of us risk being murdered’. It is an Iraqi, General Mohan who states that the ‘militias became powerful because of the absence of the Iraqi state and lack of preventative action by the British’.

*Dispatches: (The Betrayal* 17.3.08) also has an American officer; General Odon stating that the British were defeated as they ‘turned Basra over to the militia’, and that it was from the summer of 2004 that ‘it was going wrong’. Thus there is no investigation into what lead to the ‘defeat’ of the British, or any questions asked as to how the military whose role as occupiers was supposed to be providing security to the region, lost control of the south.

The remaining documentaries were made after the CotK, when the Iraqi forces cleared the militia from Basra, and the success is seen as a successful outcome for the British. As Bhuta (2005) states, a misguided war can be judged by its outcome, so this notion of success is gratefully deployed by the MoD and voiced by the soldiers interviewed in the traditional documentaries.<sup>140</sup> Peter Osborne is less convinced in *Dispatches: The Legacy* 13.12.08, where he states in disbelief that the ‘British maintain that Basra is stable and Iraqi forces in control’, but the programme

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<sup>140</sup> *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09) and ‘*Brothers in Arms* (Sky TV 17.11.09).

again has Rory Stewart, General Odon and Osborne saying that the British were forced out of Basra and the militia took control.

The discourse of success and withdrawal also contains the idea mentioned above, of cost, that is, that the soldiers have to have died for something, that their death means nothing if the outcome of the operation is not successful. The operation has now become a success, so the deaths were worth it. General Lamb elides both discourses when he says in 2009:

it has got to a point where they have a choice to their future.... The choice is theirs. That choice has been born on the back of just short of 200 dead on our part, and a vast number of people injured, on the American side. Is that a worthy endeavour? My sense it is... (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09).

This discourse of Iraq for the Iraqis rises in tandem with the discourse that the presence of the British military was exacerbating the situation in the South and leading to more violence by the militia<sup>141</sup>. Dannatt as the new head of the Army was a major voice in the emergence of this claim with his interview in the *Daily Mail* in October 2006 when he seemed to criticise the government's current policy by arguing for an early withdrawal from Iraq (*Daily Mail* 13 October 2006). General Shaw re-iterated the case claiming that 90% of the violence in Basra was perpetrated against the MNF in the Chilcot Inquiry (Sherriff 2010: Shaw 2010), and it provided a plausible reason for the British to withdraw regardless of the security situation in Basra.

This view for public dissemination seems to be rather different from that stated in the GOC MND SE's address to the MNF Iraq Commanders' conference in February 2007 cited by Alderson, who quotes the British view as characterising security in Basra as 'Palermo rather than Beirut' as criminality rather than insurgency, 'large scale gangsterism rather than all out war' (Alderson, 2009:162). However seven months later, Alderson also writes that from the military point of view, and with regard to the view of the Americans who were doing the opposite in bringing more troops in to Iraq, the 'underpinning logic was that the British presence had lost

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<sup>141</sup> *Panorama*: The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07, *Dispatches*: Iraq - The Betrayal. C4 17.03.08)

legitimacy with Basrawis, and that it was the principal reason for violence; if the British left Basra, the reason for the attacks, which so disrupted life in the city, would be removed' (Alderson, 2009:159).

In the traditional documentaries made after CotK<sup>142</sup>, the particular events of the operation and its effect on the British military strategy are not looked at in detail, and questions about a British defeat are not asked. The McNab documentary series (*Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008) looks only at particular battles or events which portray the soldiers as 'heroes' without putting them into context. The narrative structure of the documentary is in part responsible for this, with no explanation of where they fit into the wider picture of the occupation. The other Sky documentary merely features the soldiers describing the events of the situation, with no explanation. For example commentary states that in 2006 'Basra palace 'was now the front line' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09); Sergeant Lally states 'It was more or less taken as read that when you deployed onto the streets of Basra you were going to get a contact'. So when the military did pull out of Basra, commentary merely says 'Under the cover of darkness the last British troops in the city withdrew to the outskirts of Basra' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09). The strategy is never questioned, so a context and explanations for the withdrawal are not given. Uncomfortable questions are not asked and statements not challenged. Sergeant Major Kuss states 'people said we were forced out of Basra palace; that was never the case, you couldn't force us out of anywhere' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09). General Lamb adds 'We were fighting on two fronts... we did exactly what was asked of us' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09). In other words, it's not our fault, and no more questions are asked, but in none of the documentaries is the exit strategy, the events leading to the CotK, or the issue of the role of the army before or after, defined in detail.

The News and Current Affairs documentaries are more time specific and the *Panorama's* as investigations look into subjects which include the British strategy and possible failure. Jane Corbin asks whether the end of the occupation of Basra

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<sup>142</sup> (*Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008, *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09)

was ‘an orderly withdrawal or were we driven out and what was the price we paid to end the body count?’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07). Corbin states that no press was allowed to film the handover of the palace to Iraqi security forces, and later says this was done because ‘Whitehall was nervous that the media would present it as a defeat, so the PR strategy was to ban the press from the ceremony’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07). However she states that the army left when they ‘were ready’. The MoD narrative that the British were causing the violence is offered by Lt. Col. Patrick Sanders, 4<sup>th</sup> battalion the Rifles, who states ‘It was about 90% of the violence in Basra that was going on at the time was directed against us’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07). In the same programme the Iraqi General, General Mohan states that the militias became powerful because of the absence of the Iraqi state and the lack of preventative action by the British (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07), and in the previous programme Corbin states that it was he who told the British they had to leave, thus taking the narrative back a step. The withdrawal from the palace is revealed to be part of a deal struck with the Jaish al Mahdi (JAM). Mohan states that the deal was simple. ‘The Mahdi army had to stop bombing British forces and the British army would release all Mahdi army prisoners in its custody’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07), and Corbin comments ‘The top brass don’t want to talk about the deal they made, perhaps because it involved negotiations with the militia which killed dozens of our soldiers’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07).

There are two issues here. One is the unquestioning of the MoD narrative that the violence is mainly directed towards the British. It wasn’t (North 2009; Nights & Williams 2007; Ucko 2010; Ledwidge 2011). In 2007 Anthony Cordesman wrote ‘Soft ethnic cleansing has been going on in Basra for more than two years’ (2007:81). The other issue is the lack of questioning about the British strategy, not just evidenced in this programme, which leads to a paradox in the discourse. Corbin asks whether this was a political deal or a military deal (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07), and it is in this confusion about military strategy, in how the British military was fighting its war, or carrying out its occupancy, that the dilemma of this and other programmes can be seen.



Not simply destroying those who would harm you is construed as a failure by the media. However, this failure of the view of the soldier as 'war fighter' does not sit comfortably as part of the soldier as hero discourse. Thus the view that the British military was 'defeated' is down played. When Corbin introduces the leader of the Mahdi Army, who claims a victory, she says 'The leader of the Mahdi army in Basrah is Sheikh Bahadli...the British military call him Sheikh behaving badly' (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07), so undermining his authority to speak, and thus his view of the British defeat. His press statement is also juxtaposed to Lt Col Patrick Sanders, who asks 'Does this look like a defeated army? That's complete bollocks, we've fought hard over the last three and a half months, we could have stayed as long as we wanted to and we left because it was the right thing to do' (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07)<sup>143</sup>. The programme therefore rubbishes the notion of defeat, but in the terms of traditional war as presented by the media it is still perhaps unacceptable, but this still has to be explained away; hence the repeating of the mantra that the individual soldier is brave and a hero.

The discourses of the soldier as hero and the withdrawal strategy which promotes the success of the occupation, excludes discussion of the changing nature of war and the military counter-insurgency strategy, or lack of it. Success in war is understood to be traditional defeat of the enemy and although most of the media could see that the 'enemy', whoever he was, had not been defeated, and thus success was unclear, they could not seem to make sense of what the military were doing, although this was compounded by the military also feeding into the discourse of a story tale success.

Perhaps success was the cutting of casualties of the UK forces, and the enabling of the Iraqi forces to stand on their own feet. Merom argues that even an effective military counterinsurgency campaign may not deliver the outcomes sought, that there are three options, 'none of which is thrilling' (Merom, 2007: 183). He argues that the first is to insist on total military victory at the risk of discovering that even

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<sup>143</sup> However, in a paper presented to RUSI, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Sanders describes the withdrawal from Basra Palace as 'repositioning', 'for the purposes of strategic messaging'. He writes 'for the military for whom withdrawal is a perfectly acceptable term, the operation was relief in place followed by a withdrawal in contact' (Sanders 2009 as quoted by Alderson 2009:160).

sound battle-field performance leads nowhere politically, as in Algeria, Vietnam, and the Lebanon; the second is where the military effort is politically unsustainable, so the military has to cut and run, as in Somalia, and the third which is what the British did in Iraq, and which was ‘in essence to aim low, possibly lower’ was to ‘accept and support the least unpleasant indigenous authority without expecting that it will obediently serve western interests’ (ibid: 183-4). Politics becomes paramount.<sup>144</sup>

In the *Panorama* on the withdrawal of the British from Basra Palace, General Binns reacts to the question of whether what has happened will be seen as a success or failure, by stating ‘well I think success or failure will be judged by others in the future, and I think those who look for success or failure simply don’t understand the nature of modern conflict’ (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07). This can be interpreted perhaps as sophistry, but I think it can also be considered as part of the acknowledgement of the media’s misunderstanding of the military strategy of counterinsurgency, where political manoeuvrings and political solutions become part of military conduct, as stated above. Brigadier Storrie quotes John Nagl, an American expert on counter-insurgency ‘on their own, foreign forces cannot defeat an insurgency, the best they can hope for is to create the conditions that will enable local forces to win it for them’ (Storrie, 2009/2010: 21).

Storrie argues that negotiation with the JAM was a strategic move which allowed JAM to hang themselves, forcing the Iraqi forces to take action (although his conclusions might have been different if Prime Minister Maliki had not been so successful). However, no acknowledgement of the political role of the British military in Iraqi affairs is mentioned in documentaries, thus any talk of negotiation is seen as something out of the ordinary, and thus not ‘war like’.

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<sup>144</sup> It is worth quoting Clausewitz who writes:

‘The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war,... the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be. On the other hand, the less intense the motives, the less will the military element's natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives. As a result, war will be driven further from its natural course, the political object will be more and more at variance with the aim of ideal war, and the conflict will seem increasingly political in character. (Clausewitz. 1976:29).

### **7.5.b. Violence? Some questions asked in the News**

Again it is news which is more successful in dealing with the wider context of the British military's role in Iraq, whether it was leaving Iraq because it did what it said it was going to do, or what was expected of it. However, the exit strategy as peddled by the Ministry of Defence also has a prominent place in the coverage of events in Iraq in the final year of the occupation, and to a far greater extent than in the documentary coverage the withdrawal is framed as part of domestic politics in arguments between the government and opposition about troop numbers.

The killing of the RMPs in Al Amarah was seen as the first sign that the British were not winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqis, and that their humanitarian objectives were doubted by the locals. The attack on the warriors the next year in 2005 is another major signal that all was not well with the humanitarian narrative.

*Newsnight* (19.9.05), *BBC News* (19.9.05) and *C4 News* (20.9.05) all headline the package with doubts about the relationship between the British military and the Iraqi authorities, but the subsequent question is whether this signals that it is time for the military to withdraw, not that the government of the province by the British before the hand-over has failed, and that they are seen as a hostile occupation. Paxman introduces *Newsnight* 19.5.09 with the statement 'if that's how the supposed allies in the police behave and this is the reality to relations with local people, is it time to start pulling out?' ITN (19.9.05) states 'violence comes on a day when there were renewed calls for British troops to be withdrawn from Iraq'. The BBC news headlines John Reid's statement 'it would be a disaster to stay there as an occupying force ... equally to wave the white flag and run' (19.9.05). The news' practice of finding a senior politician, or primary definer to speak on a subject, and the concurrence of a party conference meant that the inclusion of statements by Sir Menzies Campbell about a need for a government exit strategy places the event in a domestic frame<sup>145</sup>.

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<sup>145</sup> ITN 19.9.05; *BBC News* 19.9.05; *C4 News* 19.9.05

Questions about the infiltration of the police by the militias and the break down in relations between the British forces and the police are raised. Nick Robinson, the BBC's political Editor says that the break down is 'very serious for the British strategy', and Lindsey Hillsum brings up the point that the 'British forces who train the Iraqi police may be honing the skills of their potential enemies' (*C4 News* 20.9.05). This bulletin also features a local journalist who claims that the Governor, the intelligence and the police are all controlled by the militia (*ibid*). Snow does not follow up this train of thought and address the wider issue but questions John Reid about the specific incident which led to the attacks on the British. The *BBC News* just quotes the government, saying it 'will keep on training the police that will ultimately allow troops to come home' (*BBC News* 20.9.05). *Newsnight* states that the Iraqi security forces have been penetrated by the militia, but the Iraqi National Security Adviser won't admit to the extent of the penetration, and Paxman does not have the figures quoted earlier that year by the Basra Chief of Police<sup>146</sup> to hand, although these are cited by Tim Collins in the *ITV News* (20.9.05), and Ben Brown states 'some say only about a quarter of the police can be trusted' (*BBC News* 20.9.05).

The issue of a break down between the central Iraqi government in Baghdad and the security forces in Basra is mentioned in a statement from the Iraqi Prime Minister in London, 'It doesn't mean that Basra is beyond the control of the sovereign central control of Iraq' (*C4 News* 21.9.05), which is precisely what was happening.

Caroline Hawley also cites a British official who 'told us that the police chief isn't in a position to fire the infiltrators because he hasn't got a green light from Baghdad' (*BBC News* 21.9.05). This is an indication of Basra being out of control both of the British and of the central Iraqi government, but the wider questions about Iraqi politics or about the strategies of government of the British military are not asked.

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<sup>146</sup> Speaking to the *Guardian*, General Hassan al-Sade said half of his 13,750-strong force was secretly working for political parties in Iraq's second city and that some officers were involved in ambushes. Other officers were politically neutral but had no interest in policing and did not follow his orders, he told the *Guardian*. "I trust 25% of my force, no more." (Rory Carroll: *The Guardian* 31 May 2005).

The September 2007 coverage is of the withdrawal from the main palace in Basra, with the British relinquishing their position in the city centre. The exit strategy discourse runs with the humanitarian theme, that the military was there to train the Iraqi security forces, they are now trained and 'ready', so the British can withdraw to let them run their country, which was always the ultimate aim of the military, thus withdrawal (whether as a relief in place, or a withdrawal in contact) is seen as a success. The BBC news also stresses the other military exit argument, that the British presence is exacerbating the violence. Basra palace 'draws enemy fire constantly' (Little, *BBC News* 2.9.07). Most government and military spokesmen and reporters such as Mark Urban merely describe the military tactics of the operation, showing the route of the withdrawal and possible threats, but do not explain its meaning.

The next major event covered by the news, The Charge of the Knights (CotK) which began on 25.3.2008, as an Iraqi lead operation which had limited British involvement, also features the humanitarian discourse, of the soldiers as trainers for the Iraqi army. Initially, the operation is presented by voice over and statements from 'experts' as a collapse in the security of the city after the British left the Palace in 2007, with the British forces 'allowing' the Iraqi forces which they had trained to undertake the restoration of order in Basra. So it becomes a culmination of their training programme and role in Iraq. 'Today's battles were a critical test of the British strategy of training Iraqi forces to handle security' (*BBC News* 25.3.08); The military spokesman 'It's encouraging for us in that the training we have been providing them with in the past few months has been effective' (Holloway, *BBC News* 27.3.08); Chairman of Defence Committee 'I'm pretty confident that the Iraqi army has been well trained by the British' (Arbuthnot, *C4 News* 25.3.08) 'British troops based near Basra airport are not playing a crucial role in the battle being fought out just a few miles away, but that it's argued is the way it should be' (*Newsnight* BBC 27.3.08).

The certainty about the worth of the training of the Iraqi security forces began to founder as it became evident that the Iraqi forces were not being successful. Basra was erupting and the British were still sitting on their airfield outside the city doing very little, but the humanitarian role given to the military and the framing of the

MoD's exit strategy manages to hold. Commentary: 'So from the airport on the outskirts of town, British soldiers new mission is to play a supporting role in the Battle for Basra while the Iraqi troops they trained will be on the front line, they will be fighting the insurgents at one remove'<sup>147</sup>, (ITV *News* 1.4.08). Ministry of Defence spokesman: 'It's a complex environment where the Iraqi security forces are under their own leadership, but with our support are making progress' (C4 *News* 1.4.08). The operation continued until April 20<sup>th</sup>, but domestic politics intervened in the UK coverage, and the news lost interest after the beginning of April.

In the news coverage of the withdrawal from the Palace in Basra and of the CotK, by framing the coverage as a success for British training, and as part of the withdrawal strategy there is no need to ask important questions about over-all British military strategy, or the changing nature of war.

Although the exit strategy is the main frame for the coverage of the British forces withdrawal, there is however a much stronger element of criticism in the news than in documentaries. The US and Iraqi views of a British defeat are cited:

Commentary: 'US military accused the British of bowing to defeat, leaving the Americans to fill the security vacuum (ITV *News* 2.9.07), Commentary: 'It was a defeat some years ago - no victory' (Simpson: BBC *News* 2.9.09). Commentary 'No victory but merely a recognition that Britain's time is almost up' (C4 *News* 3.9.07); Commentary: 'The situation the British leave behind is not one they wanted (C4 *News* 3.9.07); Commentary: 'Iraq sees it as a defeat for British forces (*Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07); Commentary: 'The International Crisis Group says this will be seen as an ignominious defeat' (*Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07); Commentary: 'The majority in Britain think war is already lost' (*Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07), Commentary: 'The Basra operation... won't be remembered as an unqualified success' (ITV *News* 1.4.08).

These are all statements made without explanation. The limited time of news does exclude much discussion of how this happened, but this still leaves major questions unasked. In a similar way, questions about the nature of the relationship between the senior coalition partner and Britain are not asked. Any explanation of this unequal

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<sup>147</sup> I'm not quite sure how you fight 'at one remove', but it connects the military to the role of fighting, more traditionally suited to soldiers, than that of watching the fighting.

partnership has major ramifications about the going to war, as well as the conduct and purpose of the occupation.

### **7.6.a. The Special Relationship in Documentaries**

Allied to the lack of understanding about the military strategy is the silence about the relationship between the US and Britain, and the divergence of the military strategy pursued by both. The confusion about the role of the British after the invasion and the subordinate nature of the relationship of the British to the US is not covered by any of the documentaries. A telling moment is illustrated in the lack of communication between the Americans and the British in *Soldier, Husband Daughter Dad* (BBC1 April 2005) when the Colonel of the Regiment discovers that the hand-over of sovereignty of the province to the Iraqis is taking place earlier than he expected, and that he has not been told of the fact. Cullen states: ‘this does actually make us look very silly’ (*Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad*: BBC1 2005 Ep 8). However, this is not explained, nor are questions asked as to the meaning of this lack of communication from the MNF command.

The NCA documentaries, *Dispatches* and *Newsnight*<sup>148</sup> do contain US criticism of British strategy. General Odom states that the British ‘allowed the police to be penetrated, retreated to an air base encircling themselves and turned it over to the Shiite militias’ (*Dispatches*: Iraq: The Legacy C4 13.12.08), but there is no in depth investigation of the divergence of policy and the subordinate role of the British.

The troops have apparently succeeded in what they came out to do, and like the war itself, any fighting is taking place because that is what happens in war. As Foucault states:

For a domain of action, a behaviour to enter the field of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it (Foucault, 1997:117).

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<sup>148</sup> *Dispatches*: Iraq - The Betrayal. C4 17.03.08, *Dispatches*: Iraq: The Legacy C4 13.12.08)

There was no uncertainty about the British military's success, and their abilities in counter-insurgency in the past were familiar, so questions about any uncertainty in these matters were not asked.

### **7.6.b. The Special Relationship in News**

In 2005 the news is still accepting the difference in the levels of violence in the South and in Baghdad, and one of the assumptions is that if the British 'take on the militia' the situation will become the same as in the North. *C4 News* (21.9.05) shows an extract of fighting in Tal Afar<sup>149</sup> (near the Syrian Border) where the US and Iraqi government forces are fighting 'insurgents', stating somewhat smugly that 'the British have avoided this kind of operation in the south', but the assigning of the violence to the 'Shia' militia means that the insurgency was not read as anti-occupation violence (as it was seen in Baghdad), but primarily to religious causes and therefore different to that which the Americans were dealing with.

The withdrawal from Basra Palace in 2007 took place at the same time that the Americans announced the surge and Bush visited Baghdad, so the news is presented as a difference in policy, and as a criticism of Gordon Brown, although as said the wider context of why the Coalition partners were diverging in terms of strategy was not explored. *C4* headlines the item with Bush having arrived in Baghdad stating the fact that America does not abandon its friends (*C4 News* 3.9.07). *BBC news* and *Newsnight* also use the same sound bite from Bush 'When we begin to draw down troops from Iraq it will be from a position of strength and success, not from the position of fear and failure' (*BBC News* 3.9.07; *Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07).

The Americans are again mentioned in the coverage of the CotK campaign. The US involvement in fighting in Sadr City in Baghdad is reported, but from the viewpoint of Shia violence spreading from Basra, it is not examined in the context of a different strategic decision as part of the surge that has been taken by the Americans. *C4* and *Newsnight* remark on the fact that the Americans have been drawn into the

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<sup>149</sup> In fact the Americans' action in Tal Afar under Colonel MacMasters in 2006 is seen as a success in counter-insurgency, and this example formed part of the practice that informed the US counter-insurgency document Fm3-24.



fight (C4 *News* 28.3.08, *Newsnight* BBC 27.3.08), they kill eight civilians in an American air strike on Mahdi army positions (C4 *News* 29.3.08). By the beginning of April when the inaction of the British forces has become clear, their static presence is ascribed to the fact that the British are only there to please the Americans, (C4 *News* 1.4.08, BBC *News* 1.4.08). However, there is still an assumption that they *will* be asked to help, so the question of why they were not is not generally asked, except by Jeremy Paxman who asks Major General Patrick Cordingley:

‘There’s no chance of the British troops being committed?’

’Cordingley: I think none at all’

Paxman: ‘None at all? What are they doing there then?’ (*Newsnight* BBC 27.3.08)

By the time of the coverage of the handover to the American forces, the American military is once again the arbiter of British performance, with the BBC showing the American General Odierno who is in charge of the American troops in Iraq talking about the ‘blood we shed together in the defence of the innocent’<sup>150</sup> (BBC *News* 31.3.09) and Colonel Keener, the American commander who takes over Basra, ‘your soldiers earned a place in history... they can now return home with the confidence of a job well done’ (BBC *News* 30.4.09).

The other frame of significance in the news coverage on the withdrawal of the British forces is as part of British domestic policies<sup>151</sup>. The movement of troops becomes a decision made by the Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and couched either as a criticism of his policies or part of the Government’s failure to attain their objectives or promises. For example, the withdrawal from Basra becomes ‘pressure on the Prime Minister to name a date for British withdrawal’ (ITV *News* 2.9.07): and still talking about the withdrawal from Basra, commentary states that Bush was disappointed with Brown (BBC *News* 3.9.07) and ‘Gordon Brown insisted it was

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<sup>150</sup> I presume he means the blood of the Americans and British soldiers, rather than the Iraqi blood they both shed!

<sup>151</sup> See Section 7.3

not a defeat'(C4 *News* 3.9.07). All the television media could see was an increase or decrease in troop numbers, read through the prism of domestic politics. An analysis of the strategic ability of the military commanders, and hence the occupation itself was lacking.

Questions were not asked about the 'special relationship', but also of importance to the understanding of the occupation and its reason for being, is the lack of explanation or questions about the deaths of British soldiers.

## **7.7 Death**

Hammond writes that it is the deaths of the soldiers which give meaning to the continued occupation of Iraq (2007) and it forms a ritualistic need of offering sacrifice to legitimate the occupation. As many of the families state, the occupation must be seen as a success for the deaths to be worth something, but entwined with this discourse in the documentaries, is also evidence of the banishment of death mentioned by Ignatieff (2000), and Boltanski's view that an audience must not be allowed to get too close to death (1999). The discomfort with death means that few subsequent questions are asked about it. As Young writes:

The flat statement that one kills and dies for the man next to you, never leads to the obvious question: what are both of you doing there?...Contemporary war movies abstract war from its context, leaving it standing on its own, self-justifying, impervious to doubt, a fact of nature (Young, 2003: 256).

### **7.7.a. Death in Documentaries**

As with the reasons assigned to the violence in Iraq, the causes of deaths given by the documentaries shed light on the assigned role of the soldiers and the justification for being in Iraq. The reasons stated in the programmes are as follows, in order of frequency:

- 1 Most deaths are distanced by just being assigned in general 'to war'.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Dispatches*: Battle Fatigue C4 22.5.06, *Panorama*: Soldiers on the Run BBC1 26.3.07, *Panorama*: The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07, *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09, *Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad*. BBC1 April 2005

- 2 The soldiers died for their country.<sup>153</sup>
- 3 No reason given<sup>154</sup>
- 4 Death is unreasonable.<sup>155</sup>
- 5 Suicide<sup>156</sup>
- 6 From the Iraqi militia<sup>157</sup>
- 7 Blair's actions<sup>158</sup>
- 8 Sacrifice<sup>159</sup>
- 9 Dying because they were being attacked<sup>160</sup>

The lack of emotion in which the deaths are referred to adds to the distancing effect, except for the deaths of the Red Caps who are described in the introduction, as being killed 'in cold blood' (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05), which is doubtful given the feelings of the local Iraqis towards the occupation documented by the programme itself later, but which is evidence of the strong emotions roused by their deaths. The affect of the deaths on others is covered in these programmes, but the actual deaths themselves are not dwelt on perhaps because of the troubling ambiguities of the legality of the war and occupation as mentioned by Woodward et al. (2009). The apathy that pertains to death which is out of our control (Sontag 2004) also contributes to the distancing of the soldiers' deaths.

The physical distance of the programme makers to the event of death also has to be taken into account. None of the documentary makers, apart from Jane Corbin

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<sup>153</sup> *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09

<sup>154</sup> *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06

<sup>155</sup> *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05

<sup>156</sup> *Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BBC1 26.3.07, 19

<sup>157</sup> *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06

<sup>158</sup> *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05

<sup>159</sup> *Iraq 2003-2009* BBC1 9.10.2009

<sup>160</sup> *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008)

(*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06), was actually in theatre when a British soldier was killed. I returned to Basra a couple of days after the deaths of the two 1RHA soldiers (*Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad*. BBC1. April 2005 Ep 7). The absence of deaths of soldiers in the documentaries thus has a pragmatic reason. Additionally, from experience<sup>161</sup> it is a difficult event to cover. If the death itself has not been filmed, how should one cover it?

