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**“The War on Terror”:  
The Making of Collective Memory by Young People in Canada**

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**“THE WAR ON TERROR”:  
THE MAKING OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN CANADA**

*By*

FARHAT SHAHZAD

A thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of  
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**ABSTRACT**

A generation of young people in Canada has grown up in the face of the so-called “War on Terror”. Where previous generations have confronted the Cold War or the World Wars, this is the war that has shaped today’s young people’s narratives of collective memory. My study investigates the following research questions: How young people in Canada understand “the War on Terror”? How they see “the War on Terror” affecting their lives and their constructions of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983)? How they make collective memories of “the War on Terror” based on these understandings? I collect my data in the form of written narratives, follow-up interviews, and demographic questionnaires. Building on theoretical models from the field of collective memory studies (Halbwachs, 1980; Wertsch, 2002), nationalism studies (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995), and cultural representations (Said, 1980; Hall, 1980, 1997, 2000, 2002), I explore the understandings, representations and experiences of young people in the form of the collective memories of “the War on Terror”. I find that the terrain of collective memory is like the topography. This topography has three main features: human agents, technologies of memory (Wertsch, 2002) and different social groups or communities. My participants construct collective memories through processes that involve a collectivity of significant ‘others’, including parents and teachers, or what I call ‘interpretative communities’. Significantly, the hegemonic narrative, according to the participants of my study, is not the official Canadian government’s narrative of “the War on Terror”, rather my participants reject the image of Canada as a military nation in favor of that of a multicultural peaceful nation. I also find that “the War on Terror” has personally affected the young Canadian Muslim participants of this study in ways that it has not the non-Muslim participants.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Young Peoples' Narratives of "the War on Terror"

This study emanates from my questioning the competition over the meanings attached to "the War on Terror" and the contested nature of collective memories. I put the phrase *the War on Terror* in quotation marks to show its problematic nature. I use the term because it is commonly used in the public sphere. My focus is on how young people understand this term. Whether there is in fact such a war, what its activities involve and what their effects are in reality, are matters that go beyond this thesis.

I started to conceptualize this study during the summer vacations of 2007 when my family was passing under the bridge spanning the Highway of Heroes in CFB Trenton. As usual, our children were half asleep and in a pretty bad mood after almost five hours of driving from Ottawa to Toronto. Suddenly, a group of people caught their attention on the bridge with Canadian flags in their hands. Are they celebrating something with those Canadian flags, my children asked? I told them that they are paying tribute to the passing convoy of soldiers who had died during the war in Afghanistan. The people were publically remembering and mourning the deaths of those Canadians who had lost their lives in "the War on Terror".

As I turned back around in my seat, I thought to myself. How does "the War on Terror" manifest itself in this place by creating this site of memory near CFB Trenton? How has this bridge become a sacred space, demarcated by Canadian flags as a symbol and constructed through performances of collective remembering? Sites of memory such as the Highway of Heroes near CFB Trenton provide people with a site for physical gathering to remember the shared part of the group experience. People gathered over the bridge on the Highways of Heroes,

whenever the convoy of soldiers killed in Afghanistan passes by, and marked the area with Canadian flags in their hands (Burnett, 2008). Practices like this link individuals through shared acts of remembering and mourning. Another question came into my mind, what sort of collective narrative leads to so many people responding with such strong emotions? In turn, this question reminded me of Wertsch's claim that what makes collective memory "collective" in cases like these is that the same narrative tools are shared by members of a group (2008).

My daughter interrupted my silent musing and asked another question. "Why are those cruel people killing Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan?" This time, her question reminded me Judith Butler's argument, that the ability to publically mourn the deaths of certain people dehumanizes others. In her work, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence*, Butler repositions the debate on remembering the dead of 9/11 around the questions, "Who counts as humans?", "Whose lives count as lives?", and "What makes for a grievable