Many programme makers film the families who talk about the loss of the soldier. However, the talk is about the loss of the person, not the description of the death itself. The representation of the death is only shown visually and ritually by the flag-draped coffins, and stills of the dead soldiers, which are more prevalent in the news, but there is otherwise a lack of talk and pictures of death itself<sup>162</sup>. Jane Corbin seems quite shocked by the death of the soldier she had been interviewing hours before he was shot, and the programme falls into a recognisable pattern of an interview with the Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Ben Edwards who says ‘this will not put us off our case’ (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1. 19.3.06) and then a tribute at the end of the programme to Captain Richard Holmes. I used the same format in *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad*. Ep.7. BBC 2005

The difficulty of translating one culture to another and the problems of how to show death or communicate its effect are also experienced by the soldiers. Bourke writes ‘By imagining themselves as participating in a fantasy, men could find a language which avoided facing the unspeakable horror not only of dying but of meting out death’ (Bourke. 1999: 28). Dan Covidi, in his account of killing an Iraqi in Basra says ‘the first person that I killed when I shot him... it was just like we were playing games again’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep 1). He has nothing from life to compare the experience with. Likewise when talking about the battle at Cimic House, Sgt Dan Mills says ‘bloody hell this is happening to us, it’s not television’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep 2). It is an experience

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<sup>161</sup> See section 2.7

<sup>162</sup> Where there is footage, the guidelines about showing death are quite strict. ‘When people have been killed, injured or are missing, it is important that, as far as is reasonably practicable, next of kin do not find out from BBC output’ (BBC Producers Guidelines. 11.4.7)

from a different existence, and as I mentioned, as a programme-maker to communicate the event it has to be put into some context and given a reason. Andy McNab has to transfer this military act to a civilian world, and try to explain it briefly to a civilian, ‘Covidi now had to kill if he wanted to see his wife and children again’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep. 1), and ‘fighting the enemy really close up ..., ain’t like the films, it’s traumatic, you can see the enemy as they are dropped, you can see the strike marks as your rounds enter their bodies, but you know you just got to keep on doing it, because if you don’t you’re the one who is getting dropped’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 200 Ep. 1).

The distancing of death by soldiers, of not wanting to face it, or talk about their experience of death both in theatre and when they return home is well documented, and I would argue is evident in the verb ‘drop’ instead of ‘kill’ used by Andy McNab above. The use of euphemisms in war has been noted as a distancing practice (Matheson 2005. Norton-Taylor 2003) and its effect is to disguise the reality of the action the word is replacing. However in this case, McNab is quite graphic about seeing the bullet rounds enter bodies. In another episode he says ‘the job is to kill as many of them as quickly as possible, so they don’t get to kill you’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep. 2), so I wonder if the choice of terminology here is rather a deliberate attempt by McNab to be identified as a soldier by using vocabulary that is recognisably that of an ordinary soldier and part of his performance. Likewise, he talks about snipers, whose job it is ‘to take out high value targets’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008. Ep. 2), with the ‘main surgical strike weapon for the British army’ (the L96 sniper rifle). Sumers, the sniper in question states ‘I knew I had taken the man out, and then one of the call signs... said you’ve taken the back of the guy’s head off’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008 Ep. 2). The vocabulary and terminology is quite graphic, and does not indicate a technique to disguise the reality of what he does.

In the commentary of many of the programmes, death becomes part of the drama and performance of the documentary. It is cited as a warning, as a rhetorical device to provoke feelings of suspense and anticipation, and also as a measurement which relays the level of danger for the soldiers. For example in *Soldier Husband*

*Daughter Dad*. Episodes 8 and 1 (BBC1 2005), the commentary mentions the fact that Camp Cherokee (where part of the Regiment was based) is known as ‘camp death’ and has been attacked more times than any camp in Basra’. The tally of British deaths is also frequently mentioned; ‘28 British soldiers have been killed since the war ended over a year ago’ (*Soldier Husband, Daughter, Dad*. BBC1 April 2005 . Ep. 6); ‘Since the end of the war 27 soldiers have been killed’ (*Soldier Husband, Daughter Dad*. BBC1 APRIL 2005 Ep. 4) ‘22 soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the war ended over a year ago’ (*Soldier Husband Daughter Dad*: BBC1 APRIL 2005. Ep. 1). ‘103 British military lives, 2,000 coalition dead and tens of thousands of Iraqis’ (*Panorama: bringing Our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06). Death again becomes a graph to measure the progress of the war. In much the same way Moeller describes the counting of suicide bombers in Iraq as being data points on a graph, ‘indicators of the relative wellbeing of the country’ (2009: 44), so the deaths become indicators of success or otherwise in the war.

Death thus becomes a number and the discourse of a CNN ‘clean war’, of the belief from the first Gulf War that war can be fought without death is carried on into this war and occupation. It becomes even more marked when entwined with the humanitarian discourse of nation building as mentioned above. Not only can modern warfare avoid death, but when war is fought for the ‘right’ reasons, death is even more out of place. For example, the mother of one of the Red caps says ‘this wasn’t active service... they said the war was over, he was on operational duty, but he wasn’t killed in the sense of combat’ (*Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05). The mother of the last soldier to die in Iraq, Conchi Bullen, says ‘When I heard that a soldier had died in Iraq the very last one, I said who’s killed him? We’re not fighting any more. They’re supposed to be friends with us now, whose telling lies? Why are they still killing our soldiers?’ (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09). Philip Hewitt’s mother questions the policy of ‘Hearts and Minds’ ‘they were in a land rover because they didn’t want to antagonise the locals, because they didn’t want to wake the locals up, my son was blown apart, how is that right? There’s no right in this’ (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07).

As spoken death is more about the loss, than the description of the act of dying. It has become a loss and a ritual of mediation because only certain people can speak about death, and only on certain terms. The mothers become the pall bearers, and spokeswomen of death, and it is through their voices and the relatives of the dead that that the main opposition to the occupation and war is voiced.

In section 2.7 on the media coverage of death, I look at the assumption of risk and payback where risk becomes a ‘mathmaticized morality and becomes a socially constructed phenomenon and I argue that with the growing realisation that in Iraq the cause was not worth the deaths being paid, the risk had to be re-defined. On this metaphysical scale with lives as the payment, the cost seems to be support by the government, by society and an improvement in Iraq. The cost is mainly in action but some mention of monetary compensation is made, as in *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, for example when Richard Turner talks about the scale set for the levels of trauma not being enough, and one of the other three injured soldiers, Albert Thomson says ‘No one would put their life at risk if they weren’t going to reap any benefits afterwards, if you get injured or killed you want your family looked after’ (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06).

However, as the occupation progresses, support by the government and society, or an improvement in Iraq is not realised. So perhaps as in Kosovo, the war becomes worth fighting because soldiers are dying (Ignatief 2000), and the conduct of the war is measured by deaths. Suffering and death can also be seen to be the moral outcome of a worthy intent. Arendt states that ‘suffering alone can make self-evident the virtuousness of the motive to act... The result is the glorification of ‘suffering’ hailing the exposed misery as the best and even only guarantee of virtue’ (1963: 107) So soldiers’ suffering becomes more authentic especially because it is held up to the hypocrisy of politicians.

This balance of mathmaticised morality and the discourses of betrayal and suffering are important as they have grown to fill the space for the reasons given as to why the soldiers are in Iraq, as it is this which should provide the legitimacy for the occupation. Bill Stewardson, a father of one of a dead soldier says :

If that country (Iraq) ends up fair just and democratic, with the material things we take for granted, possibly all those deaths have been a positive contribution which each individual can make their own judgement about. If it gets to that stage in my lifetime, maybe I will look upon my son's death as a valuable one (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

Likewise, Eddie Hancock, the father of one of the Red Caps killed in Al Amarah says when talking about the situation in Iraq, 'the lives of those troops they have died for nothing' (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07). Also the mother of PJ Jones who was killed in Iraq says:

One war less is one war less. Was it worth the price? I don't think so... I just hope against hope that there is a benefit to the Iraqi people, if there isn't then what was it all about? (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

The widow of Matthew Cornish who died in 2006 says 'it has to be worth it or else Matthew died for nothing' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09).

Michalsi and Gow state that success in modern war is only possible with legitimacy (2007:203) and cite Rupert Smith:

Contemporary warfare is fought not for victory but to create political or strategic conditions, non-state actors are strongly present, and the key to war is the struggle for the will of the people, because war is fought among the people (Smith, 2005:197).

In questioning the cost of the war, it is the families of the soldiers who were killed in the war who become the main subjects to question the cause and outcome of war. Thus is it not a direct questioning of the legitimacy of war but questions from individual family members to see a 'worth' in the deaths of the soldiers. War is justified if the outcome is seen as successful (Bhuta 2005). However, at this stage in time, the jury is still out. Sergeant Major Cuss, an Iraq veteran states 'We still haven't politically answered why we got here in the first place. What we have done is created a fairer society where a lot of blood has been spilled, and I don't know if it's worth it' (*Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09).



### **7.7.b. Death in News**

News coverage is of events, and I have not specifically looked at the coverage of the events of the soldiers' deaths. In the news items chosen the deaths are mentioned as lists of names and photographs as a formula of reporting, with no context or explanation. They are a marker of the level of violence. For example, '3 British dead in the last fortnight has been a serious escalation in a part of Iraq spared the worst of insurgency' (ITN *News* 19.9.05) 'We've had 55 servicemen killed during the war and another 40 who died while there... this (the violence of the attack on the warriors) has been an exception' (Reid, C4 *News* 20.0.05)

The deaths are presented as part of the theme of mathmaticised morality. When commenting on the withdrawal from Basra palace in September 2007, Jonathan Rugman (C4 diplomatic editor) talks about the possibility of complete British withdrawal, stating 'if Basra's violence continues many bereaved might wonder what their sacrifice was for' (C4 *News* 3.9.07). However, it is in the last section of news when the troops are about to pull out that death becomes an issue. Here news frames the occupation in terms of sacrifice and death and the mathmaticised morality of death and substitution of cost is apparent.

All the coverage starts with the British hand-over service, which is very reminiscent of a religious service, with a podium or altar, flags and a congregation. The actual religious service of remembrance is intercut with a reading of some of the names of those who died, and the summation of 179 deaths. Thus like the documentaries, the cost of the 'sacrifice' becomes a feature in an analysis of whether the war was a success, or worth fighting. The reporter Julian Manyon asks 'the big question is, was all this worth it, was it worth the loss of 179 British lives?' (C4 *News* 31.3.09). BBC News coverage of the end of the occupation also becomes a ritual of remembrance with Huw Edwards referring to the website which 'includes tributes to some of those Britons who lost their lives here over the past six years' (BBC *News* 30.4.09). The setting of the items in a frame of valediction of death and ritual emphasises the individual soldier's bravery and death which cannot be questioned, so like the documentaries, this assumption blocks questions about the greater strategic performance of the military and the cost of war.

The substitution of a moral cost for a material cost of the war/occupation prohibits discussion of the actual monetary cost of the war as it becomes tied up with death, and thus to question the cost equates questioning the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers.

### **7. 8. Cost**

Linking cost to bravery and sacrifice replaces questions about the actual financial cost of the war, which is not considered in the documentaries on the British military, unless it is with reference to the lack of equipment for the soldiers. I look at an alternative account of the cost of the war and occupation in section 6.7 and this highlights the silence in the television coverage. The issue of cost in the television coverage where it is just about the lack of equipment, or part of the ‘mathmaticised morality’, forms the discourse of betrayal where it becomes vulgar to put a financial cost to emotional suffering and death, and so questions about financial cost are not asked. As Sontag writes, war

is one of the few activities that people are not supposed to view “realistically”, that is, with an eye to expense and practical outcome. In all out war, expenditure is all out, imprudent – war being defined as an emergency in which no sacrifice is excessive (1990: 99).

Television’s lack of coverage of other aspects of the occupation is also highlighted by the discussion of other cost implications at the Chilcot Inquiry. The only cost covered by documentaries and the news items is of direct cost involving equipment and funding to the British military. However, there is little coverage about the humanitarian aspect of the occupation which was purportedly nation building in Basra. The UK pledged a total commitment of £744 million towards reconstruction in Iraq (MoD factsheet), but there is little indication in any of the programmes whether this money had been spent in Iraq, or what reconstruction was being undertaken. As seen in chapter 6, the military was involved in reconstruction efforts. Rob Tinline, the deputy consul General in 2007- 2008, states that 90 to 95% of the money spent in Basra was American money. This raises questions about the ‘special relationship’, and an important aspect of the ‘true’ cost of war.

### **7.8.a. Cost in Documentaries**

In the documentaries there are few references to the cost of the war. *Panorama* features the controversy about lack of kit where Jane Corbin states ‘Today we spend just over 2% of our wealth on our armed forces, the lowest proportion since the 1930’s’ (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07). What she doesn’t say is that in 2006 Britain was the world’s second biggest spender on defence, coming after the United States at \$59.2 billion (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, as quoted by Lewis 2008:112). Lewis writes that there is no established convention for telling stories about excesses in military spending, and this falls into the ‘shortfall template’ (2008:112). In the same programme the father of one of the soldiers killed in an accident in Iraq says ‘There’s only so much money. Do you spend extra on defence and less on education?’ (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07)

Another reference to cost, but in a different vein, is by Andy McNab who explains that the anti tank javelin missile is ‘an awesome bit of kit’ and is called the Porsche by ‘the lads’, because ‘every round costs the same as a Porsche 911. They’re both black and fast, but only one of them can turn a tank inside out’ (*Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008. Ep. 3). In much the same way that the discourse of emotionalism has prevented further questions being asked about why soldiers are dying and for what reasons, questions about the cost of war are perhaps seen as rather vulgar when soldiers are dying. David Modell the presenter and producer of a *Dispatches* film ‘Battle Scarred’ introduces the documentary by asking ‘What is the true cost of war?’ (C4 7.9.09), which implies that the monetary cost is of a secondary interest, and one that is not as important to investigate. Huw Edwards mentions the cost of the war, £6 billion, being sanctioned by Gordon Brown over shots of him and Talibani in the memorial service at St Paul’s, where the context is the cost of lives lost in Iraq (*Iraq 2003-2009* BBC1 9.10.09), again belittling any questions about the monetary cost of the Iraq war, and perhaps in the light of the discourse of using foreign policy to question domestic policy, becomes more of a criticism of Gordon Brown rather than the cost of the war itself. In this programme the Archbishop of Canterbury also refers to the ‘true’ cost of war, but in this instance the cost being not life, but justice, ‘there were those among both policy makers and commentators who

were able to talk about it (the realities of cost) without really measuring the price, the cost of justice' (*Iraq 2003-2009* BBC1 9.10.09).

Questions about the financial cost of the war are thus not asked, but neither are questions asked about who decided where the money should be spent. Questions about the lack of equipment do arise in the documentaries<sup>163</sup>, but no-one asks who was responsible for this. The comments made about the lack of kit, are made in the passive tense, 'betrayed by equipment that didn't work' (Corbin: *Panorama: Bringing Our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06): 'I'm astounded at how little protection these men have' (Nicholson: *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05), 'From the start of the war there had been controversy over the British army's kit' (Corbin: *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07), 'It was only after three years of mounting criticism that new vehicles were ordered... to date only four have reportedly arrived in Iraq (Corbin: *ibid*), 'the guys....were not given the tools to defend themselves, no communication, no duty of care for those young men' (Miller: *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09). Thus, the need to state who is responsible is avoided. This silence is perhaps part of the confusion about is who responsible for what, of a greater knowledge about the structure of the military, and the relationship between the MoD, the army and how the occupation is being funded, although as shown in section 6.7 the witnesses at the Chilcot Inquiry also had difficulty in understanding the procurement system in the defence budget.

### **7.8.b. Cost in News**

There was also little specific discussion of the cost of the occupation in the news programmes studied. This silence might be attributable to the unwillingness shown in documentaries to bring up such a vulgar subject when as implied, the 'true' cost of war is the deaths of the soldiers. In the sum-up of the occupation, the programmes do mention its monetary cost, but it is in said in passing as a sub-clause, thus lessening its impact. For example, Jane Arraf, the reporter who goes into Basra

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<sup>163</sup> *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09.

states, ‘Apart from the billions spent on military operations Britain has injected £700 million into reconstruction here’ (C4 *News* 30.4.09). The cost of the occupation is not stated, only as ‘billions’ and the lack of visuals to reinforce this and any reconstruction means that the figure passes almost without notice. Mark Urban states: ‘the sums of money Britain was prepared to put in that were always dwarfed by the estimated seven billion that the military campaign cost’ (*Newsnight* BBC2 30.4.09). Gavin Hewitt states ‘after spending £6billion what kind of city are we leaving behind’ (ITV *News* 30.4.09). No reporter states that these billions are in addition to the Defence Budget. The cost is stated in relation to something else, but not a consideration in itself. Only the cost in lives both of soldiers (C4 *News* 31.3.09), Iraqis (BBC *News* 30.4.09) or reporters (ITV *News* 30.4.09) makes much impact, as this is a familiar discourse, and it has the visuals of soldiers to accompany the statement. I look at the visual effect on the discourse below.

### **7.9. Findings in news & Documentaries: Summing up of Themes**

In Foucault’s web of power (1979) many discourses exist which work together and against each other, but they are malleable and some achieve dominance over others. These become naturalised and institutionalised into practices and ways of reasoning (Sovacool & Halfon 2007). Discourse therefore has a material effect such as generating what can be spoken about, and who is authorised to speak (Foucault 1981). In the themes examined, the dominant discourse of the suffering soldier has replaced the Iraqi victim by that of the soldier whose intent, role and actions cannot be questioned. Below I elaborate the conclusions to each theme that I examined.

#### **Why Are ‘we’ in Iraq?**

Neither documentaries nor news explain the role of the British military as fully as that covered by the alternative sources in section 6.2. Alderson for example, writes that the range of activities carried out by the soldiers included ‘acting as diplomats, local administration advisors, infrastructure consultants and economic development advisors’ (Alderson 2009:145). The series *Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad*. (BBC1 2005) gives the most comprehensive portrayal of the soldiers as trainers of the Iraqi security services, but beyond training and patrolling there is no explanation or

description of the occupation. Even the NCA documentaries give little explanation of the role of the military. The war was couched in terms of a humanitarian effort yet the problems with the police force trained by the British military which raised so much interest at the Chilcot Inquiry are hardly touched on in the programmes studied.

A third of the documentaries are about the treatment of mentally and physically damaged soldiers when they get home, so their role or reason for being in Iraqi is perhaps not pertinent to the issue of the programme. But the dominance of the discourse of suffering excludes an exploration of other issues, such as what they were doing in Iraq. News is more descriptive, and gives a greater variety in roles for the British military in Iraq. Since documentary as a genre is more concerned with issues, the lack of explanation of the role of the military as a general context for the issues covered is of note.

The lack of explanation for what the military was doing might also be in part because most of those filmed in the documentaries were other ranks<sup>164</sup> and it was mainly the senior ranks who were involved, however unwillingly<sup>165</sup> in governing and administration. However those involved in the projects developed by Snyott<sup>166</sup> and the provincial reconstruction teams were all part of the military and not just of higher rank. Likewise the involvement or lack of other British government departments is not featured in the television coverage of the occupation, unless it is mentioned in passing with regard to the treatment of returned damaged soldiers.

As discussed, the brief of the television programmes suggests they weren't dealing specifically with the occupation and this could contribute to the lack of coverage of other roles of the military, especially in documentaries. However, the concentration by the television media only on the war fighting role excludes any other justification for occupation, it suggests a lack of knowledge about the occupation and confirms criticisms about the televisual demands of reporting war (Hoskins 2004, Lewis et al.

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<sup>164</sup> See below 7.3.a

<sup>165</sup> See section 7.2

<sup>166</sup> See section 6.3

2006), for example the concentration on the spectacular, the live and the simple. I am not looking at the production of the documentaries, so do not investigate the commissioning of the programmes, or of the intentions of the programme-makers. I examine some of the other reasons for this exclusion in my general conclusions, when I have considered factors such as the communicative design of the programmes which contribute to the narrowness of the coverage.

### **Who are we fighting?**

In documentaries and news the three main protagonists of the soldiers are identified as the government/politicians, the MoD/army and the Iraqis. The identification of the British government as protagonists strengthened the narrative of soldiers as victims of betrayal, contributing to the discourse of the suffering soldier. This absolves the soldiers of responsibility for their actions, for the war and for the occupation. Both genres amalgamate the MoD with the Army, confusing the root of the chain of command, again absolving the senior army from responsibility of the decisions made about equipment and strategy.

The Iraqis are also betrayed by the British government and their own militia, but not by the British military. At the Chilcot Inquiry, Jock Stirrup claims that the British army had nothing to be ashamed of in their actions (or lack of them) in Basra. He claims that the 'reposturing (that is the withdrawal from Basra Palace) in Basra was a deliberate plan to force the Iraqi's hand politically. The British Army did all of this brilliantly' (Stirrup 2010). Frank Ledwidge comments:

This is demonstrable nonsense to the Sunni, large numbers of bereaved Shia and the entire Christian population of the province. To many British soldiers or informed commentators it displays a remarkable degree of cognitive dissonance (2011:128).

It would thus seem that the denial of responsibility for the lack of security in Basra is not just a feature of the media.

Television news assigns blame to the MoD/Government for the lack of equipment. This is a departure from picture obtained from the Chilcot Inquiry<sup>167</sup>. Sir Bill Jeffrey says that it was not the case that the budget for the MoD had been underfunded or cut, ‘but that we have a very serious management issue (Jeffrey 2010:12). Money was spent on the FRES ‘shambles’ (Hutton. 2010:24), and was available, but it was a question for the ‘whole of the top leadership and defence as to where the priorities lie’ (Spencer 2010:60).

However, television news is clearer about the chain of command, that is, where decisions originated from. This is not a study in production, so it can only be speculation that the news producers had a better knowledge of politics and military affairs, or that greater news value was obtained from pointing the finger at Downing Street.

Both genres of media text struggle to locate the origins of the violence and the Iraqi protagonists, whether it was religious, nationalism or political. News again is more specific in putting names to the Iraqi enemy, but their terminology changes with who the Iraqis were fighting. For example, when the Iraqis are fighting the British they are described as ‘insurgents’ and criminals, when Iraqi’s fight other Iraqi’s they use more military terms, such as ‘militia’ and ‘army’. Documentaries tend to use the passive tense to a greater extent which again might be a reflection of their ignorance of Iraqi politics and a general confusion as to what was the cause of the opposition, nationalism, religion or crime; but the effect is to reinforce the framing of the soldiers as victims, and again strengthen the discourse of the suffering soldier.

### **The Suffering Soldier**

The subject matter of a third of the documentaries is about the suffering of soldiers. The generic nature of documentaries as issue-lead constructions strengthens the emotional discourse. They function as carriers of messages (Rotha 1952), so the programmes are about a campaigning issue, that is that something should be done about the suffering soldier, and individual stories are selected as evidence for the

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<sup>167</sup> Section 6.7



argument to garner sympathy for their plight and rouse emotion for action. As Kahana writes, documentary 'collects the evidence of experience' (2008:2), which in this case is the experience of the individual soldiers and their families who have been affected by the war in Iraq.

Television news, on the whole tells the viewer what is happening on the screen, and the subjects interviewed are mostly military spokesmen, experts or other journalists who do not speak about their experiences, but about the events. However, when the dramatic event takes place of the fire-bombing of the warriors, it is the reporters who tell the story of what the soldiers are experiencing. The soldiers themselves just say what was happening to them at the time. It would seem that the demand for knowledge of emotions, for the performative<sup>168</sup> aspect of documentaries is also becoming a feature of news.

Other factors of style which contribute to the suffering soldier are the dominance in documentaries of the post holocaust style of interviews as confessions, witness' accounts of trauma, and the replacement of the Iraqis by soldiers as victims of the war (which is allied to the discourse of betrayal as seen above). The image of the burning soldier leaping from his warrior is used ubiquitously in footage from 2005 and also contributes to the discourse of the suffering soldier when perhaps the reasons for his leap are forgotten. Other discourses which contribute to the dominant theme of the suffering soldier are the Soldier as Hero, and of death which I consider in more detail below.

The discourse of the betrayed soldier contributes to his suffering, and is noticeable in both news and documentaries. The NCA documentaries are constructed as a diagnostic investigation into the perceived betrayal of the soldiers by a confused amalgam of politicians and the MoD, where the motivation in assigning blame becomes part of domestic politics, especially a criticism of Blair and Gordon Brown as the death toll of soldiers mounts. News also looks at the events in Iraq primarily as a continuation of domestic politics, and as the Iraqis and the British public also

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<sup>168</sup> Where the description 'performative' acknowledges the emotional and subjective aspects of documentaries (Nicholls 2001).

form the betrayed, the responsibility and role of the British military in Iraq is silenced. The betrayed soldiers' enemy is at home, so the occupation can continue to be for humanitarian purposes, yet what the 'humanitarian' purpose consists of, is never clearly revealed. The portrayal of the soldier as a hero is thus never rigorously questioned.

### **The Soldier as Hero**

The soldier as hero discourse is much more apparent in the traditional documentaries and less identifiable in news for the same reasons which contributed to the discourse of the suffering soldier. This is again in part due to the functions of the genre, and the narrative function of documentaries as telling the stories of individuals. The soldier as hero narrative is an instantly recognisable story from feature films about soldiers (*Soldier* 1998, *Zero Two Bravo* 1999, *We were Soldiers* 2002, *Hurt Locker* 2008). A frequent and familiar hero narrative is of the soldier as underdog, and this familiarity contributes to the suffering discourse. The Sergeant who jumped out of the warrior in flames is himself subject to this narrative, saying what he did was 'just your job, any other senior NCO officer would have done exactly the same' (Sgt George Long: *BBC News* 21.9.05). The narrative of the British soldier as underdog fighting despite his betrayal by the government and against overwhelming militia forces is apparent in documentaries, although to a lesser extent in news.

The soldier as hero can emerge with such force partly because there is little criticism to counter this discourse. Any discussion about the failure of the mission is debated in terms of the withdrawal of exit strategy, where the British task to train the Iraqi soldiers is perceived as a success especially after CotK, and the British military has to leave to prevent any further violence which is aimed at and thus caused by their continuing presence.

### **Violence: What Questions Asked?**

Both news and documentaries adopt the MoD withdrawal strategy that the British troops' role was to train the Iraqi forces to an acceptable standard and having done this leave the country so they don't instigate more violence. This contributed to the

humanitarian discourse of the occupation and meant that questions about what else the British military had, or had not accomplished were not asked, even when it was clear that the Iraqi police were turning on the people who were training them. It was also the trainers who were supplying the defecting police with weapons and equipment. In news especially, the success of the Iraqi army in establishing security in Basra after the CokT was assumed to be down to British training, the events of 2005 having been largely forgotten. This gives the military the justification to leave. Few questions about the violence in Basra which was supposedly under the protection of the British military were asked, and the main criticism is framed in terms of domestic politics or as reported comments on the US/UK relationship. Again the NCA documentaries and news are more critical in their coverage of the withdrawal of the UK forces, but a lack of understanding and context for the politics in Iraq contributes to the reliance on the MoD's explanation of the withdrawal strategy.

### **Death**

The act of dying has become out of place in a humanitarian war or occupation, but death as a sacrifice to legitimate the occupation and as a means of judging the levels of violence and the success of the occupation has taken its place. The emotionalism of death excludes discussion of the financial cost of war in both news and documentaries. When soldiers do die the deaths are assigned to 'war' and are acceptable because of these assumptions, but in documentaries and news the worth of death is measured as the success of the occupation. Death becomes a theatrical contrivance to increase tension and the hero status of the soldiers, and in becoming a rhetorical and dramatic device it excludes questions of why and how much.

### **Cost of war**

The cost of war becomes the deaths in war, and so becomes silenced by the traditions of reporting death. It becomes vulgar to put a price on the 'heroic' deaths especially when such a high payment is given for a seemingly low return, that is, an illegitimate, unpopular war and the scale of 'mathmaticised morality' is unbalanced. Questions about the lack of equipment are raised in some of the documentaries in the early stages of the occupation, but the questions about an over-stretched army

fighting on two fronts, the responsibility for that decision and for the military who allowed ill-equipped soldiers to go to Iraq are not mentioned. This forms part of the general lack of questioning in the media about Britain's military spending as a whole.

## **Chapter 8. Communicative Design in News and Documentaries**

Having looked at the main discourses in the documentary and news coverage of the selected programmes I now consider the communicative design of these programmes. Altheide (1987: 87) writes that ‘certain formats do contribute to the shape, texture and emphasis of certain coverage which cannot be easily accounted for by ideology’. Investigation of the design of the programme will help clarify both the differences between news and documentary and explain how certain features of both genres might be more resistant or be seen to contribute more to a dominant discourse. This will involve looking at who speaks (which is also a product of the discourse), the role of the reporter, and the specifics of the genre itself.

Corner separates documentary ‘thick text’ from news’ ‘thin text’ where the differences in documentaries lie in the ‘narrative design, subjective voice, symbolic suggestiveness and dynamics of depicted action (Corner 2001:125). Turner also specifies the ‘production, iconography, style, setting, narrative construction and characters and effect on viewers (2001). Documentary is topic led, focussing on purpose, goals and rationale (Altheide 1987).

The format is affected by such issues as the institutional provenance of the news and current affairs documentaries and style. The narrative construction of documentaries also contributes to the format of the programme. For example, all the traditional documentaries<sup>169</sup> are introduced as the telling of a story. This affects the subjective voice, as if there is a story to be told, there is a story-teller (the director, or reporter in the case of Andy McNab). As an acknowledged construction of an account it is clear that the events are mediated and go through transformations of style and rhetoric which take the genre closer to fiction. The authors for the NCA documentaries are the reporters such as Jane Corbin, and Peter Osborne, and like the traditional documentaries their communicative action is oriented at getting results, rather than arriving at understanding (Fairclough, 2003:71). The narrative construct

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<sup>169</sup> *Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad*. BBC1 April 2005, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, *Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008: *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09)

of the programme is of a journey to find the truth as an issue rather than an understanding of one or a sequence of events.

News covers events rather than issues or topics according to Altheide (1987), where the visuals drive content and focus on tactics rather than strategy. 'Live' events increasingly matter in news (Hoskins & O'Loughlin 2009), the thin text of news has a short term focus (Michalski and Gow 2007), as compared to the long term focus of the thick text documentaries. If news is a communicative strategy aimed more at presentation and visualisation (Ekstrom 2002), with limited information rather than the documentary strategy which is getting results and allegedly giving more information, it can be argued that the tools of this strategic action would be different. I now examine a major tool which helps define the format, which is the contributor to the programme or those interviewed.

### **8.1. Who Speaks**

The importance of finding out who speaks, is described by Foucault (1985) in terms of the enunciative modalities of a discourse: that is who can make statements or perform actions, and the credibility or materiality of the subject who makes them.

As Cottle writes:

Both liberal and critical theorists, in their different ways, point to the fundamental, pivotal even, concerns of media source involvement and media representation. Whose voices predominate, whose vie and contend, and whose are marginalized or rendered silent on the news stage are questions of shared interest. How social groups and interests are defined and symbolically visualized is also part and parcel of media source access (2003:5).

Whether the media replicate the views of the elite as argued by Hallin (1989), only transmit the dominant political and economic interests (Herman & Chomsky 1998) or whether competing social and political groups (Kellner 1995), analysing who speaks is a vital component to any research.<sup>170</sup> This also has ramifications for the epistemology of journalism, as indicated in the chapter on news<sup>171</sup>. Are sources chosen because they witnessed an event, or because they have second-hand

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<sup>170</sup> See Section 3.2

<sup>171</sup> See Section 3.4

knowledge of the event and where do the journalists themselves lie in this category of authenticity?

### **8.1.a. Who speaks in Documentaries**

Who speaks has a huge impact on the programme, but it is not within the remit of this study to take into account who the producers asked to be interviewed. From practical experience I know that one seldom ends up with the people one hoped to film, but as with the rest of the research, I look at what is on screen for the findings. In the documentaries studied:

- 58 British military officers are interviewed. This includes all ranks from Lieutenant upwards.
- 87 other ranks speak, which include ex soldiers, all below the rank of Warrant Officer
- 65 family members.
- 51 Iraqis speak, but this number is high because of the two *Panoramas*<sup>172</sup> (which included 20 Iraqis interviewed) which looked at the fate of Iraqis in the south during the occupation.

An unexpected finding was the lack of very senior officers being interviewed, that is, the Generals who were in charge of the British military in the South, or those working with the Americans in Baghdad. I acknowledge Tuchman's noting of the 'strategic ritual' (1972) of finding authoritative voices which reflects the opinion of the elite, but in this case would query who else to question about military strategy or policy, but the people responsible for it.<sup>173</sup> Only four Generals are interviewed,<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *Panorama*: Basra - The Legacy BBC1 17.12.07; *Panorama*: On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08).

<sup>173</sup> Having had the frequent experience when asking soldiers, and even officers about strategy and being told 'above my pay scale', I would still interview a senior officer, above the rank of Colonel, rather than a soldier on this topic, unless the brief of the programme was on strategy itself, thus requiring opinions from as many sources involved as possible. See also discussion on the use of military spokesman, p.105.

<sup>174</sup> *Dispatches*: Battle Fatigue C4 22.5.06, *Panorama*: On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09

two of them retired, and one Brigadier who is interviewed twice<sup>175</sup> and these are all in news and current affairs programmes. The lack of senior officers results in a silence about strategy and policy and no senior officers are held up as being responsible or for taking responsibility for the actions of the British military. Senior Officers have to have Ministerial permission to be interviewed which might have contributed to this dearth.

The preponderance of other ranks is not surprising. Carpentier and Trioen write of the 'utopian locations' which offer access to truthfulness (2010: 323). The first site is the world of statistics, the second, the ordinary citizen who is approached 'as the embodiment of authenticity, in an antagonistic relationship to the official sources that are seen as corrupt and manipulative' (ibid: 323). The 'ordinary soldier' is a site of truthfulness, and it contributes to and is also created by the discourse of the suffering soldier. Of the 179 British military personnel killed in Iraq 33 were officers, so arguably it was the other ranks who were doing most of the suffering, and it was they who were mostly speaking, arguably thus contributing more to the discourse of suffering. As Couldry (2003) notes, there has been an increase in the use of 'ordinary' voices in the media as means to reinforce the 'truth'. They are also easier to access, and often regarded as more authentic television (Hill 2007). As so many of the programmes are about the treatment of returning soldiers, it was also not that surprising to find so many interviews with the family of suffering and dead soldiers. The difficulty of filming the act of dying which leads to coverage of the loss of the dead soldier which is articulated by his family as discussed earlier, also contributes to the increasing use of families as authoritative voices.

The result is that families of the soldiers have now become primary speakers in the discourse. An effect of this is that the war and occupation themselves are not questioned. Being soldiers or families of soldiers, on the whole they do not question the function of war. By being soldiers or being part of military families war is part of their life. The families appear in programmes not just about the suffering soldiers, but have become authorities to talk about the war in general, not just about their sons

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<sup>175</sup> *Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08



who are suffering or who have died. For example the father of Robert Thompson who was killed in his second tour of Iraq was asked about the cost of war (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07), and many family members comment on subjects such as blame, cost and effect in the traditional documentary, *The Fallen* (BBC4 19.6.09).

What is also significant is the re-occurrence of interviews with the parents of the Red Caps who were killed in Al Majar in 2004. Along with Rose Gentle, the fathers of Simon Miller<sup>176</sup> and Ben Hyde (*Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1 19.2.07) (two of the RMP's killed) are frequently interviewed in the media to talk about the deaths of soldiers, failure of equipment and betrayal by the MoD. They are very eloquent which might have been one reason for choosing them as contributors, but they are also a manifestation of the shock felt at the beginning of the occupation that such a number British soldiers could be killed by the people they had supposedly 'liberated', and that after the relatively small number of deaths in the invasion. Tumber & Palmer note that the RMP's deaths had an effect on the coverage by *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror*, where the deaths changed the estimation of the nature of the situation in Iraq (2004). They write 'From this point on, the tone of the reporting on this theme changes dramatically in the tabloids' (ibid: 123). British invincibility was proved a lie when by comparison such a large number of soldiers could be killed at once. Leading journalists asked how the deaths could have occurred and both *The Mirror* and *The Mail* contain accusations that the government was to blame, and there was no justification for the military presence in the first place (ibid: 124).

Bennett writes that 'non-official sources only appear in news stories when their opinions are already emerging in official circles' (1990), and it might be that the deaths of the military police signalled an irruption in the discourse when dissatisfaction could be voiced by the families who could speak with the authority of their association to death, a truth which absolves them from being unpatriotic, and who also satisfied the media's criteria of objectivity mentioned by Mermin (1996)

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<sup>176</sup> *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Brothers in Arms*. Sky 17.11.09

‘finding a critical angle in the possibility that existing policy on its own terms might not work’ (ibid: 182).

As seen the majority of interviewees in the documentary programmes were other ranks, and family members. They would not be as informed about Iraqi politics or the relationship between the Iraqi politicians and the military as senior officer, or subject specialists. This is especially true of the more traditional documentaries, as opposed to the NCA documentaries.

As the questions about the legitimacy of the war increased in the media, so the sense of the unjustness of the deaths grew. Butler believes that if we invest the state with legitimacy and if it is the state which sponsored the war then ‘death is sad, but not radically unjust’ (Butler: 2009:41). She also states that ‘open grieving is bound up with outrage’ (ibid:39), and it is in the feelings of unjustness, and in the grieving by the families that questions about the war and associations of blame are made, but because of who speaks, these are mainly not opposing the war itself, but resisting aspects of war and criticising the politicians such as Blair who took the country to war. For example: Corinne Knight, the partner of one of the soldier killed states:

I feel like standing on the roof of my office and screaming exactly how I feel about that man. And then I feel like standing on his head in the marina until the bubbles stop rising, and even that would be too good for him (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09).

This is grieving at the outrage of a seemingly unfair death, and opposition to the man perceived to be the cause of that death, but it is not an outrage about the fact that the war/occupation is occurring.

Peter Osborne the reporter from *Dispatches* is the most critical reporter of the occupation and his programmes have the widest selection of interviewees. This in part is because they are not specifically about the British military in Iraq. He also does not examine the role of the military, but exhibits a greater understanding of the international politics of the country which must be examined in order to establish the role of the military. For him the military is merely a tool used by politicians in the UK and USA, who have been betrayed by the politicians, much as the Iraqi citizens

have been. However he does examine the historical situation of Iraq, the invasion and the increasing violence in Iraq in 2005, and questions the occupation saying that Britain is not building national institutions, nor disarming the militias in the south (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05). In his later programmes he argues that the British presence in Iraq is motivating terrorism and gives the US General Odom the opportunity to say that the British have been defeated in the south (*Dispatches: Iraq - The Betrayal*. C4 17.03.08, *Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08).

Interviews have always been a major feature of news and documentary, but in both types of documentaries studied, the interview, as well as being an information gathering tool, has become a stylistic technique which contributes to the discourse of the betrayed soldier. This is not only because of its similarity to confession but in their similarity to the trope of the holocaust memorial programmes where these interviews are used as evidence of trauma<sup>177</sup>. Walker writes that documentary film makers now realise the ‘probative powers of address in direct address documentaries’ (Walker 2007:93).

Peter Gordon’s film consists almost entirely of interviews, intercut with actuality of the three contributors with their family, working or receiving medical treatment (*When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06). *The Fallen* is also almost entirely talking heads filmed in close up against a black back ground (*The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09). Neither of the films has commentary, relying on the power of the witness statements and their accounts to engage the viewer and neither of these films use wall-paper footage to accompany the testimony, or dramatic reconstruction. Like the ubiquitous footage of the militia, where an image becomes a representation of reality, reconstruction can distance the viewer as it becomes a performance. (I will look at the footage used in the section on images).

Hoskins & O’Loughlin (2007) find that viewers became more upset when they saw the aerial bombing of Baghdad as they imagined what was happening to the citizens of Baghdad. This perhaps echoes Barthes’ emphasis on the ‘active participation’ of

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<sup>177</sup> See section 4:5 above on confession as an authoritative ritual which gives power to the discourse (Foucault 1978), and which also subjugates the confessor to the listener.

the viewer in producing meaning and affect of the photograph (Barthes 1981). Thus it is in these documentaries, that the distance of the mediation, in the transformation of the space by the media from the contributor or the event that the documentary draws away from News and Current Affairs and the genre becomes more like fiction.

DeLanda who writes about the three ages of technology, the first being the 'counterfeit', that is painting, the second the 'replica', that is the camera and the latest the age of 'simulation' which for him is the flight simulator (1991:189). Perhaps with regard to the media, the latest age is the digital age where simulation is becoming the acceptable media format.

In this age of simulation it is also in this space that resistance to the dominant discourse rises. Walker cites Lawrence Langer's writing about the 'ruins of memory' where the meaning of an event resides in the 'historiographic differential between fact and pseudo memory' (Langer as cited by Walker 2007: 96), and gives an example of a holocaust survivor who recalled that three chimneys at Auschwitz had been blown up, whereas in fact there had only been one. He writes that this exaggeration evokes the 'astonishment of resistance' (ibid: 96). So, it is thus in the space between fact and memory, in the astonishment of an event that resistance is born. For example, between the acknowledgement of the fact that the soldier was part of the largest army on the planet and the memory and astonishment that a single Iraqi soldier armed with an IED or AK47 was destroying that army, lies the resistance to the war as voiced by so many of the families. However, it is not resistance based on knowledge, but on emotions which is why it is a powerful rhetorical tool for documentaries. The space of mediation and interpretation is wide and can hold many views to offer an understanding rather than greater knowledge about the question posed. This space is also constructed by the visual, which is discussed below.

### **8.1.b. Who speaks in News**

In contrast to the documentaries, by far the greatest number of people interviewed in the selected news items is other journalists. Including the presenters who introduce the item from the studio:

- 86 reporters and journalists speak.

- 31 politicians speak and included in this number are excerpts from other material such as House of Commons reporting.
- 20 officers are interviewed, both American and British, the majority of whom are military spokesmen;
- 8 retired officers, predominantly Col Tim Collins.
- 13 'experts' speak. These include academics and authors.
- 8 soldiers are interviewed including 4 soldiers from the burning warrior who just describe what happened to themselves.
- 40 Iraqis including Iraqi politicians, soldiers and citizens. Many of the Iraqis interviewed come from the news item which looks at life in Basra at the end of the occupation (*C4 News* 30.4.09).
- 2 relatives of a deceased soldier are interviewed (*C4 News* 23.9.05; *C4 News* 3.9.07).

Barnhurst (2004) points to a rise in the USA, both in the length of time journalists speak on the news, but also to the increasing use of journalists as 'experts'. He writes of a growing 'cult' of experts, where 'journalists themselves began joining the ranks of news shaper, acting as expert sources on topics they cover' (2004: Chpt2:8). The findings in the British news at this time might therefore be part of the same development in Western media in general. However, these findings are contrary to the opinion of Robinson et al (2010) who suggest that future news on war will rely more heavily on official military spokesmen. Bennett (1990) and Wolfsfeld (2008) also point to a reliance on official sources as speakers in the discourse. Whether the by-passing of these sources is due to a more general development as identified by Barnhurst (2004), or to the withdrawal of the Ministry of Defence in providing 'experts' is a topic worth further research. Whatever, the causes, the result of the increase in the use of journalists as 'experts', it will become more difficult to assess the source of the information, and thus more difficult to ascertain the networks of power and the 'structures of dominance' (Hall. 1997) behind the discourse.

The reliance on alternative sources in the media such as the relatives of those killed also points to an irruption. In these findings the relative is authorised to speak not about the death of his soldier son, but about it being time to leave Iraq, thus on a matter of policy. However in news the lack of families speaking is noticeable when

compared to documentaries. This might be, as suggested, that no specific items on soldiers' deaths were included in the selected time-frame, but also points to evidence of the news format resisting the power of the suffering soldier discourse, suggesting that although the relatives have gained authority to speak about the war, they have not yet attained the authority of other subjects to speak in these more rational discourses or to speak about events other than death.

The high numbers of journalists appearing in the news items points to their increasing authority to speak as experts, often voicing their opinion based on their acquired knowledge of the situation from their time spent reporting in Iraq. Nichols writes about 'experiential encounters' in documentaries where we learn from knowledge that is situated in the experience of contributors, rather than from the knowledge of experts or books, and knowledge becomes more about memory than history (Nichols 2010). This seems to be happening in news with the dependence on the celebrity reporter where as seen below, in the final sum-ups of the occupation the journalists stress the time they have spent reporting in Iraq, giving them the authority of experience to speak. Likewise they have often become agents in the news stories, also seen below.

A contributing factor in the dominance of journalists as speakers in news might be the surprising lack of senior officers appearing, as seen in documentaries. Like the documentaries the scarcity of senior British officers adds to the lack of information on the role of the British military, its responsibilities and its strategic aims. The reliance on military spokesmen for an interpretation of the CotK contributes to the acceptance and adoption of the narration of the withdrawal strategy, and the belief in the success of the British army in its training of the Iraqi security forces, without questioning the dichotomy that the police in Basra were partly to blame for the increase in violence, but that the British had also been responsible for training the police.

The media was not allowed to film the handover of Basra palace to the Iraqis in Sept 2007 which added to the lack of interviews with senior officers, and C4, ITV and *Newsnight* resort to studio pieces interviewing 'experts', politicians and retired soldiers, who with the exception of Rory Stewart (C4 *News* 3.9.07) advocate the

withdrawal strategy of the MoD. The BBC interviews the senior Commanding Officer in Basra the night after the withdrawal who comments on the bravery on the soldiers and again advocates the necessity of the withdrawal. It would seem thus that even if the broadcasters do not talk to the military, they mainly talk to the ‘experts’ who come from the pro-military or MoD stable. The reporters voice criticism, but it is tempered by the authority of the speaking ‘experts’, and by their own opinion which can qualify the criticism, such as that voiced by John Simpson on the BBC news

‘There were people in the White house who were saying for instance that the British would be chased out by the Iraqis firing and shooting at them as they went, well it didn’t happen and it hasn’t happened, and it probably won’t happen now (*BBC News* 2.9.07).

Simpson is stepping outside the role of reporter as a neutral observer, and is seen as qualified to give his opinion, a development commented up on in the methodology chapter.<sup>178</sup>

The difficulty of finding Iraqis to interview, as well as news practices contribute to the lack of representation of an Iraqi version of events. In the coverage of the attack on the British warriors, C4 News features a government official from Basra (*C4 News* 19.9.05), *Newsnight* a local (20.9.05) and *BBC News* an Iraqi policeman (20.9.05) who speak about the event leading up to the attack on the British warriors. However a driver of a car, and an Iraqi policeman (*C4 News* 20.9.05), say that security should be in the hands of the Iraqis. *Newsnight* (20.9.05) features an Iraqi police officer who is also described as a member of the Mahdi army who states that it is the Mahdi army which stood against the occupation ‘and kept law and order’, adding ‘Al Sadr’s movement is a nationalist movement’. This is the only time in the news selected that the claim is made that it was the militia who were providing security for the city.<sup>179</sup> It can be argued that the lack of follow up or investigation into the statements about the occupation and the inclusion of these short clips of

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<sup>178</sup> See Section 5.2

<sup>179</sup> This is also the argument made by the Taliban that it is they who provide a basic security because the officials favoured by the occupation forces are corrupt and not trusted by the citizens to provide protection through remit to some kind of law.

locals from Iraqi television satisfy the news practice of constructing objectivity (Tuchman 1978) whereby the two versions of the event are presented (one MoD and the other Iraqi) and part of the pattern of the news, rather than an investigation of what actually happened.

The inability to interview Iraqis in Basra, also leads to the acceptance of the MoD version of events that most of the violence in Basra was directed against the British forces in Basra Palace, that the withdrawal from the palace was to ameliorate the situation, and that it was successful. The general silence from the Iraqis contributes to the lack of criticism of the British occupancy overall. Again, it is only at the end of the occupation, when reporter Jane Arraf ventures into the city that some alternative voices are heard: An Iraqi, Wissam Shawal states:

‘they promised us to do many things but do nothing. Their promise us to build our country, and creating a new opportunities for job for young people or graduated students, but they didn’t, nothing’ (*C4 News* 30.4.09).

However, even though the final news programmes have Iraqi voices criticising the occupation, the items are framed as a jeremiad of death with the Iraqis and soldiers both having suffered, but peace in Basra being the outcome and hence balancing the morality of risk and giving legitimacy to the suffering and deaths.

## **8.2. The reporter**

In most of the programmes viewed, questioning is done by a reporter. The reporter is seen to be a barrier to an emotional identification with the forces, and becoming part of the story (Nichols 1991) as well as witness to the story, and being part of the performance of filming, they have obtained a new definition of authenticity (Bruzzi. 2000). Foucault points out the ‘truth’ value of neutrality, a position taken by the reporter in news<sup>180</sup>. Bignell writes that the reporter has become the ‘mythic representation’ of news, and that the ‘newsness’ of news is personalised by the use of recurring models such as reporters (Bignell 2002: 122). Cashmore also mentions that the reporter brings the credibility of his presence as a ‘celebrity’ to the events he is reporting (2006). Likewise, their experiential knowledge (Nichols 2010) as

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<sup>180</sup> See Section 4.4



mentioned above has contributed to their increasing authority as speakers in the discourse.

### **8.2.a. The Reporter in Documentaries**

In the NCA documentaries, Peter Osborne appears in three out of the five *Dispatches*, and Jane Corbin in four out of the six *Panoramas*, and they have become part of the experience of the events in Iraq. Both reporters stress their time spent in the country, Osborne ‘Over the past year I’ve visited Iraq 3 times ’ (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Legacy* C4 13.12.08), Corbin ‘For months I had been hearing terrible rumours of things happening here and I wanted to investigate’ (*Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07). This both stresses their authority to report, and signals their involvement. Corbin is filmed under mortar fire, instead of filming the soldiers which is the supposed story under investigation (*Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07) and her reaction to the death of Captain Richard Holmes (*Panorama: Bringing our boys home?* BBC1 19.3.06) make her the subject of the films as much as the British forces she is reporting on. Her emotional involvement with the contributors has become both part of the programme and evidence of the truth of their emotions which she represents. For these NCA documentaries as for the news the presence of a reporter gives the programme an authored feel, that is the programme is constructed from the point of view of the reporter. It is the reporter who is driving the investigation, thus the need for strategic cohesion (Fulton 2005) as evidenced in news is lessened as the ‘story’ is acceptable as an authored construct by the reporter. This contributes to the decrease in a logical narrative construct containing the necessity to explain, or to provide a cause and effect and perhaps a blurring of focus.

As the reliance on the soldiers to film and interview recedes, the use of actuality involving the reporters becomes more important. This is also tied to the news demand for ‘liveness’ (Hoskins & O’Loughlin 2007) and for dramatic impact, and can lead to an imbalance where actuality over-takes exposition. For example the actuality of when the reporter Corbin goes out on patrol with Captain Richard Holmes who was killed (*Panorama: Bringing our boys home?* BBC1 19.3.06). The actuality and visuals are exciting television and are fore-fronted, so the issues which

lead the investigation become secondary. Likewise, in Corbin's *Panorama* on the withdrawal from Basra Palace (The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07), footage of her hiding under the table sheltering from the mortars is included as it conveys the danger of the situation, but says little about the events leading to the withdrawal, as it is occurs on the base outside the city after the event. As stated, she has also become the subject of the programme. Michael Nicholson includes an item on the Royal air force medical fast response team at an Iraqi road accident, when he and the crew come across a road accident, (with the unexplained presence of American soldiers) which becomes a major feature in the programme, but actually doesn't contribute to the argument, except as an addendum that British are saving Iraqi lives (*Tonight: our boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05). The featuring of the reporter also has the effect of making the event more significant as well as substantiating the significance of the reporter (Marshall 1997).

### **8.2.b The Reporter in News**

In the news, the reporters also assume the role of subjects and become part of the story (Hoskins 2004:57). As noted in the section on the reporter,<sup>181</sup> the reporter is witness to events and speaks of what he is seeing, hearing and feeling. However, he is also being interviewed on location as an expert because of his involvement in reporting on the country over the years. The reporters do not just do a report on the event, but are often interviewed by the anchor afterwards, for example on *Newsnight* 19.9.05 when Mark Urban presents his package on the events, and then is interviewed in the studio by Jeremy Paxman. The more conventional style of an anchor interviewing a correspondent from a different location is also evident.

However at the time of the British withdrawal the experience of the reporters is emphasised, with reporters Gavin Hewitt interviewing Bill Neely, 'our middle East correspondent and here when it all began' (*ITV News* 30.4.09) about whether the 'mission' had been worth it; News anchor Huw Edwards interviews World Affairs Editor John Simpson (30.4.09) and no-one else on the same subject, and News

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<sup>181</sup> Section 3:4

anchor Kirsty Wark in London interviews Mark Urban who also establishes the fact that he has been going to Iraq for 6 years (*Newsnight* BBC 30.4.09).

The MoD didn't manage to offer up a spokesman on the day the riot in Basra happened. Mark Urban (*Newsnight* 19.9.05) quotes the MoD who insist that the knocking down of the wall of the Jamiat police station 'was done in a peaceful way', which is counter to the scenes of devastation shown on screen the next night. The BBC news on the 19<sup>th</sup> also quotes the MoD, and C4 shows the written statement from the MoD saying that they do not know what happened. The commander of the British Brigade, Brigadier John Lorimer gives a statement by phone on the 20<sup>th</sup> to *Newsnight*, *BBC News*, and *C4 News* just stating that the two soldiers had been recovered by the British, quoting the CPA law which states that they should have been given to the British. This statement is echoed by the Spokesman, Major Steve Melbourne on *C4 News* 23.9.05. Much like the Iraqis who speak, their contribution does not contribute to any analysis of the situation, but is part of the news practice of presenting players from both sides of a game.

The interpretation of what is going on in Iraq by the reporters fills the space of an interpretation by the military. The withdrawal from Basra Palace in September 2007 is analysed by reporters in all the broadcasts.<sup>182</sup> *Newsnight* 3.9.07 also includes British politicians, which frames the exercise in the light of domestic politics. *C4 News* 3.9.07 includes the Commanding Officer but he only comments on the bravery of the troops. The reporters are mainly in Baghdad or in the studio in London where the BBC calls on Mark Urban who explains the details of the withdrawal with the use of a map, but gives no context (*C4 News* 3.9.07). For the CotK, again military spokesmen are only used to say that British troops will not be involved in five of the fifteen reports on the exercise, but there is no explanation of what the exercise is from a military point of view. Again it is the reporters who analyse events. It is only the BBC who has a reporter in Basra. Of the fifteen reports on the CotK, only six items have reporters in Iraq, three are from Paul Wood in Basra, and the other

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<sup>182</sup> *BBC News* 2.9.07, *BBC News* 3.9.07, *C4 News* 3.9.07

three from Baghdad. The majority of reporters are actually in London using footage from Iraqi television and talking to other reporters, or experts.

In the final section of news about the CotK from the beginning of April when it was becoming clear that the Iraqis were not doing as well as the military spokesman insisted they were with the British training, the four news reports<sup>183</sup> were all framed as a betrayal of the decision by the government not to bring the troops home as promised, and thus framed as domestic politics, so only British politicians were interviewed.

When looking at the role of the reporter and producer as part of the communicative format, it is also worth looking at the role of commentary in documentaries. In many of the reporter-lead documentaries commentary is an extension of the reporter's voice. Commentary can be perceived to be an essential part of the expository style of documentaries, and its presence contributes to the idea that documentaries often give more context and explanation to events.

### **8.3. Commentary**

I examine commentary in documentaries, as it is a feature of this genre. Nichols summarises expository documentaries as those with direct address to the viewer, typically with voice-over, or commentary in which images are frequently subservient to the words of the narration (Nichols 1991:95). In this case I am looking at the role of commentary to explore the importance of the visual and whether it becomes a tool of the discourse.

In *Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad*, BBC1 2005 events are seen through the eyes of individuals, and the context for the events is not fully established or explained. Commentary is used merely to explain what the situation is for these individuals. It is not used in the traditional expository role of explaining the overall situation to the viewer. For example, in the first episode commentary states that the 'Regiment is about to arrive at a time of increasing danger and uncertainty on the streets of Basra', but no explanation of the wider role of the military, or the occupation is given. The

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<sup>183</sup> C4 News 29.3.08, Newsnight BBC 27.3.08, ITV News 25.3.08, ITV News 1.4.08)

situation is only described as it will affect members of the Regiment. The Regiment is there to train the Iraqi security forces, which explains their presence, but how that fits in with British strategy or military purpose is not explored. In Episode 4, which features the handover of sovereignty to Iraq, what this actually means is not explained. In this episode the events are seen through the eyes of the Battery Sergeant Major, Kenny McMillan, but the wider politics which give meaning to the events are not explored at all. One of the most revealing facts about the relationship of the British military as second-fiddle to the Americans, and their role in the politics of Iraq is illustrated in this programme where the Commanding Officer, Colonel David Cullen is not told that the hand-over will take place sooner than expected. Commentary states 'like everyone else he finds out about the decision to bring the hand over forward by watching the news', and a very annoyed Cullen remarks 'It does actually make us look very silly, it would have been nice to know' (Cullen. *Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad*. BBC1 2005). There is no follow up question either with reference to his personal feelings, or to what this signifies about the lack of Intelligence (as in information), the poor organisational system established by the Coalition, or what this lack of communication reveals about the Americans' conception of the British place in the coalition. Likewise, in this programme the BSM when talking about training the police states they have 'ten days to turn them into 'trusted policemen' (McMillan: *Soldier, Husband, Daughter Dad*. BBC1 2005 Ep. 4). It was already becoming evident that large sections of the police were being infiltrated by the militia, yet again there were no follow-up questions about any personal feelings of betrayal, what significance this might have for the Regiment or military on a wider context, or indeed the acceptance that you could train a policeman in ten days.

It is not only in this episode where the more traditional 'voice of god' style commentary which gives context to a situation has narrowed down to what is only on screen. In the first episode after a car bomb goes off, commentary states 'the reality of the Regiment's task is beginning to sink in' (*Soldier Husband, Daughter Dad*. BBC1 2005. Ep1), but we are none the wiser as to what the reality or the task actually is. The whole issue of training and equipping the Iraqi police, many of whom then join the Mahdi army in August is never explored. The frequent

references to the dangers faced by the individuals in the Regiment are really only used as tools to heighten the emotional feeling of jeopardy taking place at that moment, to juxtapose with the footage of the individuals' families back at home. The incidents, such as the mortar attacks on the camps, IED's, British patrols in Basra which occur in most episodes are not explained or put into the context of occupation and Iraqi politics. It could be argued that the brief of the programme was to explore the effects of such events on the soldier and their families, but many soldiers and most senior ranks in the Regiment were greatly concerned about the wider issues, the political and strategic effects of such actions. David Cullen, and other officers had important roles in negotiations and dealings with the Iraqi politicians in the South East. An alternative to the discourse of emotional reactions to the events was present in the Regiment itself.

In the NCA documentaries the reporter voices the commentary either as voice over or to camera. The same trend of only explaining the micro, of the situation as it affects those individuals seen on camera seems to be happening in these programmes also. In the *Panorama* 'Bringing our Boys Home (BBC1 19.3.06) the reporter Jane Corbin does not question the role of the military or the purpose of the war. As the title implies, this is not going to be a programme which offers hostile questions about the military's role in Iraq. She spent 10 days with the UK forces, and it was in this programme that one of the soldiers she filmed was killed. She states that 'security is the key to everything here', but there is no overall analysis of whether the military is succeeding or failing to provide that security. She films a patrol in Al Amara where Captain Richard Holmes is later killed, but she speaks from the emotional civilian discourse of death, asking his commanding officer what effect this would have on other soldiers; not asking whether this was evidence of British unpopularity in the south, or evidence of a failing lack of security by the British.

Corbin does look to the wider politics of the South East, mentioning that the Provincial Council had stopped cooperating with the British after the incident at the Jamiat in September 2005, but this is placed after the killing of Richard Holmes, lessening any understanding by a British audience for the actions of the militia, who arguably are conducting what they see as a war against the occupier. She acknowledges the militia as being a 'feature of democracy', but in the light of the

death of one of 'our boys' it is a loaded statement and an exploration of that dubious democracy is not pursued.

This programme, unlike many traditional documentaries, but like many of the NCA documentaries is event lead, and time specific, so the immediate is dealt with but not the wider context, history or reason for the occupation. Part of the reason I surmise that Corbin goes on patrol in Al Amara, is that the province was handed over to the Iraqis when she was there, and therefore a news event. She states that the Provincial Council is threatening to withdraw cooperation 'but it looks like political posturing' (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06). The British 'top brass' is brought in and over picture of General Cooper signing a paper, states, the 'meeting is a success, and things seem to be improving and moving forward' (*Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* BBC1 19.3.06), however, what 'political posturing' means, and what is improving or moving forward is not explained. General Cooper is not interviewed about the handover, and British strategy in Iraq is not investigated.

Corbin does however introduce a wide range of speakers. She interviews Brigadier Marriott, a tribal leader, an Iraqi family and goes to Baghdad to interview the Prime Minister Jafaari. She also films in an Iraqi police station and talks to Dr Reid the Minister of Defence. She can thus move around, yet, as stated the bigger questions of context are not asked, and when they are referred to, they are placed within recognisable discourses of emotional death and pertain only to the events seen in the documentary. The occupation has become a continuation of the war against a dubious militia and is entitled 'democratic' without mention of being elected, yet it is a humanitarian occupation with little evidence of a political explanation or what exactly the military role is in the occupation.

It would thus seem that in the texts studied, commentary has become narrowed down to explain what the viewer can already see or what has already been heard. In the section on the literature of the power of the image, I cite Hallin who notes that 'most of the time the audience sees what it is told it is seeing' (1989: 131)<sup>184</sup>. In this case Hallin is implying that the viewer will see what he is told to see. From the examples

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<sup>184</sup> See Section 2:11

I see, I conclude that both the audience and the producer see (as in view) the same things, and the producer merely tells the audience what they are both seeing. This might be evidence of a strengthening of a feature of news, which is that live visual evidence increasingly matters. Hoskins & O'Loughlin write that the tendency to linger on the dramatic and visual is at the expense of context and detail, and that the 'talk' about the dramatic and visual, heralds an increasing dependence on sensation rather than knowledge of the actuality (2007). Thus being able to see the event is given more authority than the acquired knowledge of the 'media' or an unseen producer whose off camera research is not held to be as convincing. The narrowing down of commentary to just explicate visuals also limits the 'potential of secondary connotative meaning (Bruzzi 2000:57), thus limiting the documentary's art, and taking it closer to news.

#### **8.4. Communicative Design: Summing up**

The choice of speakers, and the speaking role of the reporters influences which discourses become dominant. The preponderance of speakers from military families, and from other ranks (that is not officers) in documentaries contributes to the dominance of the discourse of the suffering soldier in the genre. In news the dominant speakers are reporters and journalists which leads to a greater critical approach by the news, and a weakening of the discourse of the suffering soldier. However, both genres lack representation from senior British military officers so questions about military responsibility and strategy are not asked. Their replacement by politicians and pro-military experts either places the events in a domestic frame querying the success or failure of government policies; or leads to an unchallenged re-iteration of the MoD withdrawal strategy, and a lack of debate about the role of the British military in Iraq. In news the dominance of the journalists as speakers points to their increasing importance as providers of opinionated and experiential knowledge, but they are themselves caught in the discourse of the morality of risk and the suffering soldier so silence alternative questions about the role of the military, the financial cost and of the political nature of war.

It would thus seem that reports both from embedded and un-embedded producers lack coverage of these issues. The time spent as embeds covering the occupation is



much less than that experienced in the war. As a programme-maker I know that the filming schedule for NCA documentaries is quick, and the producers and reporters would not have been embedded for anything like the time that the producers were for *Soldier, Daughter, Husband Dad*, BBC1 2005. Also the news correspondents spent only days at a time embedded, as seen in the coverage of CotK where Paul Woods reported from Basra for three days<sup>185</sup> but was then in Baghdad (BBC News 29.3.08), and then disappeared. This points to a hypothesis that it is as much the influence of the discourses in general as being ‘in bed’ with the military which contribute to the silences noted above. The communicative format of the genres adds to this.

In both news and documentaries the role of the reporter as either the author or a major contributor to the programme is closely bound by and to the structures of the communicative format. It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate about the producer or reporter’s specific intention or role within the programmes studied, but this is a future area of interest.

In both documentaries and news the reporter has gained authority to speak from a position of their own experience, and as a role-player in events. The emphasis on the reporter as eye-witness to events in Iraq negates the need to show what could not be seen or shown (Hoskins, 2004: 127) thus excluding events and interpretations other than that witnessed or stated by the reporter. Other forms of knowledge become secondary to that of the experience of the reporter (what he sees, feels or hears), especially in documentaries,<sup>186</sup> although this seems to be happening in news, but to a lesser extent. The time spent in Iraq becomes important, thus perhaps defying the ‘fleetingness’ inherent in the demands of television journalism (Ekstrom 2002). As stated, in the news studied 13 experts are interviewed, compared to 86 journalists. *Newsnight* and the BBC cite one opinion poll (*BBC News* 3.9.07, *Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07) commissioned by *Newsnight* and Jon Snow of *C4 News* talks about the International Crisis Group’s description of the competing mafias in Basra (*C4 News* 3.9.07) but no other source of information is mentioned, apart from quoting the MoD.

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<sup>185</sup> *BBC News* 27.3.08, *BBC News* 28.3.08, *Newsnight* BBC 27.3.08

<sup>186</sup> See Nichols 2010 above on ‘experiential knowledge’.

The decision to interview other reporters and the growing use of reporters to comment is noted and might be a reflection of the lack of senior military personnel willing or able to speak. However, where they do speak, they are not used to analyse a situation but to give one side of an event, often counter-posed by an account from an Iraqi. The withdrawal of military personnel and alternative voices thus has the effect of distancing the involvement with the British forces, their connection to events in Iraq, and thus their lack of responsibility for what happened in Iraq.

The voice of the journalist or producer in commentary in the NCA and traditional documentaries echoes that of news in that its function is limited to explain the immediate situation, both of the event and for the individual on camera. However, whereas the reporter or journalist in news has now become an 'expert', in traditional documentaries little expert knowledge of the situation or context is demonstrated. In these programmes, commentary has also become a rhetorical device to increase dramatic tension, rather than explain the background or wider events of the situation. The commentary supplied by reporters such as Peter Osborne shows more knowledge of the situation, and his input follows the trend discussed in news of a confident 'expert' discussing the wider context of the situation. The dominance of explanation of the immediate and of only what can be seen emphasises the increasing importance of the visual in both news and documentary.

## **Chapter 9. The Visual in News and Documentaries**

As stated in section 2.11, the visual has become increasingly important in the representation of events, as it can be argued that image has come to replace words in the contemporary political landscape. Also, as seen in the previous chapter, commentary which traditionally gives context or a bigger picture to events seems now to have narrowed to explaining only what is experienced or seen by the audience, or by the contributors. Michalski and Gow (2007) write that image has an important role in the portrayal of the legitimacy of the war, and in this section I examine how the visual focus on fighting both distances the politics of the occupation and therefore the role of the military, how it increases the ‘otherness’ of the Iraqis, and strengthens the discourse of the suffering soldier.

### **9.1.a. The visual in documentaries**

What is also striking in both the news and documentary coverage is the lack of footage from Iraq in general. This was in part because of the difficulty for a cameraman to film on the streets. As the British military became tied to their bases it became impossible even to get travelling shots of the city, or any Iraqi civilians. Also, many of the documentaries are about soldiers when they returned home, so there is little filming of them working in Iraq. *Soldier, Husband Daughter Dad*, BBC1 2005 is a series about the 1RHA in Iraq and they were training the Iraqi security forces, so this has the most footage of soldiers carrying out this role<sup>187</sup>. Other footage<sup>188</sup> of British soldiers in Iraq is either dramatic reconstruction of soldiers fighting, the soldiers own footage<sup>189</sup> of them under fire, or wall-paper footage to denote action, mostly of action leading to suffering, or dramatic pictures

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<sup>187</sup> Even in 2004 when making this series we could not go outside the walls of the barracks or Basra Palace to film an exterior because it was deemed too dangerous. We could film from the top of a snatch armoured land rover as it was travelling, or the soldiers patrolling, but still from the safety of the back of the snatch.

<sup>188</sup> *Sweeney Investigates: Death of the Redcaps* BBC2 10.2.05, *Panorama: On Whose Orders* BBC1 25.2.08, *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008

<sup>189</sup> *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07, *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008

of combat. Who the soldiers are fighting and why is seldom explained, except in the Andy McNab series where the stories are the battles, but even here the battles are presented as defensive actions, so the over-all strategic aim of the war is not examined.

The news packages and many of the documentaries open with a weapon being fired, or men carrying weapons, either using militia footage, or from the point of view of a British soldier holding a weapon, with the sound of gun fire as a dramatic introduction to the piece. A good example of this is the *Panorama* (The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07) which opens with footage shot by the soldiers from inside an armoured personnel carrier of them repulsing an ambush. We thus know we are in a battle. Voice over describes the action, with the commanding officer saying that this fighting from last summer was the fiercest fighting they had undertaken. Yet we don't know what the fighting is for, or what the context is. Like much other footage used, without its specific identification it becomes representative of what 'our boys' have to undergo and suffer. The heat and danger is stressed and we are told that a cousin of one of the soldiers fighting is killed in another similar battle, thus engaging our sympathy for the soldiers, but who the other soldiers are fighting, or why is not explained.

The performance is only what we can see on the set of television screen, and does not give its wider temporal setting. Any context given is the immediate, that the violence is caused 'by the militia inside Basra', and General Binns, who is in charge of the British Army in Iraq and the commanding officer of the Regiment involved, voices the MoD exit strategy, that 'ninety percent of the violence is against us' (Saunders: *Panorama: For Queen and Country?* BBC1. 19.2.07). Corbin states that the civilians are being caught in the middle of the violence, and so the British have been told to leave Basra centre by the Iraqi General Mohan. Yet at the end of the programme she says that the Mahdi army has become powerful, and that women are being murdered for being inappropriately dressed, which is not quite the violence directed at the British forces specified earlier on.

Thus much of the action footage which does appear of the soldiers is of them fighting. However, the main reason given for the soldiers' presence is for

humanitarian reasons: for training<sup>190</sup>, peacekeeping<sup>191</sup>, to establish democracy,<sup>192</sup> and to help the Iraqi people.<sup>193</sup> So, what is striking is that apart from the documentary series on the training of the Iraqi Security Forces by IRHA, (*Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* BBC1 2005), there is almost no visual evidence of this.

In the documentaries there are only three programmes which feature the soldiers out on patrol and talking to Iraqi police, which could be construed as helping Iraqi Security Forces. For the military this was understood as ‘winning hearts and minds’ in the fact that the soldiers were out on the streets, especially in the early days with soft hats, but as Michael Nicholson points out ‘Winning hearts and minds is a buzz phrase here, the officers repeat it all the time, but it’s not easy to do when the person who you are trying to win over is looking into the barrel of a gun’ (*Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05). A civilian audience might also have had problems understanding this to be soldiers acting for humanitarian reasons.

The lack of visual evidence has the effect of silencing the political role of the military, of actually removing the role they did play in training and reconstruction in Iraq. Pictures of meetings, of building, and of training are obviously not nearly as exciting as running around with guns, shooting and being shot at, but as noted in the literature review, the actuality as visual action not only influences what is included in news (Altheid 1987), but also impacts on documentaries, and certainly as a programme maker it was the ‘action’ shots that were considered to be important.

Footage of militia and of men in uniform is used indiscriminately. This happens in both documentary and news coverage. For example, library pictures are used to illustrate British troops being medically evacuated in *The Real Story with Fiona Bruce* (BBC1 29.11.04) using footage of Jordanian soldiers carrying the bodies, with

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<sup>190</sup> *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* BBC1 2005: Episodes 1,2,4, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06

<sup>191</sup> *Soldier Husband, Daughter Dad* 2005 Ep. 1: *Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty*. ITV June 2008b, *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09

<sup>192</sup> *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05, *Soldier Husband Daughter, Dad* BBC 1 2005 Eps, 4,5,9, *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home*: BBC1 19.3.06

<sup>193</sup> *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06, *Andy McNab’s Tour of Duty* Sky 2009 Ep 1, *The Fallen: Legacy of Iraq* BBC4 19.6.09, and *Dispatches: Battle Scarred* C4 07.09.09

American soldiers appearing in the account of a British major David Bradley's rescue. They are soldiers, any soldiers, so seem to be acceptable to illustrate a point. Green night footage is also used in many documentaries as wall paper for voice-over to illustrate the activity of the soldiers, especially to infer danger and mental stress.<sup>194</sup>

Library footage is used in all of the documentaries, which from a programme-maker's point of view is unusual.<sup>195</sup> It is in part due to the high number of documentaries about returned soldiers, but is also evidence of the scarcity of footage from Iraq. The result is that the footage becomes metaphor for what is happening. It is not part of the actuality, as the index of the event. It becomes a reconstruction which emphasises the dominant discourse of the programme, and allows emotion to fill the distance between the actual and the symbolic. Most of the identifiable soldiers are those interviewed sitting down, that is the returned suffering soldier, or the close up still of the soldier who is now dead. They are static, speaking of trauma to camera, but on the whole are not seen carrying out the 'traditional' fighting role of the soldier, except in library footage which is representational of them as being a soldier. Again, the space between the traditional understood role of the soldier and the evidence of the suffering soldier can be filled by the discourse of suffering.

The other main body of fighting footage is that of shots of Iraqi militia. These are dramatic pictures of Iraqis firing or carrying RPG's and mortars, running, or in the backs of vehicles, or dancing round captured British armoured vehicles. This footage was used in the documentaries<sup>196</sup>. In *Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad* BBC1 2005 I used a militia propaganda DVD featuring footage of the snatch land rovers which had been seized from the soldiers I filmed. The *Tour of Duty* series also uses this footage, describing it as 'incredible unseen footage from the front

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<sup>194</sup> *Tonight: Our Boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05, *Dispatches: Battle Fatigue* C4 22.5.06, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06,9,C

<sup>195</sup> Because of the cost of copyright, and the practice of most documentaries to make a programme authored and directed by the programme maker.

<sup>196</sup> *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* BBC1 2005, *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05, *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07: *Panorama: Soldiers on the Run* BB1 23.06.07: *Panorama: Basra - The Legacy* BBC1 17.12.07.07, *Andy McNab's tour of Duty* Sky 2008

line'. A sequence from this footage also turns up in *Dispatches* and *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07*. Very similar footage is used later in 2005, and from the CotK in 2008<sup>197</sup> of pictures of militia firing rockets and RPG's on the streets. It's obviously filmed by the militia as the camera man is behind the armed men, accompanying those firing weapons. *Dispatches* claims 'We asked local cameramen to document what's really happening in Basra' (*Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning C4 21.11.05*). ITV also uses the footage with voice over saying 'These dramatic pictures filmed from the Shiite' militias point of view show the second day of intense fight' (*BBC News 31.3.09*). They at least acknowledge that it is filmed from the militias' point of view, even if not acknowledging that it is the militias' material.

This dramatic sensational footage is not actuality from the same time as that filmed for the documentary. It is thus not evidence, or a reproduction of events as a witnessed text, as we know nothing of the event being filmed, the people appearing in it, or who shot it. The visuals have little connection to the commentary except to create sensation. Beattie writes that documentary display 'startles and excites in ways which produce pleasure' (2008:5). Sensation becomes the vehicle of cognition and knowledge. He adds that the form of knowledge produced with this function is 'subjective, affective, visceral and sensuous and as such is part of a broader culture that acknowledges appeals to the senses as a form of knowledge production (ibid:5). The visual becomes the site of knowledge, and the authority of argument constructed through the logic of narration recedes.

### **9.1.b. The visual in News**

The news has even less actuality footage of British soldiers. Much of the footage comes from Iraqi television, for example the coverage of the burning warriors and images of the Jamiat Police station. The only footage specially shot for the coverage of events in 2005 is of interviews with the British soldiers after the event, and Caroline Hawlsey's ride in the plane from Baghdad to Basra (*BBC News 21.9.05*).

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<sup>197</sup> *C4 News 29.3.08; ITV News 25.3.08*

The same footage of the burning warrior, the Jamiat police station and the white car in which the SAS soldiers had been driving is used in all news items. The pictures of the burning warrior and the stills of the soldiers leaping from the warrior are extremely dramatic, and fulfil all the requirements for the image to dictate the inclusion of an event in a news item (Deluca and Peeples 2002: Smith and McDonald 2011). All the news reports spend some time merely describing what we are seeing on screen, ascribing thoughts and emotions to the soldiers, which is highly emotive and does not add to the understanding of why the soldiers were there and what they were doing.

As no media was allowed to film the hand-over of Basra palace, news has used library footage representing 'soldiers', so it is of action shots. The footage supplied by the MoD is of the service of hand over, a hand-shake and pictures of a flag being lowered. There is also MoD footage of the vehicles leaving the Palace, and footage from Iraqi television of the hand-over and of jubilant Iraqis on the streets. Other visuals in this coverage are maps, graphs and studio interviews. Most of the pictures of the soldiers are therefore of them doing traditional soldier's activity, representing war.

The next phase of news coverage is the CotK, where the footage is mainly of the militia, thus again representing 'war'. It is used extensively in the news.<sup>198</sup> As the British did not become involved for about a week the story had moved on, and thus again there were no pictures of British soldiers except of them sitting at their base on the airport outside Basra. The final stage of news coverage is the hand-over to the Americans where again the actuality footage is of the service, with an altar, handshakes and flags going up and down. The montage of the defining moments of the occupation, are by their nature mostly of war, with the footage of the burning warrior, soldiers firing rifles and snatches.

The use of the militia footage highlights the nature of the operation as a military exercise, so negating the need to explain the politics behind it. The coverage of the

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<sup>198</sup> *BBC News* 27.3.08, *BBC News* 28.3.08, *BBC News* 29.3.08, *ITV News* 26.3.08, *C4 News* 29.3.08, *ITV News* 25.3.08, *Newsnight* BBC 27.3.08, *ITV News* 1.4.08, *C4 News* 1.4.08



CotK is usually accompanied by commentary describing the visuals which explain very little. For example,

Connery: These dramatic pictures filmed from the Shiite militias' point of view (militia running up to bank of rubbish) show the second day of intense fighting. Militia men target Iraqi govt troops in their sights an army patrol passing at the end of the road (highlighted army patrol in distance) (*ITV News* 25.3.08).

Like the use of maps, and much of the commentary in general, this commentary merely tells you what you can already see, and still has to tell the audience that it is exciting. With every channel using the same footage which explains nothing, understanding is as limited as the commentary.

Part of the scientific discourse<sup>199</sup> is the use of graphics and maps to denote a scientific authority and legitimacy. Conley writes that a map 'plays a role at once as a guarantee (the film is said to be 'taking place' in the area seen before our eyes) and a sign of prevarication: 'a map is inserted ... to establish a fallacious authenticity of a place' (Conley 2007: 4). The press was not allowed to film the withdrawal of the British from Basra palace so the maps also become a replacement and a tool to discuss the events. They also allow the reporter to discuss the event without explaining the decisions or context behind the move.<sup>200</sup> A feature of the *Newsnight*s with Mark Urban is his discussion of movements over detailed map shots without actually explaining anything (*Newsnight* BBC 3.9.07). Like much of the commentary, it is an explanation of the immediate, of just the event which is taking place. He does not mention the agreement between the Mahdi army and the British, nor the fact that the crews were not allowed to film the hand-over, a fact mentioned by C4, although with no explanation. ITV hinted at a possible pact between the factions, 'it's understood a deal may have been struck with insurgents to allow this phased withdrawal' (*ITV News* 2.9.07).

Thus the media was aware of the pact, which makes one wonder why Urban did not refer to it, but playing with the maps means he didn't have to. Google earth is also used to show where Basra is in Iraq (*C4 News* 25.3.08). Maps are also used by Andy

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<sup>199</sup> Section 2.4

<sup>200</sup> *BBC News* 2.9.07, *Newsnight* 3.9.07, *ITV News* 25.3.08

McNab in the documentaries (*Andy McNab's Tour of Duty* ITV4 2008) to the same effect; that is of describing the immediate action and tactics of the military, but not the strategy or context of what was going on.

## **9.2. Editing**

With the inclusion of much of the Iraq material from other sources, editing affects the genre and the favouring of certain discourses over others. As stated<sup>201</sup> both news and documentaries claim an indexicality and a relationship to the real, and the more 'natural' the footage looks the greater the connection, and more authority of 'reality' can be claimed. Schaefer argues that a feature of the natural style is continuity editing which is characterised by 'transitions between shots recorded at a single site and without any apparent breaks in action' (Schaefer 1997: 74). On the other hand, editing techniques such as dissolves (when one shot gradually fades as the other is brought up into focus), jump cuts (two sequential shots are juxtaposed where the action from the first has moved on), montages (the assembly of thematically related shots) and fades (the image slowly turns to black) as transitions convey a sense of artificiality (ibid). These artificial transitions are more generally used in drama to convey a sense of time, and to enhance a theme or emotion and often specific to a particular genre. The generic conventions will thus be explored.

### **9.1.a.Editing in Documentaries**

The use of library footage has been noted in all the documentaries and the inclusion of this material, not shot from the time of filming, has affected the editing. The style of transitioning from the material shot at the time of filming the documentary to that of the library footage and the necessity to acknowledge that it is different has added to the increased mediation of the programme, thus moving it closer to fiction.<sup>202</sup> I should note that there is a tradition of 'found-footage' documentaries, but these are more often avant-garde or experimental film (Beattie 2008), rather than the

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<sup>201</sup> Section 3

<sup>202</sup> Section 3.1

expository style of the films studied, and it is these I consider here. Most of the specially shot material in the body of the documentaries consists of straight cuts which are more conventionally used to imply continuity realism. Some of the archive footage is given a blurred edge to distinguish it from actuality.<sup>203</sup> Other distinguishing effects are the use of grading, that is, to make the archive material a different colour, either brighter or more monochrome.<sup>204</sup> As stated, the green night footage is frequently used to signify flashbacks<sup>205</sup> and to increase the drama of the scene.

In some cases the News and Current Affairs documentaries use more stylised editing than the traditional documentaries (except with comparison to *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty* ITV4 2008 which I will look at in detail below), which is perhaps surprising in that one might have expected that as these programmes come from a news background they would be edited in the same style, that is, using continuity edits, and less dramatic transitions and juxtapositions to emphasise the authority of the 'real'. The use of page wipe cuts to signify a change of scene, simple wipes and a double screen<sup>206</sup> is also used to juxtapose scenes. *Dispatches* (Iraq: The Reckoning C4 21.11.05) has a satirical montage sequence with the voices of politicians talking about the 'welcoming' of forces to Iraq, juxtaposed with the pictures of US soldiers pointing guns at civilians, threatening weapons and aerial footage of people being blown up. The effect is a stylised authorial opinion piece signifying derision at the politicians' spin on the invasion. Various NCA documentaries<sup>207</sup> include scenes of dramatic reconstruction, partly because the difficulties of obtaining footage of

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<sup>203</sup> *Real Story with Fiona Bruce*: BBC1 29.11.04, *Dispatches*: Iraq: The Reckoning C4 21.11.05, *Panorama*: The Battle for Basra Palace BBC1 10.12.07,15)

<sup>204</sup> *Tonight*: Our boys in Basra ITV1 21.11.05, *Dispatches*: Iraq: The Reckoning C4 21.11.05, *Panorama*: On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08,15

<sup>205</sup> *Dispatches*: Battle Fatigue C4 22.5.06, *When Our Boys Came Home* BBC2 1.6.06, *Tonight*: War Wounds ITV 30.1.06,9,15)

<sup>206</sup> *Panorama*: Soldiers on the Run BBC1 26.3.07, *Panorama*: Basra - The Legacy BBC1 17.12.07. *Panorama* :For Queen and Country? BBC1 19.2.07

<sup>207</sup> *Dispatches* ( Battle Fatigue C4 22.5.06), *Panorama* ( On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08) and *Sweeny Investigates*

military disciplinary activities, and military violence. The techniques of mediation again tend to move the NCA documentaries into more traditional documentary format where more imaginative aesthetic techniques are used to persuade a viewer of an opinion, not just to supply knowledge. *The Panorama* (On Whose Orders BBC1 25.2.08) is highly stylised with artistic shots of barbed wire signifying imprisonment of the Iraqis, black and white dream sequences, focus pulls and stills of Iraqi prisoners. As the reconstructions move into the theatre of performance the NCA documentaries become more like fiction, and the viewer becomes distanced from the event.

The traditional documentaries however, seem to be trying to emphasise their seriousness in their 'newsness', with less post production effects, although *Soldier Husband Daughter Dad* 8 (BBC 1 April 2009) uses flashbacks and uses a camera pan as a continuous edit, transitioning from a scene in Iraq into a scene in the UK with a continuing movement. The series intercuts news headlines to impart news of events, usually of violence in Iraq. For example the intercutting of the news headline from Huw Edwards stating, 'Basra has seen its bloodiest day since the Fall of Saddam Hussein' (*Soldier, Daughter, Husband, Daughter*, 4 BBC1 April 2005). Events of importance thus have to have the authority of the news, possibly demonstrating the series' intent to prove its own scientific discourse and claim to 'truthfulness'. *When our Boys came Home* (BBC2 1.6.06) uses short flashes of archive footage, notably the green night vision material to signify flashbacks, but engages no other effects. The stories of the three men are intercut to a narrative structure dealing with issues, with wide shots of their locations and music signifying transitional scenes. *The Fallen* (Legacy of Iraq BBC4 19.6.09) is predominantly intercut interviews, with straight cuts, filmed against a black or white background, again the narrative thread is of issues of subjects such as what they think of the enemy, or Tony Blair etc.

The documentary series which is most mediated and which is more like fiction in its editing is *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty* Eps 1,2 and *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* (C4 21.11.05). The credit list for post production is longer than for any of the other programmes and included an edit assistant as well as the on-line editor and editor

(the latter two are usual in longer documentaries with higher budgets). The intercutting of the specially shot footage with the militia footage is very slick editing, for example, real footage is used of militia running or shooting, which was shot wide (as the militia cameramen were obviously amateurs), then intercut with reconstruction footage of close up British soldiers, or close-ups of militia being shot. The sequence of wide shot to close-up follows recognised action cutting, and the reconstruction filming has been directed to fit in to this pattern. It has then been graded to look the same, and fact elides into fiction. It is very well done, but it needs close observation to spot where the reality ends, and reconstruction begins. It all looks 'real', but arguably has the effect of making it all look like a performance and of fiction, as it is a representation of the event.

### **9.1.b. Editing in News**

News is mostly constructed by simpler editing, as in wide-shot to close-up, or cutting from one scene to another. The footage from the incident at the Jamiat in 2005 is taken from Iraqi television, and consists of four shots which are held and simply cut together. The pictures are repeated for their dramatic impact, sometimes intercut with a still of the burning soldier, but there are no editing effects. There is perhaps no need, as the pictures are sufficiently dramatic.

In the second section of news, the withdrawal from Basra palace, the editor relies on continuity editing, where the scene often begins with an exterior and transitions to an interior, with audiovisual synchronization (Schaefer 1997). The report has straight cuts, with general views of Basra to text, 'Basra Palace, it's the heart of a hostile city', over an exterior shot of the Palace, 'it draws enemy fire constantly... the pull out which began tonight', over a shot of a British soldier inside a sanger with binoculars. ITV has the same style of editing, although the reporter is outside the MoD in London, and the library picture used is that of the soldier jumping out of the burning warrior, a symbol which I suggest has come to represent the suffering soldier discourse. Library footage is also used of dancing Iraqis over the commentary stating that a deal may have been struck with insurgents. In neither of

these bulletins is it mentioned that the footage is from the MoD<sup>208</sup>, although the BBC has the graphic ‘recent pictures’ over shots of soldiers getting into boats on the Shatt al Arab canal, but apart from this graphic the sequences are cut together with the visuals being used to illustrate the commentary and no effects are used.

Schaefer argues that pictures are often included at the expense of less visually stimulating reports, although he acknowledges that when visuals are not readily available, formatting routines still make it possible for journalists to produce conventional reports (Schaefer 1997:70). This is true of these bulletins, where the footage of the hand-over is from the MoD as news crews were not present at the Palace. Even though the conventional report of the hand-over is presented with the pictures merely as illustrations, the pictures are still framed as the familiar narrative of the withdrawal strategy, of the violence being directed at the British in the palace, and they must leave as they are inciting it. The pictures seem to be chosen to illustrate the withdrawal strategy promulgated by the MoD.

Thus the pictures follow the narrative, and are interpreted to suit the narrative frame. For example, over the footage of the Iraqi flag being raised at the hand-over ceremony at the Palace, commentary emphasises the danger stating ‘even the Iraqi raising his flag was wearing a flak jacket just in case’, even though all soldiers wear their flak jackets when off base and at this time would wear them outside. In both the C4 and the BBC bulletins from Iraq the narrative structure of the item finishes with heroic images of the British soldier. In the BBC item it is of a wide shot of a soldier silhouetted against a sunset, and in the C4 report that of British soldiers giving the thumbs up sign as they drive past in their armoured vehicles. The C4 voice-over states ‘if Basra’s violence continues many bereaved might wonder what their sacrifice was for’, also contributing to the discourse of the suffering soldier.

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208 Footage from MoD crews was used during the Iraq war as part of the general pool of material which could be used by all broadcasting organisations, but when the war officially ended this contract no longer applied, so should have been noted as such.

Most of the packages in the coverage of the Charge of the Knights, CotK, begin with synchronized militia footage of militia in action with the sound of gunfire as a dramatic introduction to the item. Commentary then begins after the impact of the sound and vision of the action. The drama of the pictures would seem to be the main motivation in editing the package, and there is no narrative sequence to the pictures themselves. Again they are interpreted and edited to suit the spoken narrative. In themselves they are just a montage of shots of different militia put together to create drama for the report. The footage is not sourced except for the ITV news where commentary states ‘dramatic pictures filmed from the Shiite militias’ point of view’ (*ITV News* 26.3.08), which then goes on to describe what is happening in the pictures, fitting explanation into the template of the withdrawal strategy. *C4 news* does label some footage ‘library footage’, but it is of Bush getting out of a helicopter (*C4 News* 28.3.08), the Iraqi footage is not labelled, although it is not C4 footage. The packages are simply edited as montages of dramatic pictures to act as wall-paper to the narrative of a disintegrating Iraq, whose violence is purely an internal matter not necessitating involvement of the 4,100 British soldiers sitting outside the city. The intercutting of the militia footage is of simple cuts, with no distinction made by editing effects that it is not from the same source as the rest of the footage. It thus becomes as ‘authentic’ as the rest of the footage, that is, of the reporters in the studio, and interviews conducted by the reporter.

Montage sequences are dominant in the last section of the news, the hand-over to the Americans and the British withdrawal from Iraq where the past six years of occupation are condensed into a sequence of familiar shots from the occupation such as the burning warrior, a Black Watch soldier on the street from 2003, and the ubiquitous militia footage. The montage is packaged within the memorial service to the dead soldiers, and the hand-over. Again the footage isn’t sourced, and is cut simply, implying authenticity and as a narrative to illustrate the discourse of the suffering soldier, fulfilling the withdrawal strategy as mentioned above.

### **9.3 The Visual: summing up.**

The scarcity of footage in both news and documentaries led to the ubiquity of what was available, which arguably contributed to the confusion as to who the British military was fighting, and a sense of who was fighting the Iraqis and why. The militia become a faceless group of people wearing scarves to hide their identity, running or driving around the streets of Basra and Baghdad seemingly without order or western discipline. The pictures are used more to signify that the news has been able to access the militia (at a step removed, to quote a phrase used by the news earlier) and thus confront danger, rather than being used because of what the pictures are actually saying. The tactic of describing what is happening in the pictures enhances the sense of the immediate, but fails to give context to what is happening, or place the event in its wider political situation.

In both news and documentary, as the images move further away from being tools of evidence, or a representation of what was happening, they become tools of display, used to elicit sensation. Nichols writes that for the intellect, logic prevails over affect, but that for the senses, the

converse holds, bringing a distinct form of knowledge... so the visual is no longer a means of verifying the certainty of fact pertaining to an objective, external world and truths about this world conveyed linguistically. The visual now constitutes the terrain of subjective experience as the locus of knowledge (2000:42).

Like the British soldier the fighter becomes generic, with the same shot appearing again and again. Thus, as the pictures became wallpaper, the context and the issues become blurred into the mess of war, with no reason needed to legitimate it, explain it or take responsibility for it. As the soldiers and reporters' role is confirmed by their 'bravery' which makes the action worthwhile, so news confirms its worth by seeming to risk life by getting the pictures. The repeated pictures of soldiers and militia become symbols of the struggle, which adds to the 'derealized' perception of war. Virilio defines 'derealization' as the 'process by which increasingly abstract and distancing modes of symbolic representation mediate the relationships through which persons and places acquire meanings' (Hoskins, 2004:28).



The main framing for documentaries and news coverage of the British military is as a humanitarian force, but the visual evidence of soldiers having therapy to camera, and of fighting, lies counter to this stated role. The dominant image in the more traditional documentaries is of interviews, of soldiers confessing to camera, emphasising the truth in what they are saying both in the familiar pose of a Holocaust memorial, but also the mid-shot pose of a newscaster<sup>209</sup>. Messaris argues that visual-verbal juxtapositions serve to 'extend the interpreter's abstract thinking abilities' (1994:132), and it is in the abstract that knowledge lies, according to Althusser, who writes, 'to know is to abstract from the real object its essence, the possession of which by the subject is then called knowledge' (1970:35-36). As the visual becomes the location of knowledge, where knowledge is based on subjectivity and sensation, logic is expelled, so the space between the two widens. It is in this abstract and space of sensation that the dominance of the discourse of the suffering soldier squats and spreads.

A dominant visual is of the anonymous Iraqi militia fighting with his RPG and AK47 a representation of a seemingly significant threat to the British soldier who by comparison is seldom seen. When the British soldier is seen, he is pictured in a military role as a 'general soldier', as an abstract himself whose code of a 'fighter' is juxtaposed to the spoken frame of a trainer, or suffering soldier, with a humanitarian role. It is in this space of the viewers' imagination in both news and documentary where the reconciliation between what is seen and what is stated, that the documentary force of the imagination has become dominant and where the emotional discourse has been strengthened.

Grierson described the significance of Flaherty's *Moana* as lying beyond its 'evidentiary function' in the supplementary relationship between the 'real' and the 'inducement to dream', where its ideological function could be established (Kahana, 2008:5). It is perhaps the actual lack of evidence which gives the documentary discourse of emotionalism and of the suffering soldier its strength. As with the

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<sup>209</sup> See Section 8.1

chimneys at Auschwitz<sup>210</sup>, in the incomprehension of the discord between stated fact and seen evidence, the imagination has constructed an emotional picture of the soldier in Iraq built from the blocks of past wars and familiar story narratives, cemented together by the shared emotions of loss and betrayal so producing a figure which bears little resemblance to the soldier of the Chilcot Inquiry.

The image which sums up the occupation and which is a symbol of this constructed soldier, which is used ubiquitously and which has come to signify this occupation is the footage of the burning soldier leaping from the warrior, from the attack on the Jamiat police station in September 2005. It is a technique used by both news and documentary which increases the documentary abstract space in news. It was of a specific event, but because it was used so often<sup>211</sup>, beyond the actual events of September 2005 the individuals, the strategy and the context become meaningless. It stands as a synecdoche of the suffering individual soldier who is willing to be sacrificed and die because he is a soldier, thus denying the political or social responsibility of those who sent him. He is fighting the forces of anarchy who fight because they are anarchic. However the particular reasons and actions that led to this footage are not considered

This particular image and the inclusion of dramatic militia footage increase the performance and thus the fictional aspect of the programmes. This is emphasised by the editing in news and NCA documentaries, but down-played in the traditional documentaries. In all but one (the Jamiat incident in 2005) of these sections news has effectively co-opted the editing technique of montages from drama. These give drama to the report, but purely as a montage offer no informative narration, they are used to communicate abstract concepts (Schaefer 1997), but are not of specific events which give information about that event. In the final section of news coverage the discourse of the suffering soldier is dominant in the montage

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<sup>210</sup> See Section 8.1.a

<sup>211</sup> *Tonight: Our boys in Basra* ITV 21.11.05, *Dispatches: Iraq: The Reckoning* C4 21.11.05, *Panorama: Bringing our Boys Home?* 19.3.06, *Tonight: War Wounds* ITV 30.1.06, *Panorama: The Battle for Basra Palace* BBC1 10.12.07, *ITV News* 2.9.07, *BBC News* 31.3.09, *C4 News* 30.4.09, *BBC News* 30.4.09

sequences. Reality is inferred by the drama and danger of the shots, and by the conventional editing, but in fact the news is less ‘truthful’ than the documentaries in the eliding of the militia footage into the package, by the continuity editing and straight cuts with no mention of the source of the material, and no post-production effects to differentiate the militia footage from the specially shot material as demonstrated in the documentaries.

The effect and use of library footage in news suggests further study, but it is perhaps worth considering that news, unlike documentaries, does not have to pay for footage not specially shot, so it can use library footage with relative impunity. In my experience the authored nature of documentaries also impacts on what footage is used, in that a director will want to use their own material as much as possible, and will make a distinction between specially shot footage which is credited to the cameraman, and library footage. The time-scale also has an impact in that an editor of documentaries has much longer to put a programme together. In the past a 30 minute programme had on average a four week edit<sup>212</sup>, so there is time to experiment, to source other material if necessary and structure a film, whereas a news programme is cut in a matter of hours, with banks of library material on hand. In a situation where footage is scarce, the producer can construct a news story as stated by Schaefer (1997) from library footage and as seen in the montage footage from CotK from material representing the story being told.

The effect of the editing is that traditional documentaries seem to be engaging with news editing techniques to emphasise their scientific discourse, where as the NCA documentaries are using editing techniques seen more in traditional documentaries. The news is still claiming the ‘real’, but is relying more on montage effects from documentary which increases the abstract and the space where the documentary emotional appeal lies.

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<sup>212</sup> This is being cut down now with directors being expected to do rough cuts as they shoot, or having an edit director working on the material as it is being shot by a filming director.

## **Chapter 10. Conclusions**

The purpose of this research has been to discover the dominant discourses in the news and documentary coverage of the British military in the occupation of Iraq. It is in these discourses that the justification for the war and occupation rests, and in this justification lies the interpretation of the function, efficacy and cost of the military. Nichols (1991) writes that the master narrative leaves no room for anomalies and this research has attempted to define and point out how and which narratives have excluded which anomalies. To do this I have examined the genres of news and documentaries to see how they have created and been created by the discourses and what has been silenced, and have thus looked at the genres themselves to see how they have contributed to, resisted or silenced these discourses. This is complicated because of the nature of discourse in that they produce the objects of which they speak; and they also construct a particular version of the subject as being real (Carabine, 2001: 267).

I looked at the Chilcot Inquiry and other sources to identify significant issues and events, and then noted these issues and events as reported or not mentioned in the news and documentary coverage. I identified the main silence in the portrayal of the soldier as occupier rather than just fighter, which excluded questions about the responsibility and accountability of the military in the occupation and in the politics of Iraq, the role of the Iraqi as enemy, the cost of the occupation, and the relationship between the US and Britain.

The first issue I explored was the role of the British military as given by the television coverage. It was ill-defined and although couched in terms of being 'humanitarian', what the soldiers did to justify this adjective is not clearly explained. The main role of the military as stated by the television media was to provide security and train the Iraqi security forces, yet we very rarely saw any evidence of this on television. This was partly due to the subject of the documentaries, where a

third were about returning soldiers, and due to the generic formation of news<sup>213</sup>. The dominant visuals were of soldiers fighting, yet the narration and spoken text framed the occupation as humanitarian, where the soldiers' role was to establish security and help the Iraqis. As 'occupiers' the British military was a major force in the politics of Iraq and this political role is manifest in the changing nature of war which became a strategic war of counter-insurgency in Iraq. British alliances and mis-alliances with the Shiite political and military groups, and their failure to secure security in the city lead to the anarchic descent of the city into criminal, sectarian and political violence. Counterinsurgency is both a political and military undertaking, and the weakness in the television's coverage of the political aspect meant that no comprehensive analysis could be made of the military situation, so a conclusive account of the role of the military's success or failure could not be made

It is only in failure that questions are asked, and as the Occupation was not seen as a failure, many questions which the Chilcot Inquiry asked, were not addressed by the documentary coverage, and only in part by the news. The ability of the news to withstand the dominant emotional discourse of the coverage can be attributed in part to its generic differences. However, the greater ability of news to provide context and a wider range of voices was surprising, not in that it did, but in that documentaries failed to do so. With reference to this research, two of Corner's four functions of documentary (2000a), as a project of democratic civics, and as journalistic inquiry and exposition are worryingly compromised.

I establish that the dominant discourse of the suffering and betrayed soldier and soldier as hero excluded questions being asked, and facts from being known which themselves might have countered the emotional discourse. These questions include not only what was the British military doing in Iraq, but who was the enemy? The discourse of betrayal was fed by the positioning of the government as the enemy. I examined the portrayal of the soldiers' enemy, and found that the violence described was mainly passive, no perpetrator in Iraq was identified apart from an amalgam of

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<sup>213</sup> See Section 3:2, the favouring of dramatic visuals, the drive for 'liveness', the covering of the event rather than the issue, for example.

shadowy militia and their shrouded leader Moqtada Al Sadr, so silencing the identity and thus the cause of much of the violence. The Iraqi militia were mainly portrayed as religious fundamentalists, fighting the forces of order whether they were Iraqi or British. The identification of opposition to the British as a form of nationalism was not really considered, although the opposition to the Americans was mostly couched in terms of opposition to the occupation. It was the British politicians and MoD as part of the government who were the enemy, and they betrayed everyone, both the soldiers and the Iraqis, so the responsibility for actions by the military was absolved.

The subject of the cost of the invasion and occupation was also barely touched on in the television coverage of the military occupation. From the Chilcot Inquiry it is apparent that much of the lack of equipment was not wholly due to the politicians' refusal to fund the occupation, but the military's procurement system. As the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the MoD states at the Chilcot Inquiry, they had 'a very serious management issue, which we have been trying to work through in the past few years' (Jeffrey, 2010:12).

However, the general lack of political will to deal with Iraq is also evident. It can be seen in the decision by the government not to back the military's efforts to carry out their own 'surge' in Operation Sinbad. The commitment to Afghanistan and the failure of their counterinsurgency strategy meant that the British military efforts came to nothing. The Chilcot Inquiry presents a British army which was involved in a major expedition on two fronts with a lack of unity, strategy or commitment to Iraq, where senior officers could not change their mind about the commitment to Afghanistan when they were already heavily involved in Iraq, or would not change their mind to fight on two fronts when senior officers such as Shirreff were asking for more troops and equipment to be sent to Iraq. The lack of equipment in Iraq can thus be seen to be in part because of this decision to fight on two fronts, rather than a fault of the politicians for not providing the MoD with sufficient money. The lack of communication between the CoGS and the Prime Minister, and the seeming lack of consultation between senior military officers when making major decisions are thus major areas which affect the actions of the British military, none of which is covered by the television news or documentaries studied.

Excluded from coverage is not only the politics of the occupation and any military strategy but also the nature of the relationship with the Americans. The divergence of British military strategy compared to the American surge, and the examination of the British tactic of withdrawal when the American surge is undertaken is mentioned in passing but not examined. News and NCA documentaries cite the American General Odom who states that the British have failed, but how and why this has happened is not explored.

It also becomes clear that contrary to the accepted belief that the British army was superior in counterinsurgency tactics to the Americans, they were overtaken and left lagging in counterinsurgency strategy and operational intelligence, and their relationship with the Americans was that of a very junior player. An example of where this is apparent, but its significance missed is in the documentary *Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad* (BBC 2005) when the commanding officer is not informed by Baghdad that the province will be handed over early to the Iraqis.

This lack of questioning about the military strategy can also be seen to be the result of the prominence of discourses enunciated in the coverage of past wars which strengthen and confirm the dominant themes of the suffering soldier and soldier as hero. These are that good must defeat evil and the battle must be won by the just. Heroes win wars and those carrying out humanitarian wars must be seen to win for war to have a purpose. The unpopularity of the Iraq war, the uncertainty about its legitimacy, the lack of knowledge and suspicion about an 'occupation' of Iraq also contribute to the silencing of questions which again permits the stranglehold of the discourses of the suffering soldier, and the soldier as hero which dominate the coverage of the military occupation.

The discourse of the soldier as hero is also strengthened by the 'withdrawal strategy' as presented by the MoD, which is unquestioned by news and documentary. This narrative states that the British military occupied Iraq for humanitarian reasons, which are the training of Iraqi security forces and the stabilising of the country. A measure of the success of the British army was the ability of the Iraqi army to fight

an insurgency and when they started fighting the British could leave, having achieved their aim to train the Iraqi security forces. However, the outcome of the fighting was entirely in the hands of the Iraqis, because it was they who were fighting, and not the British. The portrayal of the withdrawal from Basra palace in 2007 as a necessity to stop the violence in the city is part of this strategy. As indicated in Chapter 6<sup>214</sup> most of the violence was being perpetrated against the Basrawis, (not the British military as claimed by the MoD) with an ineffective British military looking on. The retreat by the British to let the Iraqis take over and put their training to use as an alternative explanation satisfied the narrative of a successful operation, which doesn't need to be questioned.

Contributing to the discourse of the suffering soldier as hero, is the ambiguity of his portrayal in death. Death which is a major feature of war coverage is seen from the literature to have become much distanced as wars become more technological, and the discourse of science and humanitarian war becomes dominant. As stated by Woodward et al (2009) the troubling legality of this war distances death, as does our lack of control over it (Sontag 2004). The soldiers' own distaste for speaking about it adds to this, so death becomes a measure of the danger and progress of the military as well as a factor in the drama and performance of the action.

A strand in the coverage of death in both news and documentaries is the discourse of 'mathmaticised' morality. That is where the cost of war depends on the success of war, that the soldiers' death means nothing if the outcome is not successful. Where the causes of death are not balancing the payment to death, the risk has been re-defined, and the cost of death becomes not just success but support by the politicians and viewers, and the utility of their efforts is not questioned. The suffering of the soldiers becomes the guarantee of virtue (Arendt 1963), and death makes the war morally worth fighting. The soldier's willingness to die gave purpose to the war, which also satisfies the public's acceptance of death for a cause (Freedman 2000). This 'cost' allied with the virtue of death makes discussion of the real monetary cost of the war and occupation seem vulgar, and again questions are not asked. The

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<sup>214</sup> and section 7.6



mismanagement of the resourcing of soldiers is thus not investigated except as a general factor in the betrayal of the soldiers by the politicians.

As deaths become a measurement of progress, the British success becomes part of the 'withdrawal strategy' but as stated, no-one questions success. Thus the military strategy is never questioned, so a context and explanation for the withdrawal not given. This is symptomatic of the evident lack of discussion about the changing nature of war and the military counter-insurgency strategy, or lack of it. Merom (2007) cites options for ending a counterinsurgency, but the television media is still entrenched in the traditional view of 'war' victory, where success is seen to be the defeat of the enemy and the nature of the occupation in Iraq is never clearly explained. Occupation is both a military and a political act, and one of the silences in the coverage is the explanation or recounting of Iraqi politics. This includes investigation into the corruption of the Basra police. The subject is raised by News at the time of the storming of the Jamiat police station in 2005, but the suspicion that the British were training the forces who would ultimately turn on the trainers, is not discussed in depth, or examined by any documentary. By 2009 this seems to have been largely forgotten.

The dominant discourses are thus discourses of emotion, of the suffering soldier, a betrayed hero of whom few questions can be asked, and no responsibilities demanded. It is not only past narratives which influence the coverage of the occupation, but the format and design of the programmes which aid or hinder the dominance of the emotional in the genres of news NCA documentaries and documentaries. Both types of documentaries are oriented to achieve results (Fairclough 2003), whereas traditionally news is designed to arrive at an understanding. News also covers events rather than issues (Altheide 1987), where the visuals dictate content and focus on tactics rather than strategy.

Notwithstanding these generic traits, some of the findings were unexpected.

**The lack of senior officers as speakers** is noticeable in documentaries. This contributed to the silence about strategy and the role of the military in politics, as well as any identification of their responsibility in the politics in Iraq. The

dominance of other ranks in documentaries was not that surprising given their identification with authenticity and truth (Carpentier and Trioen 2010), and the subject matter of the majority of documentaries, which was about their treatment on returning home. The dominance of the suffering soldiers and their families leads to a grief at the outrage of an unfair death<sup>215</sup>, but not to questions about the resort to war or the policy of the occupation.

By contrast, in **news the majority of people interviewed were other journalists**. This is a growing trend noted by Barnhurst (2004) in the USA, but is contrary to the supposition by Robinson et al (2004) who suggest that future news on war will rely more heavily on official military spokesmen. As in documentaries, the disappearance of senior officers affects the coverage. With no-one to ask about strategy and the military's involvement in the political situation, the wider context of the occupation is not discussed, and the responsibility of the military for events in Iraq is silenced. The lack of military voices also points to the increasing authority of the journalists to speak because of their experience in Iraq as reporters. Their knowledge is based on being involved in events, from witnessing and seeing. As Nichols (2010) writes, knowledge becomes more about memory than history.

**The lack of Iraqi voices** is a feature noted in the literature on the coverage of the invasion as part of the criticism of embedding. The danger to both to Western journalists in finding sources, and sources from speaking to Western journalists, contributes to the continued lack of alternative voices, as they do appear in the news reports on the British withdrawal in 2009 after the Charge of the Knights operation, when the security in Basra was secured by the Iraqi forces. However, their space and that of the senior military officers is filled by journalists, politicians and pro-military experts who place events in a domestic frame, questioning the success or failure of government policies, or who reiterate the MoD withdrawal strategy. A question for further research would be to ask whether the increasing reliance on

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<sup>215</sup> See Section 7.7

these speakers is a continuation of a practice arising from embedding, or whether it is part of the changing nature of reporting in general.

This **increasing reliance on the reporter** in news coincides with the increasing role of the reporter as author of the NCA documentaries which decreases the requirement for a logical narrative construct of the story. A reporter such as Corbin becomes part of the story she reports, including actuality footage of her coming under fire and the increasing use of live footage involving the reporters. The news demand for liveness and for dramatic impact leads to an imbalance where exposition takes a back seat to the sensation of being a witness to events. This defies the 'fleetingness' inherent in the demands of television journalism (Ekstrom 2002), requiring an experience based on time spent in the country. However, as Hoskins (2004) states this excludes events and interpretations other than that witnessed or stated by the reporters.

The **rise of exposition as explanation for what is only being seen** by reporters is not just a practice noticed in news. A similar use of commentary in documentary is also noted. Traditionally commentary is used to address the viewer, outlining the narrative, explaining and giving context to what is seen, where 'images are frequently subservient to the words of the narration' (Nichols, 1991:95). However, in the documentaries studied, commentary is limited to explain what the viewer can already see or what has already been heard. Like news which is primarily lead by the visual evidence, where the dramatic and visual is given more emphasis than context and detail, documentaries are giving the authority to the 'experience' and immediacy of what is seen, rather than calling on acquired knowledge of a situation, especially where the drama of war is more entertaining than the dryness of political exposition. The visuals produce sensation which builds the site of knowledge, whilst the authority of argument constructed through the logic of investigation, and narration recedes.

The visual has become the main instrument in the representation of events in both genres in reporting the occupation, but because of the lack of footage available and the concentration on dramatic 'war' pictures with indiscriminate use of the militia footage, only a part of what the soldiers are doing is represented, and that which is,

becomes distant and unreal. The ubiquitous use of militia footage seems to be used more to signify that the news has been able to access the militia, where commentary merely describes what is happening, and the war becomes 'derealized' (Virilio 2002).

The British soldier, by comparison with the Iraqi militia, is seldom seen on the streets of Iraq, and when he is, he is pictured in a military role as a general soldier, as an abstract. In documentaries he talks to camera about his suffering with the same pictures used by news to represent flashbacks. Yet, the occupation/war is described as 'humanitarian', and he is described as a trainer with a humanitarian role. It is in this space formed by the lack of footage of actuality of soldiers, of the difficulty of visualising abstracts such as democracy, where the visuals become a representation and a performance, rather than a reproduction. This space is where the discourse of the suffering soldier has become dominant and an emotional picture of the underdog hero has been constructed. It is here, where from imagination, from past wars and familiar story narratives that the emotional discourse has been strengthened. This soldier bears little resemblance to the soldier from the Chilcot Inquiry, one who was involved in politics, administration, working with civilians and trying to help in the governance of a country.

I looked at the differences between news and documentary<sup>216</sup>, and using Corner's (1996) idea of documentary being a series of transformations, from the planning stage to the editing stage, suggested that it is in the edit that the difference might lie. I used Nichols (1981) idea of the 'voice' of a documentary, that is, the various effects which become part of the 'transformations' in the process of mediation. So, news lies at one end of the mediation scale, with simple continuity edits. Fiction is placed at the other, with a complex mediation, music, silences and editing effects such as montages and artificial edit transitions. Documentary can be found somewhere in the middle. In the texts I examined, it seems that the traditional documentaries were sliding down the scale where news traditionally lay, using simple continuity edits to stress their 'naturalness' (Schaefer 1997) and closeness to

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<sup>216</sup> Chapter 3

‘reality’, and aping the editing of news, and the truth of seeing, whereas the NCA documentaries were sliding up the scale, using many techniques of fiction editing, such as montages, fades, with music and effects. The ‘thin texts’ referred to by Corner<sup>217</sup> (2001) are adopting many of the ‘thick texts’ usually associated with traditional documentaries. The ‘artificial’ transitions are techniques, both visual and aural as rhetorical devices to heighten and suggest emotions, to draw on memory and imagination, and it is in this space again where the emotional appeal lies and the discourse of the suffering soldier gains power.

Nichols writes that facts become evidence when they are taken up in a discourse, and that ‘discourse gains the force to compel belief through its capacity to refer evidence to a domain outside itself’ (1991: 29). In the section on the literature on embedding, I asked, whether it is ‘standard journalistic news gathering and framing practices’ which led to the media’s supportiveness of war (Carruthers, 2000: 27) or whether it was specifically the practices of embedding.<sup>218</sup> This research shows that the discourses of reporting the military compel certain beliefs, whether the journalists are embedded or not, that it was not just the power of the military authorities which shaped the embedded and unembedded reports. The lack of context provided by embedded reports (Miller 2004: Tumber and Palmer 2004) is also evident in the television coverage of the British military later, as is the focus on the military action (Lewis and Brooks 2004). Markham writes that the ability of embedded journalists to adopt and adapt to new economies of authority points ‘to the continuity of underlying field structures (professional hierarchies and gatekeeping mechanisms) through changes to the lived experience of journalism’ (2011: 156). In the chapter on power<sup>219</sup>, I argue that power is not unitary, it is a ‘complex network of micro-powers,’ and the similarity of discourses of the coverage of the war and occupation can be seen to be evidence of this effect.

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<sup>217</sup> See p.65 above

<sup>218</sup> See p.38 above

<sup>219</sup> See p.98 above

To a certain extent the discourses of the suffering soldier, and soldier as hero dominate both genres of news and documentary, regardless of the communicative design of the programme; however news is more resilient to the aesthetic of the emotions. The documentary force of the imagination is becoming stronger in news, where representation as a communicative tool supersedes reproduction and where news and especially NCA documentaries are straying into the realms of performance and authored interpretation.

Traditional documentaries rely on the voice of the ordinary soldier to convey the 'truth' of their prognostic argument, emphasised by the aesthetic of an editing style similar to news to convey its 'reality'. The use of the ordinary soldier might be interpreted as the second utopian location where 'truthfulness' can be seen to reside as a coping mechanism as used by journalists in the Iraq war (Carpentier and Trioen 2010), where the NCA documentaries draw their truthfulness from the third location, the experiential knowledge of journalists (ibid). However, this foundation of the knowledge upon which the 'truth' is drawn is increasingly based on the senses. It is knowledge gained emotionally, fed and manipulated by discourses also based on emotion. The telling and showing are reconstructions based on sensation. Corner believes that with the increase in documentary as 'diversion', it is no longer classifiable as a 'discourse of sobriety' (2000a), however, the coverage of war and occupation as events and issues of concern to any public, require reporting that is based on a logical and intellectual 'reality', that questions and investigates assumptions of the dominant discourse.

The Chilcot Inquiry shows that what was happening in Iraq was not just war. The military had a major political role in the occupation, whether they wanted to or not. Smith (2005) states that the nature of war has changed, the utility of military forces in the occupation of Iraq depends on the ability of the force to adapt to complex political contexts and engage non-state opponents. War is 'a product of social conditions and circumstances' (Eyre and Littleton 2012: 181), and thus the circumstances and society have to be understood to comprehend what is happening in the 'war'. If viewers do not understand what their military is doing, or failing to do, and the media do not change their reporting to reflect this change, they are

failing along with the military. The military failures in Iraq seem to be being replicated in Afghanistan (Ledwidge 2010), and for the sake of both the Afghan civilians, and the hundreds of young soldiers being killed, more questions should be asked by the media about the military's strategy and its purpose and role in Afghanistan. In asking what journalists can do in future war reporting, Carpentier and Trioen point to the gap between journalistic ideology and practices, and write that journalistic openness, self-reflexive and self-critical dialogues in journalistic culture can find ways to 'define, enable and haunt journalism' (2010: 326).

I believe more than this is needed. In News and NCA documentaries reporters and producers with more knowledge of the politics of Iraq, and of military strategy accounted for the greater questioning of the role of the British military. More openness and access to the senior ranks of the military would also allow for more questions about the occupation and its failure, although this is probably one of the reasons for the lack of access! The commissioners' increasing narrowness of global scope lies in contrast to the international potential of other media forms and is also a factor in British television's failure to consider Iraq as anything other than a primarily military topic, mainly approached from a domestic angle in its effect on returning soldiers. These are issues for another study.

Clausewitz writes that 'A greater part of the information obtained in war is contradictory, a still greater part is false, and by far the greatest part is of doubtful character' (1976: 60). Although he is talking about information for war fighting, it is the role of documentary and news producers to make sense of the contradictory, to discard the false and to understand the doubtful. As more young soldiers and Afghan civilians die in Afghanistan, the role of the media in asking informed, uncomfortable questions becomes more important, and the practice where judgements about war are emotionally motivated and that war be justified by the deaths it engenders should be opposed.

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### Chilcot Inquiry

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## Appendix

1.

	Question asked by reporter/anchor in introduction to Documentaries
Programme	Introduction
Real Story 29/11/04	How well are they (soldiers) being treated when they return home?
Sweeney Investigates 10/2/05	Was there a military cover up?
Tonight 21/11/05	Can hearts be won by the barrel of a gun? And are the Iraqis capable of looking after themselves?
Dispatches 21/11/05	We reveal the consequences of our misadventure in Iraq
Panorama 19/3/06	Has it been worth the cost of lives and when will Britain be able to bring the troops home?
Dispatches 22/5/06	British troops off this month to another foreign war, but are they losing the battle at home?
When our boys came home. 1/6/6	This is the story of 3 British servicemen
Tonight 30/10/06	So just why are the MoD press officers so angry and what's the truth about how injured British troops are treated?
Panorama 19/2/07	War has claimed the lives of 130 British soldier, now families are breaking ranks and asking questions which the government is finding it hard to answer'
Panorama 26/3/7	Is the army to blame here for taking a too insensitive approach or are the soldiers cowards?
Panorama 10/12/7	What is the price we paid to end the body count?
Panorama 17/12/7	What is the true legacy Britain is leaving the people of Basra?
Panorama 25/2/8	On whose orders?
Dispatches 17/3/8	Has the public been deceived?
Andy McNab's Tour 06/8	I'll be telling the heroic stories, acts of courage, bravery ...
Dispatches 13/12/8	Peter Osborne returned to the country to see if the time is right for Western troops to leave.
The Fallen 19/6/9	This film features friends family and loved ones of some of the 179 servicemen and women who lost their lives in Iraq
Brothers in Arms 17/11/9	This is a story about a band of soldiers
Iraq 2003-9	What is the true cost of war?

9/10/09	
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docs	Stated reasons for being in Iraq
Real Story 29/11/04	No reason
SHDD	<p>1. Sgt g ‘ Brought tidworth to Basra – training and mentoring will continue ‘Peace keeping; ‘Danny’s unit is responsible for training the new Iraqi police as they prepare for the handover of power in 2 months time’</p> <p>3. Joey ‘It’s a dangerous job we are doing here, but it’s what I joined the army for’</p> <p>4. Kenny: ‘I’m extremely proud of what we have achieved here, and we have achieved more than we hoped, established a training academy and facilities to teach. Iraqis are happy, we’re happy so it’s a really good achievement.</p> <p>5. Cpt Chris: We are trying to get this place normal so people can walk out on the streets when they want without having any fear, whether that be from terrorists, old regime whether it be from anyone’.</p> <p>6. Fadel (Interpreter) I love my job and I must try hard because as you know the British are in Basra to help us because of that I do my best to help them also’.</p> <p>8. Sgt G: it was nice to know you have done your bit for 6 or 7 months, some of it I enjoyed, satisfaction in getting people to do stuff, training people up.</p>
Sweeney Investigates 10/2/05	<p>BBC news headline ‘they were training Iraqis and were apparently killed at a police station. Father – this wasn’t active service, ‘they said the war was over, he was on operational duty, but he wasn’t killed in the sense of combat’.</p>
Tonight 21/11/05	‘Keeping the peace but fighting the insurgents establishing a free and democratic country’. ‘first priority is to protect themselves, and the second is to train the Iraqis.’
Dispatches 21/11/05	<p>Peter Osborne – because of an AWOL president and a delusional prime Minister. Jack Straw – we are now on track to establish the beginnings of democracy.</p>
Panorama 19/3/06	John Reid, defence secretary ‘we are there to help them build a democracy, and security forces in order to protect it.
Dispatches 22/5/06	None
When our boys came home. 1/6/6	Sgt Thomson ‘Thinking back to the children that I’d had to push away and thinking back t public opinion back home, we shouldn’t be here. I was thinking to myself what are we really doing here?’
Tonight 30/10/06	TA soldier Scott Garthy ‘ I was proud to have gone there, because I actually believed, forget WMd, that were were there to help the people
Panorama 19/2/07	<p>Philip Hewett ‘supposed to be stabilising the country’. Mother of Robert Thompson (who died)’ he says we aren’t going to make any difference. Anything that we build, they’ll destroy, so who</p>

	<p>is it we're helping? Jane Corbin: ' by 2006 Iraq was on the brink of civil war. The noble cause the British were told they had been fighting for had been displaced by sectarian slaughter'</p>
Panorama 26/3/7	None
Panorama 10/12/7	General Binns 'We liberated a country, we didn't rebuild it as quick as Iraqis expected, and we turned from an army of liberation into an army of occupation'.
Panorama 17/12/7	Taroud al-Ainache 'Tony Blair promised to bring the people of Basra stability and security. Why did they come?'
Panorama 25/2/8	None
Dispatches 17/3/8	Peter Osborne: the Government told us that the Iraq war would make us safer, but have we brought back the cult of the suicide bomber to Britain?
Andy McNab's Tour 06/8	<p>a – '1RHA deployed to Basra for what they believed would be a hearts and minds tour' Major Paul Bates 'We were there on a part of the rebuilding of Iraq'</p> <p>b – Their mission to bring peace and security to the province</p> <p>c – just mention of the military mission.</p>
Dispatches 13/12/8	Milliband 'Our job in Basra was for Iraq to be run by Iraqis and that is what is happening'. General Binns 'I came to rid Basra of its enemies, and now I formally hand Basra back to its friends'
The Fallen 19/6/9	<p>to help people' fall of tyrant, 'freedom', 'violent occupation'.</p> <p>Zam 'We didn't go there to kill people, we were there to help people, to get rid of somebody, but there's obviously people that disagree with that'.</p> <p>SM Brendan Campbell ' the feeling was that the Iraqi people in Basra had been given their freedom, they'd been freed from the tyranny of Saddam.</p> <p>Commentary: Military police like Simon Miller were helping to keep the peace'.</p> <p>Sept 2007 Lamb 'we are there to try and create the conditions for a better life'</p> <p>To get the Iraqis to move themselves to somewhere better... but they and only they can take that responsibility.</p> <p>Kuss: We still haven't politically answered why we got here in the first place. What we have done is created a fairer society where a lot of blood has been spilled and I don't know if it's worth it.</p>
Brothers in Arms 17/11/9	None
Iraq 2003-9 9/10/09	<p>A military campaign'</p> <p>Huw : V/O as Blairs walk in to St Paul's 'the decision maker himself, who famously declared he wanted to stand shoulder to shoulder with America and with his friend President George W Bush'.</p> <p>Talibani talks of the 'debt to those who joined in the liberating of Iraq and who continue to strive to make Iraq free, prosperous and a good</p>

	regional neighbour’.
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### 3. Criticism/Blame

Programme	Criticism 2
Real Story 29/11/04	<p>Rep: ‘Family (of Damian mason) say the MoD has not been there enough. They claim one home visit from the army welfare officer and say they have lost out financially.</p> <p>Rep: But army psychiatrists claim there’s nothing wrong with David Damien says he is lucky to have financial &amp; emotional support of family &amp; if left to Mod, he wouldn’t have coped.</p> <p>Damian Mason ‘I don’t trust the army now’</p> <p>MoD ‘Damian has received the full support of the army.</p> <p>Rep: We’ve spoken to several other servicemen who were injured out in iraq who were deeply unhappy with the care they’ve received from the Mod since they’ve returned home</p> <p>Rep: ‘one other soldier as well who received gunshot wounds &amp; he says from start to finish, the Mod have been apathetic towards his case’</p> <p>Shaun Rusling: The treatment that we receive currently is simply inadequate. ...</p> <p>Rep: how do you feel the army has treated you?</p> <p>David to cam: They haven’t treated me that’s the problem.</p> <p>Rep: other than sleeping pills and anti depressants David says he is getting no help from the MoD</p> <p>V?O; Yet the Mod says ‘all service personnel who become ill or are injured receive the best available medical care’.</p> <p>David McGough ‘Army hasn’t treated me and that’s the problem’</p> <p>Families assoc ‘servicemen are being sacked through no fault of their own other than that they are ill from saving their country’</p>
Sweeney Investigates 10/2/05	<p>Intro: one thing is clear, the red caps did nothing wrong... they were betrayed b y equipment that didn’t work. Betrayed by the ‘British army’ ... responsibility lies... with Whitehall and the MoD.</p> <p>JS (over question of whether the patrols should get permission to go into the area) ‘on this simple point of fact the MoD is just plain wrong’.</p> <p>Geof Hoon on record as saying ‘our forces don’t have lousy kit’</p> <p>Reg Keys ‘clansman radio didn’t work’.</p> <p>JW ‘in the aftermarth of killings the Ministry did seem to point a finger at Sgt Hamilton jewell.. that he had not followed standard operating procedure’</p>
Tonight 21/11/05	Lack of equipment (but no finger pointing) ‘I’m astonished at how little protection these men have’.
Dispatches 21/11/05	Bush & Blair ignored advice re. invasion (situation changing in Iraq, fault of militia)
Panorama 19/3/06	Increasing chaos
Dispatches	Shocking story of an army that can’t even properly care for its own



22/5/06	<p>wounded &amp; a government that's trying to cover it up'.  V/O: The 'authorities want to forget them.  ... failed by the government, by the legal system and even by its own leaders.  V/O (of Neil Spencer) – 'It was a suicide bomber.  V/O: After he was discharged from casualty in April 2004 he needed physiotherapy to save his hand,. He didn't get it.  Spencer: fighting my government for what you are entitled to was a blimming hard thing.  Geoff Hoon gave false statement to Parliament re. number of soldiers injured in combat. 'This programme has learned that that statement, a statement to parliament is false'  V/O: In part 2 evidence that the govt is not only trying to conceal the number of injured, it is trying to silence the injured themselves.  v/O: Uncomfortably conscious of the difficulties of the injured the MoD appears to have been doing its best to prevent them appearing on screen.  QU: Did the army offer him any kind of assistance? (in housing)  Rep: there was a threat (from the MoD press office) that there would be consequences to medical treatment if any member of the armed forces spoke to the press without going through the MoD press office.  V/O: the Mod did not respond to our specific questions on medical care  MP Gerald Howarth: I think this is a terrible indictment of the senior levels of the British army that they felt they were under pressure to do this. (Case of Trooper Williams).  Sgt Hamilton-Douglas (ex black Watch): Obviously when I was in I couldn't say anything, you have to bite your tongue &amp; keep quiet, because of the wrath that can come down on high. Now I would say its bullshit.  VO: for all the concern by the top brass the common factor in every issue we've seen is the soldiers feeling that their leaders, the chain of command, are failing them  V/O: While the country can still rely on the soldiers loyalty they feel increasingly that they can no longer rely on ours.</p>
When our boys came home. 1/6/6	<p>Daniel 'Mod Should be doing more, to them I'm just a number'.  Richard 'I felt as if I was discharged as a number, not as a person, just a feeling of being hung out to dry'.</p>
Tonight 30/10/06	<p>V?O: story of why The MoD has fallen out with ITV press.  V/O: The MoD reacted furiously they denied any neglect &amp; claimed that aspects of the report invaded the privacy of the troops.  2<sup>nd</sup> programme, following up previous prog on poor treatment of wounded soldiers (March). MoD told news rporters that unless they retracted what they said they were no longer welcome on MoD facilities.  TA Scott Garthy 'the govt washed their hands of me'  Dave Corrigan is now suing the MoD and according to his solicitor, his experience is not unique.  MP Adam Holloway: I brought up this question of ITN being</p>

	<p>implicity threatened by the MoD  Dave Corrigan (Army medic) You'd think Tony Blair &amp; his govt, would have learned how to treat the guys who they are sending to Afghan or Iraq</p>
Panorama 19/2/07	<p>Sons &amp; daughters went off to fight.... now families are breaking ranks and asking questions which the government is finding it hard to answer'  Complaints about faulty kit and unanswered questions about casualties have put <u>families</u> special relationship with military leaders under colossal strain'.  Eddie Hancock: 'our PM saw it in a simplistic way'  JC: The military's contract with its political masters is being properly equipped and trained. .. (Controversy over kit.)  JC: Government officials have admitted not wanting to go public with their preparations for war, while diplomacy was continuing.  JC: It was clear to everyone back home that <b>we were now the enemy.</b>  'Jamie Hancock's mother talking about accountability of soldiers for murder - 'shouldn't that mean the govt is also accountable for anything that happens to our soldiers whilst they're out there?'  (New enemy, ie militia)  Sue Smith 'I don't blame the army ....The people I blame are the people sitting in Whitehall, they're not afraid to go out every day, not knowing if they are coming home. ... Where's the support because the MoD &amp; govt should be giving those lads the support'.  Eddie Hancock (father) tony Blair 'he's the most inept PM we have ever had in living memory and his legacy will be Iraq for all the wrong reasons'.</p>
Panorama 26/3/7	<p>Is the army to blame for taking a too insensitive approach?  James Piotrowski: 'the army refused to help me.'  Father – I just wanted to go up to Tony Blair, grab him by the throat and wring his neck... why had no-one helped my son?  TB says there is provision for traumatised soldiers  B/g curtain with soldier running: but new unpublished research seen by Panorama, suggests it's not enough.  Steven Walker: 'over all the army is letting young soldiers down'  Cesare McDermott (former soldier) As long as you do your job, they don't give a ##### what happens outside.  Richie Livingston (friend of Gordon Gentle). If the army had been there for me, I probably would still be in it</p>
Panorama 10/12/7	<p>Whitehall wouldn't allow press to film handover of palace 'Whitehall was nervous media would present it as a defeat'.</p>
Panorama 17/12/7	<p>Taroud al ainache 'Tony Blair promised to bring the people of Basra stability and security. Why did they come?'  Translator 'We feel that the British forces are responsible for our lives'  General Binns 'where the government has indicated we're discharging our moral obligation'  Gen Mohan ' Militias became powerful because of the absence of the Iraqi state and the lack of preventative action by the British'</p>

	<p>JC further north the American troops took them (militias) on, but the British army lacked the man power and the political will back home. Iraqi woman: (when asked what the British brought to Iraq) ‘misery, they didn’t do much. This is the question I was thinking about, why did they come? Why? To oust Saddam Hussien, OK he is gone &amp; next? That’s the big question, that’s the question that everybody’s asking why.</p>
Panorama 25/2/8	
Dispatches 17/3/8	<p>As we hand back control of Basra to locals the plight of the Iraqis who worked for us shows us that our hopes for the invasion have been betrayed.</p> <p>PO: The population turned on the British accusing us of failing to improve their lives. With the army forced on to the defensive, local militias took advantage and infiltrated the police.</p> <p>PO the British have been driven out by local Militias.</p> <p>The British people were deceived about our reasons for entering this war, and now we’re being deceived about what we’ve left behind.</p> <p>PO Conc: We failed to bring liberal democracy to Iraq, instead we brought danger to the streets of London. We’ve damaged our international reputation, we’ve alienated millions of our fellow citizens, we’ve betrayed the values that we stand for. Most worryingly of all the government refuses to acknowledge any of this.</p>
Andy McNab’s Tour 06/8	
Dispatches 13/12/8	<p>The British have been driven out by local militia</p> <p>Gen William Odom: Former National Security Agency Director (US): The British came in &amp; bragged on themselves for not wearing their helmets and their soft caps &amp; this new approach they had learned in Northern Ireland &amp; made friends with all the Shiites down there, &amp; those of us who knew about Iraq laughed at the time &amp; pretty soon they found themselves completely penetrated, the police they put together were just a melange of militias they didn’t even know existed. The next thing you know they’re shooting it out with their own forces, &amp; as I see it they essentially retreated to an air base encircling themselves &amp; turned it over to the Shiite militias. Now that’s not much of a performance.</p> <p>PO: In Basra the Iraqis contemptuously side lined British forces. When they needed back up it was the Americans they called in (all over shots of militia &amp; fighting on a rubbish dump – with IA &amp; Us forces), &amp; it’s the Americans who are reaping the benefit.</p>
The Fallen 19/6/9	<p>Kameron Ellis: no one really liked him either.</p> <p>Courtney Ellis: i wanted to go up to him and whack him with a stick( they laugh &amp; 1<sup>st</sup> girl said ‘&amp; she’d not kidding’.</p> <p>04’34” Richard Wilson: i thought Blair in the back of his mind probably thought from wanting to go along with Bush, that’ll be a nice thing on my CV, as a prime minister, win a war.</p> <p>Corinne Knight: (Partner of Sergeant Robert O’Connor) I feel like</p>

	<p>standing on the roof of my office and screaming exactly how I feel about that man. And then I feel like standing on his head in the marina until the bubbles stop rising, and even that would be too good for him.</p> <p>Bill Stewardson father of Kingsman Alex Green(in green) : I don't hate the bloke, i don't class him as a buffoon, I really don't think he was some warmonger hell bent on taking the path that he took, I think he took some brave decisions and I think he knew full well what his lot would be. But he acted in the way he thought at the time was correct.</p> <p>LCpl Jon 'Frenchie' Le Galloudec, 4<sup>th</sup> Battallion, the Rifles: It's got to be hard losing your son or your daughter in a war you don't believe in, the fact is I told my mum &amp; dad if i died out there, if you went to parliament, Gordon Brown, I'd haunt them.</p> <p>" Peter Brierley. Father of LCpl Shaun Brierley: I'm angry because the troops who are coming up that's brilliant nobody will go from Iraq will have to go what we've gone through but the govt are still trying to cover up the truth,</p>
Brothers in Arms 17/11/9	<p>Father of Simon Miller (red cap) 'I hate the guy, I hold him totally responsible for the death of my son... my son died on a lie, he was killed for a lie'.</p> <p>Chris Thompson (lost a leg) 'you fight for your country, you'd expect them to look after you, but they haven't'.</p> <p>SM Andy Kuss 'when it did start kicking off we found lots of holes in the army, not just equipment, mainly with our mentality, some of it was arraogance, we thought we could just walk in and walk back out again'.</p> <p>Father of Simon Miller: They've been sent there, all for Blair's folly.</p> <p>Lamb 'We were fighting on 2 fronts 'we did exactly what was asked of us'.</p>
Dispatches 07/9/9	<p>'army' wouldn't allow Dave Foreshaw to be buried in his uniform or have a St George's cross flag on his coffin.</p>
Iraq 2003-9 9/10/9	<p>HE: Blair went in as he wanted to be friends with Bush</p> <p>HE: Gordon Brown 'sanctioned all the spending on military effort</p> <p>HE: Gen Sir Mike Jackson 'he was the one who was very busily telling us throughout the invasion about the progress being made and about the difficulties being faced.</p> <p>Archbish: 'heavy responsibility' &amp; the 'invisible enemy may be hiding in the temptation for short cuts in the search for justice, letting ends justify means, letting others rather than oneself carry the cost, denying the difficulties or the failures so as to present a good public face'</p> <p>AB: there were those among both policy makers and commentators who were able to talk about it (the realities of cost) without really measuring the price, the cost of justice'.</p> <p>HE: 'rash for anybody to say absolutely it had been the right or wrong thing to do'</p>

#### 4. Description of Iraq/Iraqis (Docs)

Docs	Description of Iraq/Iraqis –
Real Story 29/11/04	Insurgents
Sweeney Investigates 10/2/05	Locals, Iraqis, people,
Tonight 21/11/05	‘minority of people who want to disturb’: insurgents, increasingly hostile place, the enemy. Local population
Dispatches 21/11/05	<p>2 Iraqs. One conjured up by TBlair &amp; G Bush where events are going according to plan, and another Iraq of mayhem and disorder and the menace of civil war.</p> <p>Heavily armed home grown militia waging a vicious battle with each other and coalition troops, traditional Islamic extremists, Iraqis, Mahdi Army</p> <p>PO: The truth is that Iraq was held together by a despot, and when we removed Saddam and his feared Baath party we unleashed forces that we can no longer control.</p> <p>PO: There certainly are Iraqis trying to build a free &amp; democratic country.</p> <p>Toby Dodge: a deeply traumatised country, society mobilised by nationalism, by increasing Islamic radicalism</p> <p>PO: Instead it (American forces) is handing over power to the murderous forces we unleashed by removing Saddam. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the British controlled south.... They stand by while hard line Islamic politicians set about creating a theocratic Islamic state.</p> <p>PO: Areas ... fallen into the hands of traditional Islamic extremists.</p> <p>Rory Stewart: people are imposing aggressive Islam as socialism</p>
Panorama 19/3/06	<p>JC: This whole thing feels very dangerous, you know out of control’</p> <p>‘People in Basra were obeying their religious leader’s calls for massive protest... these militias are a feature of the new democracy, fostered by the coalition, have been responsible for torture and killings and have been implicated in the deaths of many British soldiers.</p> <p>‘Half the population tell you that we must remain’</p> <p>Iraqis</p> <p>Militia now involved in politics.</p> <p>Director Basra Police Academy: Problems of tribalism</p> <p>‘It’s the minority that want to harm you’.</p> <p>Capt Richard Holmes (who is killed) attacks by ‘people’ on coalition troops.</p> <p>Militia infiltration</p> <p>Militia &amp; ‘seizure of weapons which threatened British forces &amp; the Iraqi people (personification of weapons).</p>
Dispatches 22/5/06	<p>‘sophisticated enemy’ in Iraq who understand British military rules of engagement.</p> <p>‘foreign war’</p>

When our boys came home. 1/6/6	Iraqi's – (mostly passive tense of what happened to each).
Tonight 30/10/06	Violence done to soldiers. ( passive)
Panorama 19/2/07	Local people, 'dark forces stirring', Armed Iraqi mob; Fedayeen, suicide bombers, Iraqis, 'sectarian slaughter', Iraqi people,, insurgents JC: the enemy the British army was sent to fight had been defeated. ....V/O: But a new and expected threat now filled the vacuum. Letter from Jamie Hancock: Everytime that gate opens there's somebody waiting to shoot at you.
Panorama 26/3/7	(Not identified) Steven Walker (Univ Essex) 'Soldiers are working inside civilian populations when they don't really know who the enemy is'
Panorama 10/12/7	JC: 'The enemy, Shia militias are still out there. Jaysh El Mahdi, one of the Shia militias effectively trying to drive us out of Basra.' Binns: Some people have chosen to fight us. Mahdi army dominant force 'their aim to force the British out of Basra and take control of the city'. Militia, civilian casualties, Iraqi security forces, Mehdi army, Basra's notorious death squads.
Panorama 17/12/7	Women are being brutally killed for being improperly dressed, there's torture and ethnic cleansing and thousands of people who work for us risk being murdered, Dark forces in Basra Criminal gangs, death squads, malign influence of the militia, extremists who talk of honour while killing women. In Basra a 'hard line Islamic ideology has taken route, not the freedom the British promised'. Dedicated local people, Men and women in Basra Mahdi army Militias- the armed wings of political parties elected to power in the new democracy Britain & America brought to Iraq.
Panorama 25/2/8	Mahdi army; prisoners
Dispatches 17/3/8	Local militias General Odom: pretty soon they (The British) found themselves completely penetrated, the police they put together were just a melange of militias they didn't even know existed. The next thing you know they're shooting it out with their own forces, Rory Stewart: 'more than one enemy in Iraq, locals, terrorists or the police' Larry Wilkinson: 'Iran owns southern Iraq now & the British realised that & the British decided to accommodate that rather than fight it, and as a consequence Iran's influence in Southern Iraq is the paramount influence now. Iraq to be run by Iraqis, Shiite militia

Andy McNab's Tour 06/8	The enemy. 'I've got one'. 'I didn't want to kill somebody' Sadr's militia.. 'the target'
Andy McNab	<p>Ferocious Mahdi army', 'vicious uprisings', militant Shia Cleric, 'the enemy', 'The lads facing an enemy which didn't know when to stop' 'the Mahdi army were a determined fanatical force bolstered by a new breed of warrior, mercenaries lured by the promise of cash for kill'</p> <p>Sgt Dan Mills: We had the silly crazy ones in the early days, they'd come out in the road, or they'd drive, unwind the window in front of you and put an AK out the window &amp; squeeze the trigger at you, &amp; you were like, what are you on?</p> <p>'Outside the compound were (sic) a thousand strong militia determined to wipe them off the face of the earth'.</p> <p>News clip ' today's violence reignites fears of a Shiite rebellion across S. Iraq, the Shiite ceasefire is over'.</p> <p>'Snipers take out high value targets'</p> <p>2004 was a year of vicious uprisings'.</p> <p>'Massive militia gathered outside Cimic house for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time'.</p> <p>Moqtada 'Shia Cleric'</p> <p>'them'</p>
Andy McNab	<p>'insurgents' primary target is coalition ground troops</p> <p>Prime suspect 'a local leader who ran a private army of insurgents' 'the enemy'; 'the men'; 'insurgent IED team'</p>
Dispatches 13/12/8	<p>'local militia'; Iraqis, 'CLC's (Concerned local citizens);</p> <p>Insurgents, rogue police units, Shiite militias,</p>
The Fallen 19/6/9	<p>Iraqi insurgents; they; enemy; women &amp; Children, the middle east is an unpredictable beast;</p> <p>(when asked the question 'What do you think about the Iraqis?')</p> <p>if you're talking about the civilians here, it's not very nice of course, but its collateral damage. If you're talking about the insurgents, if they want to play a big boys game, they expect to get hurt.</p> <p>Col; Some of the people killed were genuinely evil people, and so I wouldn't mourn their passing, but I also think that some of the people who were killed, I'm sure were completely innocent and were just in the wrong place at the wrong time, &amp; I know some of the people who were killed who may have been fighting us, were motivated less by evil than by other factors.</p>
Brothers in Arms 17/11/9	<p>Insurgents,</p> <p>Gen Lamb 'their occupation to a great extent their religion, thus way of life', elements of the militia and Iranian injected dissent'..'they fought a bad cause'.</p> <p>LC Joe Farrer 'its difficult to decide who was responsible for deaths of people out there, its so hard because you don't know who you are fighting against'.</p> <p>Father of soldier: I think politically or militarily when all this happens you know the militants they call the insurgents ar basically just Iraqis, Iraqi people, Iraqis, the population, , military groups, 'different</p>

	insurgency groups', militia,
Dispatches 7/9/9	'They' (mortared Danny out scoff times) 'the bastards'. Iraqis, insurgents,
Iraq 2003-9	People who have suffered outrageously,

#### 5. Violence as passive in Documentaries

Programme	Passive violence - & 'violence' as a character 4
Real Story 29/11/04	'Many soldiers were transformed by experiences in Iraq... Major David Bradly was injured after attempting to rescue a group of British soldiers'.
SHDD 1	V/O: Joey and Adam's convoy is easy prey for booby traps and sniper fire.
Sweeney Investigates 10/2/05	Michael Nicholson 'Close on 100 British soldiers killed here, over 200 more have been injured'.
Tonight 21/11/05	This murderous chaos & anarchy has now spread & dominates large parts of the country. Robert Fiske 'If you go on the streets of Baghdad, you see the violence in front of your eyes. You cannot escape the bombs, you get there, severed heads' PO: The day I arrived in Baghdad a massive bomb went off in the Palestine. James Jeffry: There is violence in Iraq, terrible violence, Hassan Hussein Shama : Last week I was the subject of an assassination attempt,
Dispatches 21/11/05	Lt Alloway: I got a little bit of shrapnel hit me in the head JC: More british troops have died in maysan than anywhere else in Iraq JC: British forces try to hold the ring, often bearing the brunt of the violence. Capt Richard Holmes: Al Amarra is calmed down considerably. There's always more areas which will be more volatile than others, due to the presence of a small minority. JC : Basra is no longer a city at war JC :More British troops have died in Maysan than anywhere else in Iraq JC (pointing) these are the rockets which have been coming over to the British camps. A roadside bomb had ripped into a British convoy as it had returned to base BUT as soldiers went to recover the casualties, they were attacked by locals with stones & petrol bombs. Capt Richard Holmes & pt lee Ellis has been killed after they left us JC: As dusk falls british bases in Basra find themselves targeted by mortars. We came under attack and had to seek cover 2 out of 4 nights in this camp.



	<p>JC: still there is attack coming onto the British, but this time of course from the Shia population, Shia insurgents or militias who don't want the British here.</p> <p>JC: The war &amp; its aftermath have claimed 103 British military lives.</p>
Panorama 19/3/06	<p>V/O: (Chris Thompson,) he was blown up by an insurgent landmine it had ball bearings in it.</p> <p>V/O: Somewhere in here are the men who suffered the most serious injuries in their countries service, broken limbs, major burns, amputations..'</p> <p>Charles Hayman (former editor Jane's) For every one person killed I would expect to see about 6 people injured in the long term casualty statistics</p> <p>v/O: This is Captain Peter Norton, a bomb disposal expert with the RLC. He lost an arm, a leg &amp; much of his stomach after an Iraqi insurgent landmine exploded beneath him.</p> <p>V/O: the toll of British wounded in action in Iraq is at least a third higher than the MoD claims, if the American experience is any guide it may be more than double what the MoD claims.</p> <p>Rep: war doesn't just create physical injuries.</p> <p>Mrs Douglas (Mother of Alan) ...and he told me that Alan had been shot in Al Amarah and subsequently died.</p>
Dispatches 22/5/06	<p>Story of 3 British servicemen injured during the invasion of Iraq 2003.</p>
When our boys came home. 1/6/6	<p>British troops - Bruised, battered &amp; forgotten...</p> <p>V/O: As the fighting goes on the number of troops with psychological problems increases.</p> <p>Trevor: Military psychiatrists said he needed a spell of leave. They refused to include him among the 182 troops officially diagnosed as suffering from PTSD.</p> <p>V/O: As more and more soldiers return home injured and claiming that they have been let down the work load or the law firm we featured in March is increasing</p>
Tonight 30/10/06	<p>War has claimed the lives of 130 British soldiers</p> <p>JC: 'within a few weeks the British took control of South Iraq. They lost 33 men,.... it seemed the war was over. They little dreamed they'd lose another 100 soldiers.</p> <p>Sue Hewitt (mother) - I realised they were constantly under attack and that every day there was a risk that they could be killed.</p> <p>John Hyde (father of Ben, RMP) They're still fighting over there &amp; they're still dying</p>
Panorama 19/2/07	<p>James Piotrowski: 'seeing the killings, being shot at, when I come back onto civvy street I just can't adapt'</p> <p>Steven Walker (univ of Essex) - The nature of conflict in Iraq is extremely stressful. .... The young soldiers I've interviewed had traumatic experiences in Iraq</p>
Panorama 26/3/7	<p>Jeremy Vine: Was it really an orderly withdrawal? Or were we driven out?</p> <p>JC: Powerful guns still target incoming missiles, but the truth is the</p>

	<p>British army bowed out of Basra months ago.</p> <p>JC: attacks on British forces here in Basra has dropped dramatically in recent weeks, but earlier this summer British soldiers were involved in some of the bloodiest street fighting they'd experienced in decades.</p> <p>JC: 10 crew survived amazingly without injury, and fought their way out of the ambush.</p> <p>Kevin : my cousin died in small arms fire, he got shot in the head</p> <p>JC: Kevin's cousin Corp Jeremy Brooks, was one of 11 soldiers from the rifles who were to die in operations in Basra this year.</p> <p>Lt Col Patrick sanders 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Rifles: we were involved in some pretty intense fighting....perhaps some of the most intense fighting we've seen in recent years and certainly in Iraq and we lost a lot of good people, some close friends</p> <p>PS: it's fair to say it was about 90% of the violence in basra that was going on at the time was directed against us and (what you saw was the Jaysh El Mahdi, one of the Shia militias effecitvly trying to drive us out of Basra)</p> <p>'JC: a thousand people were living in the palace at the mercy of mortars and rockets. Soldiers recored the incessant attacks with phones &amp; cameras. Sometimes there were more than 70 hits in one day. This one clip filmed by a soldier shows 10 mortar rounds falling in less than 2 minutes</p> <p>JC: . The attacks seemed to come from no-where, dragging on for weeks. And somehow under siege the soldiers tried to keep to their regime.</p> <p>JC: The COB the main British base at the airport was also under sustained fire). Buildings were destroyed, people were killed</p>
Panorama 10/12/7	About locals betrayed
Panorama 17/12/7	
Panorama 25/2/8	PO: 175 British soldiers have died in Iraq and more than 7000 have been wounded
Dispatches 17/3/8	
Andy McNab	<p>Maj. Paul Bates: Back then we could walk quite freely down the streets of Basra &amp; we did so on a daily basis. There wasn't that palpable sense of danger that perhaps you get now then you go to Iraq</p> <p>Terry: We drove 2 ks constantly under hail ... then we hit IED</p> <p>Terry...: we got to the gates only to be greeted by a hail of bullets, we were engaged now from 2 or 3 different directions.</p> <p>Terry: At this point been in contact for 10 15 mins</p> <p>McNab: Ambushed and taking fire, terry and the lads only option is to take their safety catches off and put their SA80's into action.</p> <p>McNab: Terry &amp; the lads become the focus of a deadly manhunt.</p> <p>McNab: ...with the house under attack from every side, a massive battle is raging down stairs.</p>

	<p>McNab: Matt and the lads of 1RHA are facing their worst nightmare . their lives are in the balance , they've proved they can hold the enemy off</p> <p>McNab: Although the militia bodies are stacking up the British soldiers are now running dangerously low on ammunition.</p> <p>McNab: Against the odds everyone in that RHA patrol survived the contact,</p>
Andy McNab's Tour 06/8	<p>McNab: In April 2004 the lads of the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment got caught up in the biggest scrap for British troops since the 1950's. Surrounded &amp; besieged by the ferocious Mahdi Army they were soon battling for their lives.</p> <p>Soldier: The city just kicked off</p> <p>McNab: The siege of Cimic house had begun.</p> <p>McNab: Cimic house was a cage with the tigers of Y company trapped inside. ... It seemed like the whole city had turned against the PWRR.</p> <p>McNab: The lads were facing an enemy that didn't know when to stop</p> <p>McNab: Cimic house was being slowly strangled to death.</p> <p>McNab: Cimic house was hammered by RPGs rocket 7 small arms fire. Mortar fire... they must have known the psychological affect.. ... Cimic house was malleted by mortars all that August.</p> <p>McNab: Y company was determined to tough out the siege even if it meant getting killed. ... The worst case scenario of being under siege is that you are going to be overrun.</p> <p>McNab: Cimic house was pounded every day with small arms, RPG,s and deadly mortar fire.</p> <p>McNab: snipers first line of defence against the mobile mortar teams.</p> <p>McNab: the compound was attacked 83 times in 23 days. That's about 4 assaults a day.</p> <p>McNab: The siege was lifted. The lads of &amp; company PWRR were bloodied but unbowed. The compound was devastated but still standing.</p> <p>McNab: the defenders had been in 188 contacts</p>
Dispatches 7/9/9	Updated – with new section on US in Baghdad.
Brothers in Arms	<p>Iraq has been a bitter and bloody campaign</p> <p>Sgt Maj Andy Cuss: I've been involved in a number of fatalities</p> <p>Trevor McDonald News clip: evening 6 royal Military policemen were killed in iraq today, in the biggest loss of enemy lives since the beginning of the gulf war.</p> <p>Ram: We come back with brick thrown at me and sworn at me , &amp; dirty looks at me it was pretty different.</p> <p>V/O: Open warfare had broken out on the streets of Basra &amp; the rifles were getting contacts on a daily basis.</p> <p>V/O: by the time the rifles returned to Basra for their next tour, Iraq had become even more dangerous.</p> <p>v.O: Since the last mortar attack 4 weeks ago the area around the base has been quiet.</p> <p>Lcorp: Joe Farrer: I remember watching Baghdad getting bombed on the news. &amp; it never crossed my mind that I would end up thee.</p>

	<p>... We knew Iraq was a dodgy place at that time, people were dying... we were there when the first British female soldier was killed. , when the helicopter was shot down, the lynx.</p> <p>v/o: Chris Thompson was patrolling with the rifles, when he lost his lower right leg to a roadside bomb.</p> <p>V/O: Along with the 100,000 British troops who have served in Iraq, friends and families of soldier like Matt have been living through the experience as well.</p> <p>Margaret Foulks - every time you heard a snatch land rover been blown up you worried.</p> <p>Sgt Major: My company was located in Basra palace &amp; we'd take rocket attacks every single day</p> <p>Lally: Basra palace sustained over 100 rounds of fire on one day alone. .... you've got to bear in mind that these attacks could come 24 hours a day, day or night... it was more or less taken as read that when you deployed on to the streets of Basra you were going to get a contact.</p> <p>V/O: armoured vehicles and supply trucks were being attacked all the time.</p> <p>Lally: one of my guys, Sgt Williams been blown up 12 times,</p> <p>Sgt Major: we got IEd'd a couple of nights &amp; I lost Corporal Edwards that night...&amp; we had a total of 5 casualties across our battlegroup,</p> <p>V/O: 179 British personnel have been killed in Iraq, including 13 fatalities from the Rifles...</p>
<p>Brothers in Arms cont.</p>	<p>LC Foulkes: The first time its quite scary and at the end of the day you're like that (grimaces) you're trying to fucking kill me..</p> <p>LC Foulkes: They started dropping mortars in the compound... I think they started exploding</p> <p>Second time today we're been mortared.</p> <p>Soldier in O group meeting: There's a credible threat out there The threat is as it has been for weeks particularly on main routes in and around Basra.</p> <p>Sg Major Cuss: I've been involved in a number of fatalities...</p> <p>V/O: so far on their final tour B company haven't taken any casualties.</p> <p>LC Foulkes: The worst time is when you get hit is at the end of the tour... lets not have any fucking accidents, deaths,</p> <p>Zam: What you are going into is a real live shooting match.</p> <p>V/O: For the first 3 days the British met little resistance as they moved into the heart of the country</p> <p>Sg Maj Campbell: It was slightly apprehensive going down the road because we didn't know what we were up against</p> <p>V/O: After 48 hours of fierce street fighting, the city was taken.</p> <p>V/O: the slaying of 6 British soldiers was the worst loss of lives since the invasion..</p> <p>News clip: Trevor McDonald '6 royal Military policemen were killed in iraq today'</p> <p>Geoff Hoon: Initial information suggests that they may have been involved in an incident in a policestation in al Major al Kabir.</p> <p>Ram: We come back with bricks thrown at me and sworn at me , &amp;</p>

	<p>dirty looks...</p> <p>Kuss: I remember one incident when we got a brick flying in, straight in my mouth, douch, that hurt like hell.</p> <p>V/O: Open warfare had broken out on the streets of Basra &amp; the rifles were getting contacts on a daily basis.</p> <p>Kuss: The Iraqis cottoned on to that very quickly, the violence ratcheted up quite quickly..</p> <p>V/O: Tensions increased even further in the run up to the country's first elections.</p> <p>Kuss: This signalled a new and even more bloody phase in the conflict... it ratcheted up during that tour, &amp; towards the end that's when it really exploded.</p> <p>V/O: , Iraq had become even more dangerous.</p> <p>V/O: Since the last mortar attack 4 weeks ago the area around the base has been quiet.</p> <p>LC Joe Farrer: We knew Iraq was a dodgy place at that time, people were dying</p> <p>Joe: we were there when the first British female soldier was killed. , when the helicopter was shot down, the lynx, there were explosions going off a lot of the time.</p> <p>V/O; the British lynx carrying 5 people was hit by 2 missiles</p> <p>Kuss: most patrols you'd expect to be bricked, at one point IED's were happening daily,</p> <p>v/O: Chris Thompson was patrolling with the rifles, when he lost his lower right leg to a roadside bomb.</p> <p>Margaret Foulks (mother) 'everytime you heard a snatch landrover been blown up you worried'</p> <p>V/O: The end of 2006 &amp; the rifles were back in Iraq &amp; back in the thick of the action. This time based in the heart of the city, at Basra palace which was now the front line.... At the height of the insurgency the armys down town bases were under constant siege.</p> <p>Sgt Maj: My company was located in Basra palace &amp; we'd take rocket attacks every single day</p> <p>Lally: It was a massivly dangerous place to be at that stage of the game.</p> <p>V.O Basra palace sustained over 100 rounds of fire on one day alone.</p> <p>Lally: you've got to bear in mind that these attacks could come 24 hours a day day or night....</p> <p>it was more or less taken as read that when you deployed on to the streets of Basra you were going to get a contact.</p> <p>V/O armoured vehicles and supply trucks were being attacked all the time.</p> <p>Sgt Maj: When one of my guys, Sgt Williams been blown up 12 times, we used to call him the unlucky soldier... we got IEd'd a couple of nights &amp; I lost Corporal Edwards that night... we had a total of 5 casualties across our battlegroup,</p> <p>V/O: Since the start of the war 179 British personnel have been killed in Iraq, including 13 fatalities from the Rifles</p> <p>Zam; he was in the centre of Basra, that was a pretty rough place to be</p>
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	<p>at that time, a mortar round came in &amp; landed near where he was located and a bit of shrapnel hit him and that was it basically.  Joe: The atmospherics of the city have just improved 10 fold.  British soldier: you get the odd stoning now but, before it was really bad  V/O: Corporal Matthew Cornish was the 115<sup>th</sup> soldier to die in Iraq</p>
The Fallen 19/6/9	<p>V/O: On the second tour he was nearly killed when his vehicle was blown up  VO: The landrover had been hit by a roadside bomb... The bomb had been set to hit a vehicle in the opposite direction  Sgt Martin Lindley: One of the first times we went out one of the lads he got shot..  V/O: \Martin saw intense action in Afghanistan.  Danny (re his friend Jason) ‘He’d been in a contact...’  V/O: The British had become prime targets for the insurgents. The base was constantly mortared and many troops just had soft skinned accommodation for protection.  Danny : We got hit every day, sometimes 3 times a day... we’d sit there in our underpants with body armour &amp; helmet just sitting there waiting. Like a lucky dip is this going to *** hit me or what...</p>

6. Reported statements as reason given to why in Iraq (News)

Programme	Reason given ‘why in Iraq’ NEWS
BBC Newsnight 20/9/5	<p>Lord Patten ‘when I hear British ministers talking about getting the job done... I wonder what they think the job is... we need a strategy, not sure anybody knows what that strategy is. I suppose it is to leave behind a stable, democratic and prosperous Iraq, but that seems pretty farfetched now’.  Paxman: ‘why did Tony Blair invade?’  Patten : ‘because he thought that America’s allies couldn’t let America in on her own’</p>
Newsnight 19/9/5	<p>Chris Bryant (Labour MP) ‘trying to build the police as part of building a strong civil society... trying to build civil society in Iraq... We’re good at peace building, peace- making, building a civil society’.  Tim Collins : We’ve got to provide the security for the people of Ireaq from which the fledgling democracy can flourish’.</p>
BBC News 19/9/5	<p>Long term British plan is to hand over security to the local Iraqi forces...  The Iraqi police that the British have been training...  The government wants to signal to the Iraqis that it’s not an occupation force..</p>
ITN 19/9/5	<p>Occupation (running into trouble).  James Mates ‘If the Iraqi people feel the British are fighting them rather than being there to help them, then clearly the continuing</p>

	British problem could become part of the problem rather than the solution.'
C4 News 19/9/5	Troops are perceived as an occupying force. Menziez Campbell 'Commitment and moral obligation (both to Iraqis and to soldiers).
ITN 20.9.5	Occupation, supposed to be handing over the city of Basra to local control
BBC News 20/9/5	'Occupying force' Britain's exit strategy has always been to train up the Iraqi police so that one day they could take over from British troops. Government says it will keep on training the police that will ultimately allow troops to come home.
C4 News 20/9/5	John Reid: Strategy remains the same, to support the Iraqis as they build their own democr4acy... We're there to make sure that we see this through to the end. Jon Snow: 'British forces who train the police may be honing the skills of their potential enemies.
C4 News 21/9/5	John Reid (Defence Minister) We will not leave the job half done... be a committed friend. The British and Americans may not be doing any good, but they are holding the ring, holding Iraq together as a geographic entity, stopping extremes of violence.
ITN 21.9.5	No reason
BBC News 21/9/5	'Usual patrols' (keeping a low profile to avoid any antagonism).
C4 News 23/9/7	Susan Smith (Mother of Pt. Phillip Hewett, killed in Iraq) 'unjust cause... the streets are filled with those who think Iraq will be seen as the PM's biggest mistake.
BBC 2/9/7	One of the most dangerous tasks the British routinely face, running supply convoys through streets controlled by enemy militias. ( provinces handed over to Iraqi security forces trained by the British (& Italians?).. training continues. Military spokesman 'There's a limit now to what we can do in Iraq, a limit which in my view has been reached to the extent that we ought to have a framework for the total withdrawal of all our troops.. Galpin ' British troops insist they still have a role training the Iraqi security forces Little: When all 4 provinces have been handed over the question will soon assert it self, what purpose is served by keeping the troops in harm's way at all? Sir Ming Campbell 'there's a limit now to what we can do in Iraq.. we ought to have a framework for the total withdrawal of all our troops.
BBC 3/9/7	Still responsible for security in Basra province as a whole, & will continue to train Iraqi troops, & will support Iraqi forces in Basra city if called on.
C4 3/9/7	Snow: Like the end of many a British colonial enterprise... LT Col Saunders – we ask the Iraqi security forces to start to take responsibility for the security of Basra themselves. 4 years of occupation.

	Patrick Mercer – We’re still protecting the main supply route for the Americans Stewart – there to keep our relationship with the US intact.
Newnt 3/9.7	Ainsworth: We’ve trained an entire division & they are the people who are taking over from us in Basra palace. ...It would be wrong even if you were opposed to Iraq in the first place not to accept that our troops have been doing a tremendous job... B Ainsworth (Defence Minister): that’s the whole reason for our working with the Iraqis, building up their capacity, building up their ability and getting them to take over. It’s their country, it’s their future, it’s for them to do the job and we are trying to help them to do that. .
BBC 25/3/8	‘their role is now called ‘over watch’ Basra occupied by the British for nearly 5 years has become lawless & dangerous. Today’s battles were a critical test of the British strategy of training Iraqi forces to handle security.
BBC 26.3.8	Rep from Baghdad. (Brits are playing no part in the fighting, just watching closely)
BBC 27.3.8	They (British) are playing no part in the fighting, just watching closely Maj. Tom Holloway: It’s encouraging for us in that the training we have been providing them with in the past few months has been effective.
BBC 28.3.8	The UK military has been busy re-supplying the Iraqis with rations, medicines & large quantities of ammunition. However, there is no chance say officer here that British troops will join the fight on the ground
BBC 29.3.8	British troops fired artillery on a mortar position after a request from Iraqi ground forces. American & now British forces are getting involved. & the British today fired artillery from their base at Basra airport (at request of Iraqi ground forces).
ITV 26.3.8	(no mention of British except for the death of a British soldier killed in Iraq, shot during a fire fight... from the Shia dominated South he (Mos) & his military army (!) grew to become strong opposition to the occupying coalition forces. (British??)
C4 25.3.8	British forces have been providing air surveillance, but no UK troops are involved on the ground. The Iraqi army tries to do what the British army couldn’t and clean up the centre of Iraq’s oil wealth... V/O: December, Britain said Basra was safe enough for the Iraqis to run it. Arbuthnot: I’m pretty confident that the Iraqi army has been well trained by the British & with the help of the aerial surveillance, the targeting & with that sort of stuff that the British are able & still providing..



	<p>In December officer privately admitted that the violent Mahdi army dominated the city</p> <p>Arbuthnot (chair of defence com).. the end of the Iraqi project that we've contributed so much towards.</p> <p>...we are there to help if needed</p>
C4.26.3.8	<p>British not mentioned until end with death of British soldier –</p> <p>Becomes the US</p>
C4 28.3.8	<p>..British soldiers whose zone this once was have remained firmly on their base</p> <p>Dr Bashar Al-Nahar( representative of Maliki's party in UK) 'I think if needed the PM will ask for British help</p>
C4 29.3.8	<p>British troops have become involved for the first time in the Iraqi clamp down on Shia militia in Basra... at request of Iraqi forces under fire.</p>
Newsnight 28.3.8	<p>British &amp; American forces partially involved.</p> <p>MoS's forces have controlled much of Basra particularly since British forces moved out of the city centre in December</p> <p>V/O: British troops based near Basra airport are not playing a crucial role in the battle being fought out just a few miles away, but that it's argued is the way it should be.</p> <p>Godrey (expert) ...if it goes completely wrong then they are able to rescue the situation or take over the situation.</p> <p>(Wood reports: very bloody day, hundreds injured by one account &amp; desperate citizens who have been without food and water for 2 days</p> <p>...Iraqi govt was always going to have to tackle the militia problem in Basra</p> <p>...American forces have been drawn into the fighting with the Iraqi forces further north in the way that the British here have not.....danger that the Mahdi army will be able to turn this, into a battle against the occupier 'quote, unquote', and that raises the fear of a Shia uprising, the thing which the coalition has always feared most of all.</p> <p>Cordingly – the Iraqi troops ... better trained &amp; equipped..got air support from the British... last thing the British will want to do is get involved on the ground.</p> <p>Pax. What are they doing there then?</p> <p>Cordingly – 3 tasks, training, keeping routes open &amp; supplies.</p>
ITV 25.3.8	<p>Test of the Iraqi army, trained of course by the British since control of Basra was handed over last year... may have to call on some of the thousands of British troops at Basra airport just a few miles away.</p> <p>British had hoped they had seen the back of combat in Basra, but if that fighting worsens they could end up in far deeper trouble than before.</p> <p>Connery – British insist they are not about to become involved in what is an Iraqi situation.</p> <p>Spokesman 'We are not on standby...Iraqis conducting this operation largely without our support.</p>
ITV 1.4.8	<p>(In light of domestic politics &amp; Govt promise to bring troops home)</p> <p>Trev: The British operation in Basra won't be remembered as an unqualified success, but in the Autumn it looked at least as if it was</p>

	<p>coming to an end. ...PM spoke of a timetable for withdrawal.  Kieran Vincent: so from the airport on the outskirts of town, British soldiers new mission is to play a supporting role in the Battle for Basra while the Iraqi troops they trained will be on the front line, they will be fighting the insurgency at one remove..</p>
C4 1.4.8	<p>(In light of reduction of troops &amp; draw down)  The main role remains training the Iraqi forces...  ...some believe the British presence in Iraq is more about the relationship with America than their role on the ground.  Prof Michael Clarke:RUSI: ...nobody can pretend that these useful things they are doing are central to what happens on the ground in Basra any more.  Journalist at conference: What does it say about their mission, in Basra, that the Iraqi PM can launch a major offensive and not even pick up the phone and tell us he is doing it.  Des Brown ; (the troops) are there for military reasons and they're there in the numbers they are there based on military advice.....complex environment where the Iraqi Security forces are under their own leadership, but with our support are making progress.  Browne – as you know there is no military solution only to any of these challenges... politics has started to operate over the last number of days. ..their role is known as over watch, but some in the US question if they're doing enough.  V:o: some believe the British presence in Iraqi is more about the relationship with America than their role on the ground.</p>
BBC 1.4.8	<p>Sam Brennan: Centre for Strategic &amp; International Studies: The bottom line is the British lost control of Basra and now they've moved back to the airport, they really are there as a talking point for the US more than they are as an effective contributor to Iraq's security. .</p>
BBC 31.3.9	<p>Odierno – linked by the blood we have shed together in defence of the innocent.  (since march 2003) 179 have lost their lives.  It was only a year ago that Iraqi troops with help and training from the coalition finally routed the militias. ..  Significant chapter in this controversial campaign to a close.  Sir Jock Stirrup: the British approach has been the right one... it's only been possible because of the fantastic professionalism and courage of all those men and women who have served here over the years...  (&lt;&lt;what approach?&gt;  Caroline Wyatt: (Withdrawal strategy – 'the Iraqi troops who ensure the relative security are now the most visible presence here, allowing British forces to begin their withdrawal.</p>
ITV 31.3.9	<p>(Buried) Stirrup remembered the sacrifice of the 179 British servicemen and women who've lost their lives during the campaign...here to go.</p>
C4 31.3.9	<p>Emily : Beginning of the end for Britain's controversial occupation of Southern Iraq....6 years and 10 days the British have been in command</p>

	<p>of Basra (in command??)..This WAR has claimed 179 British lives. The British have fought a long and dangerous war here, but following an Iraqi lead operation against the militias last year they say they leave Basra a safer place. &amp; end on troop numbers.</p>
C4 30.4.9	<p>179 British lives were lost in the invasion &amp; occupation of southern Iraq have they bequeathed peace &amp; prosperity?...sewerage still lies in the streets, &amp; electricity remains intermittent. However you can now insult the Iraqi PM about it all without getting shot.. British troops have ended combat operations. Jonathan Miller: Longer than either WW the role of the British combat forces in Iraq is now over Maliki acknowledged the lives sacrificed Gordon Brown defined Iraq as a success and talked of a partnership of equals. Blair (2003) a heavy responsibility to make the peace worth the war There'll be few tears shed by the basrawis for the departing occupiers. The Brits undermined, overwhelmed, a Shia militia forcing them to withdraw to the airport. Toby Dodge: they never had the troops to succeed... an economy intervention &amp; very good soldiers died because they weren't given the support from Whitehall in terms of political backing or material Jonathan Miller: others argue that the object of war isn't victory but peace... Sir Mike Jackson: People have been killed and wounded in pursuit of producing a better future for Iraq. JM: had the invasion &amp; 'the long painful aftermath'. Iraq is emerging from 6 years of hell. The British army is emerging from an operation success or failure history is yet to judge.</p> <p>(Look back) a city crying out for reconstruction and jobs hoped the British would bring stability and therefore investment. Jane Iraq – apart from the billions spent on military operations Britain has injected £700 million into reconstruction here. ... 3years ago British soldiers were painting schools and refurbishing soccer pitches. Britain funded a major water treatment plant, but as those streets became more dangerous British soldiers retreated. (goes to Hayanitha) ..Although the British brought clean water to a million people in Basra these residents are still angry. Int with Iraqi Wissam Shawal: they promised us to do many things but do nothing. Their promise us to build our country, and creating a new opportunities for job for young people or graduated students, but they didn't nothing'. Nawfal al-Obeid – the British only doing one thing. Securing themselves. ...Jane Iraq – this British legacy might be leaving the Iraqis to do it themselves. Iraqi Deputy PM Barham Salih: 'Liberation gave the people of Iraq the opportunity to rebuild their shattered lives, rebuild their shattered</p>

	<p>country and again that would not have been possible without the contribution of the UK and the US and other coalition members. (At investment conference in London)</p>
<p>Newsnight 30.4.09</p>	<p>‘One of Britain’s most controversial military engagements. Mark Urban ‘the sums of money Britain was prepared to put in that were always dwarfed by the estimated 7 billion that the military campaign cost. In the end the Iraqis claiming they were required to do the business and the British leaving concluding that they made the difference.</p>
<p>BBC 30.4.09</p>	<p>Huw (in Basra) after 6 troubled years Britain declares an end to its combat operations in Iraq. British insist their mission has been a success. Soldier ‘We leave knowing that Basra is a better place now that it was in 2003 Padre ‘we remember those who lost their lives in the causes of freedom and creating a better world....179 dead Gavin Hewitt ‘war had bitterly divided Britain and questions remain over what was achieved and the sacrifices made. Defence Sec, John Hutton: We paid a very high price, we have the casualties have been very very high indeed, but we are coming out of Iraq I think having done an amazingly good job. ..’most of those who served believe they’ve given Iraq a chance of a better future John Simpson at war memorial outside Basra – This latest occupation of Basra is often seen as a failure.</p>
<p>ITV 30.4.9</p>	<p>‘Farewell to the fallen and goodbye to Iraq as Britain declares its war is over. ... A military operation that lasted far longer than ever intended... Julian Manyon returns for ‘mission’s end’ ‘179 Britons who laid down their lives for their country in a war which left much of the British public uncertain and confused’. Hutton; Iraq is not a threat any longer to its neighbours; it’s not a threat any longer fortunately to its people. The murderous fascist dictatorship of Saddam is no longer with me.... hope remains that the Iraqi forces will soon be able to take full responsibility for their own security. But despite the 6 year British presence that day has not yet come. J – one officer ...said ‘he felt considerable pride in being part of a force that brought democracy to Iraq....another ‘edge of bitterness about what he thought was a lack of support for the operation in the UK... some have described the deaths of their friends as a waste of a life &amp; some soldiers wearing t shirts that say not end of an era, but end of an error.. J – British who have been involved in training them (the army) are convinced they have done the job. Gavin – after spending £6billion what kind of city are we leaving behind? ‘Basra has changed.. (football) Basra beats Baghdad who not long ago</p>

	<p>would have been brutally beaten next by Saddam thugs for losing – football club Britain built 80 years ago during its first occupation. Sattaral Mansory (sports journalist) British troops were ‘too busy protecting themselves to help us’...</p> <p>Bill Neely: Britain built little, no power station, no sewerage plant, no hospital, water here is dirty, electricity intermittent. British troops are leaving behind a stable city, but it’s decrepit. ... There’s no question Britain was for years responsible for providing essential services. But this doesn’t look like success to me.</p> <p>Nigel Haywood UK consul General: There are power stations that we tried to rehabilitate, there’s water systems that we patched up as best we can (Dr Jinan Hassan (Cancer specialist) ‘for 2 years they visited about twice in our centre up till now I don’t receive anything chemotherapy from them. ... our children are paying for your war. School – a policeman asks those children whose fathers have been killed to stand up. 7 stand, one in 5. Many of their fathers were insurgents. 1 in 3 unemployed Basra is daring to dream of lasting peace... Gavin: 179 members of our armed forces, ... countless thousands of Iraqi civilians have also died and are still dying, and here on news at 10 we’ve been remembering 3 of our own killed.</p>
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7. Reported statements as to who is the enemy (News)

Prog	The enemy? – who
BBC Newsnight 20/9/5	<p>Shiite extremist element of the police Mahdi army supporters including those in the police with many claims that they are trying to enforce strict Islamic law Mob of terrorists Rival factions Iran</p>
Newsnight 19/9/5	<p>Mob Anti British Street protests by supporters of a radical Shiite group, the Mahdi army Hundreds of Mahdi supporters killed in armed clashes with the British Army Open warfare in Maysan province (where we saw the winning of a Victoria cross by one of our soldiers) history of tensions but only by extreme Shias Soldiers were attacked Shiite extremists are mounting more deadly attacks</p>
BBC News 19/9/5	Those who want to destroy democracy in Iraq
ITN 19/9/5	An angry mob
C4 News	Followers of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al Sadr

19/9/5	
ITN 20.9.5	<p>Angry mob  Radical Shiite mob to attack British troops  Iraq, who would love to extend its influence into southern Iraq.</p>
BBC News 20/9/5	<p>Mob, terrorists  Local militants, extremists, Mahdi army militia fighting to drive the British army troops out of the country.  Iran, suspicion it is pouring money, weapons and explosives across this long border and into the hands of Iraq's southern militias.  Training the enemy of the future (the police)  'difficult to know friend from foe'</p>
C4 News 20/9/5	<p>Shia militiamen from the Mahdi army blamed for kidnapping 2 SAS men</p>
C4 News 21/9/5	<p>Militia, gunmen, insurgency, extremist elements</p>
ITN 21.9.5	<p>Iraqi mob, crowd</p>
BBC News 21/9/5	<p>Small but rotten core of criminal and military sympathisers  Neighbouring Iran</p>
	<p>Basra palace, it's at the heart of a hostile city... it draws enemy fire constantly...streets controlled by enemy militias.  'the main base at Basra airport is far from safe, it also draws enemy fire'  One senior US military adviser last month accused the British of bowing to defeat &amp; of handing over to a security force that is riddled with anti-American insurgents (not British??) &amp; gangland militias.</p>
BBC 3.9.7	<p>Huw 'Today they left after the worst year for casualties since the invasion'  Questions remain over the Iraqi army &amp; police forces taking over, keenly infiltrated by Shia militias fighting a turf war in the city.</p>
Newsnight 3.9.7	<p>Iraqi Security forces.  'deteriorating situation in the south' (in contrast from Anbar)  Urban 'it's a hostile environment'  Ainsworth 'that's the whole reason for our working with the Iraqis, building up their capacity, building up their ability and getting them to take over. It's their country, it's their future, it's for them to do the job and we are trying to help them to do that.'</p>
BBC 25.3.8	<p>Iraqi army.  militias &amp; criminal gangs – 'the militia groups have been ruling the streets for many months'.  The main target were fighters from the powerful Shia militia the Mahdi army and they were defiant  'At least 30 people were killed and scores wounded in street fighting'.</p>
BBC 26.3.8	<p>The violence in Iraq has claimed the life of another British soldier.    Major General Kevin J Bergner: US Military spokesman: These are Iraqi decision, these are Iraqi forces and they are Iraqi govt leaders. Directing &amp; implementing these operations. We have great respect for them &amp; minister for defence &amp; interior &amp; their subordinates press this..</p>

BBC 27.3.8	<p>George A: factional fighting between the country's Shia militia in the south is spreading. It's been the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of fighting between the government forces and Shia factions in Basra.</p> <p>A rag tag militia has held off 30,000 Iraqi police &amp; troops the coalition says this huge operation does show the Iraqi forces are capable of maintaining security on their own.</p> <p>this fighting is also factional, Shia against Shia. PM Nouri al Maliki is allied with militia groups like the Badr corps. They dominate the security forces. The militants look to the radical cleric MoS as their leader, but he has also spoken of abandoning the gun for politics</p>
BBC 28.3.9	<p>The city's terrified civilians are nowhere to be seen. The UN wants to bring in 200 tons of badly needed humanitarian aid, but it's too dangerous. The Iraqi defence minister visited today and admitted that putting down the militias had been tougher than expected.</p> <p>Un Named Iraqi: We thought this would be a normal operation said the minister, but we were surprised by this resistance. We have been forced to change our plans and our tactics</p>
BBC 29.3.8	<p>Basra is paralysed and seething.</p> <p>Popularity of America in Iraq is declining.. MoS 'occupation should leave</p> <p>But the mahdi militia men have been told not to lay down their arms while foreign troops are still in Iraq</p>
ITV 26.3.8	<p>Fighting in basra entered a second bloody day today as Iraqi security forces tried to end the Shia's militias hold on the city.</p> <p>. In the days after the War MoS established a power base in the new Iraq. From the Shia dominated south he and his military army grew to become strong opposition to the occupying coalition forces.</p>
C4 25.3.8	<p>Sprawling violent gang, Violent Mahdi army (which army isn't violent?) Violence spread across Iraq today... Mahdi army This militia, a bi-product of anarchy... it's unclear if any man is in charge of this sprawling violent gang. A far cry from December's hand over of the city to Iraqi control while officers privately admitted then the violent Mahdi army dominated the city, the official line was that violence was down. Milliband ' that violence has been massively reduced'.. Locals said murder and kidnapping had spun out of control, even though in December Britain said Basra was safe enough for the Iraqis to run it. A country wide standoff with Iraq's most powerful militia The militias leadership threatening escalation unless the campaign of arrests against it stops Holloway (military spokesman) – In the intervening months since December there has been some form of a turf war being fought in Basra between the 3 main groupings of militia. James Arbuthnot: The problem in Basra has always been the Iraqi police.</p>
C4 26.3.8	<p>As a battle with Iraq's army has claimed at least 55 lives went into its</p>

	<p>second day, Iraq's PM Mal M gave these men till Friday to lay down their guns.</p>
C4 27.3.8	<p>I think in Basra today we've seen the fighting re intensified possibly to the same as the first day, heard reports of army &amp; police bases being overrun, local residents now starting to find almost siege conditions where they're running out of food and water 7 I think there is a huge feeling of fear &amp; anticipation before tomorrow's deadline, in which the prime minister (shots of men in street) said lay down your arm or we will come and get you &amp; it's not quite clear how this is going to pan out.</p> <p>Talking about MoS: These groups supposed to be criminal elements which may not be entirely under his control,</p> <p>JS: but these are Shias fighting the army which is controlled by a shia PM,</p> <p>N: That's the key point for PM Maliki – there are provincial elections coming up in October &amp; he very much needs to stamp his authority over this Shia part of Iraq or he may incur losses to the Mahdi army's political faction during those elections.</p>
C4 28.3.8	<p>: Good evening criminal mobs, shia militias heavily armed residents, Basra has them all &amp; now it has the Iraqi PM setting an unmet deadline to disarm. American air power has been called in to bomb the militias, but British soldiers whose zone this once was have remained firmly in their base.</p> <p>At least 120 people have been killed in Basra since the start of the campaign on Tuesday, and the government has extended a deadline for militias to hand over their weapons</p> <p>The Iraq government today, the green zone, Parliament tried to meet to stop the country edging towards civil war, but only a fifth of MPs made it in. The president's office was mortared. Across town violence flared, in the slum of Sadr city, US troops were in action for the first time in this battle on the ground fighting Mahdi army gunmen, this the wreckage from gunfire, helicopter and artillery rockets all unleashed by US troops here. America drags into a battle started by Iraqi PM, Mel M and meant to quickly destroy a rival militia. It didn't.</p> <p>Chaos &amp; a sense of collapse again in Iraq.</p> <p>The Iraqi govt insisting this isn't a grab for power, but a simple police operation</p> <p>Dr Bashir (spokesman) There is no law and order in Basra, and now seems to be the time especially since the Iraqi army has regained a new sense of confidence &amp; the operation by the way has been meticulously planned by the Iraqi army and executed by the Iraqi army using new equipment, especially tanks...Basra is by and large calm, there are pockets of resistance where rogue and criminal opposition have been building up their strength. The water has returned, the electricity has returned, the medical hospitals are being equipped so the operation is going according to plan, according to my reports : its obvious that only rogue elements of the mahdi army would be</p>



	<p>involved here, because they are the only ones who would disobey MoS. Today 's he reiterate he wants a peaceful resolution to this conflict.</p>
C4 29.3.8	<p>Smoke rises from a house in Basra hit say Iraqi police by one of 3 US precision guided bombs dropped today. Relatives said a child &amp; 2 women were among 8 civilians killed (family gathered looking at damage of shrapnel etc). US military say they are still assessing who the casualties were.</p> <p>Iraqi Man to cam:... 'This is a secure residential area, it's not a strong hold for insurgents or militia living here. Is this the freedom the Americans and the British say they are bringing us. Is this Al Maliki's idea of freedom?'</p> <p>V/O: The Americans are being drawn into an offensive by Iraqi forces to eradicate Shiite militia from the country's second largest city.</p> <p>Maliki to cam: We will continue to stand up to these gangs in every inch of Iraq, unfortunately it seems there are some among us who are worse than AQ.</p> <p>Latest figures from hospitals and military commanders are as many as 300 fatalities over the past 5 days, and as Iran called for an end to the Shiite violence which it says gives coalition forces a pretext for staying in the region</p>
Newsnight 2.3.8	<p>Maliki said aim was to 'crack down on lawless gangs'.... His main target the Mahdi army controlled by the anti-American cleric, MoS, and the results so far yet more violence right across Iraq. .</p> <p>Robin Denslow – this has become a show down with a difference, the fighting is not between Sunni &amp; Shia groups ... it's become a battle between 2 very different leaders, both wanting total control of Iraq....MoS In August he ordered a ceasefire, but his militia have controlled much of Basra particularly since British forces moved out of the city centre in December.</p> <p>Aymas Godfrey(Former British Intel Officer Basra)'We always knew this was going to happen, just by the very nature of MoS, his militia, who he is and how he wants power, and the entire game there he plays was always going to come to a violent head'.</p> <p>Godfrey: It's actually very right that the British army is standing back because it's not needed at the moment.</p> <p>Cockburn: now we are having the beginnings of a civil war within the Shia community which is 60% of Iraqis.</p> <p>Paul Wood: overall it has been a very bloody day, dozens killed, hundreds injured by one count &amp; desperate citizens without food and water for 2 days, moving people without their medicines..</p> <p>Wood: The Iraqis govt was always going to have to tackle the militia problem in Basra which made the city a place of fear, for instance 100 women have been murdered for not wearing, in the opinion of these</p>

	<p>militias, proper Islamic dress... there's also been a lot of skirmishing over the spoils in Basra, the smuggling trade, the oil trade. It should also be seen as intra-Shia rivalry. This isn't the civil war that many people feared, this is fighting between different Shia factions, Shia civil war &amp; the PM is backed by one faction, the other faction is the Mahdi army of the radical cleric MoS.</p>
ITV 25.3.8	<p>Fierce fighting in Basra has left at least 30 dead and many more injured as the Iraqi army launched a ferocious attack against the city's militia.</p> <p>..Neil Connery: the country's 2<sup>nd</sup> city looks more like a war zone with running battles between the security forces and the Mahdi army militia.</p> <p>Mahdi army ... kept a relatively low profile since calling a ceasefire last August, but are increasingly breaking into splinter groups.</p>
ITV 1.4.8	<p>Basra turned into a battle ground, Shia militias which had given British forces so many problems engaged in open warfare with Iraqi government troops who are trying to win control of the city</p>
C4 1.4.8	<p>'Iraqi government crack down on Shia militia in Basra has frozen the British troop withdrawal from Iraq.</p> <p>Des Browne: part of the development of Iraq...the Iraqi govt lead by PM &amp; their own security forces have sought to challenge the militia and the criminal gangs and others who have been seeking to exercise power in the city of Basra, &amp; as I have always known and made perfectly clear in handing control over to the Iraqis, this was a challenge that they the Iraqis themselves had to face.</p>
BBC 1.4.8	<p>Paul Wood: for a rag tag collection of militias has already been enough to reverse a planned UK troops cut.</p>
BBC 31.3.9	<p>V/O: Southern Iraq has come a long way since the darkest days of the insurgency which saw British forces fight some of their fiercest battles in decades.</p> <p>It was only a year ago that Iraqi troops with help &amp; training from the coalition finally routed the militias.</p> <p>Today Basra city is indeed a different place, more peaceful and with growing hopes of prosperity, despite the rubbish on the streets</p>
ITV 31.3.9	
C4 31.3.9	<p>The British have fought a long and dangerous war here Iraqi lead operation against the militias</p>
C4 30.4.9	<p>Gordon Brown defined Iraq as a success story and talked of a partnership of equals. Brown: for the future equals allies, business partners and always friends in the community of nations</p> <p>V/O: a Shia militia forcing them to withdraw to the airport.</p> <p>Majid Ahmed Al-Sari: Former Security advisor, Iraqi Government: I mean there were no deals, only understandings (laughs) no, as far as I know, there were communications between the British and militia leaders, and frankly some militia leaders were recruited to work with the British.</p>

	<p>V/o: For Sheikh Abdul Bidel Afajdi.... This is the bitter legacy. He says with their appeasement of the militias, the British delivered Basra to the Iranians. To cam ‘ I swear to God the British are working with Iran. I swear to God.</p> <p>Barham Salih: Iraqi Deputy PM: First and foremost people in Iraq are free to speak their mind and people are not jailed for speaking their minds, and this should be celebrated and recognised and this would not have happened without the contribution of the UK and the US and their help to the people of Iraq to overcome tyranny,...</p> <p>people of Iraq without Saddam Hussein now have an opportunity to harness their economic potential and build their lives in collaboration with their friends in the UK and elsewhere</p>
<p>Newsnight 30.4.9</p>	
<p>BBC 30.4.9 BBC</p>	<p>John Simpson: Ordinary people in Basra we spoke to agreed. They liked the way the British behaved here &amp; they are worried the American will now be a lot more aggressive. JS: The question is will Iran see the opportunity to stir things up here, with the militia groups they used very effectively against the British &amp; will the try to make it a kind of fighting withdrawal for the Americans ... I think also they’re worried that the militias might come back and then after the Americans go, they could take over again.</p>
<p>ITV 30.4.9</p>	<p>Iraq is not a threat any longer to its neighbours; it’s not a threat any longer fortunately to its people. The murderous fascist dictatorship of Saddam is no longer with us’ Mr Brown said the UK &amp; Iraq was beginning a long term partnership of equals Brown: it is founded on our shared political cultural and economic interests, a secure prosperous and democratic Iraq able to exploit its own great economic potential and able to provide security for its people working closely with its neighbours and the rest of the international community Julian Manyon: Iran has let’s be frank, been the puppet master in a lot of the troubles that beset this region, Bill Neely: Basra, unstable, volatile, explosive, but today impassioned crowds are found at football not on the streets confronting troops. (football) Basra has changed Saddam’s palace is now an Iraqi army base. He is dead,. Basra’s stable, if a bit filthy, but the big question is, was all this worth it, was it worth the loss of 179 British lives?</p>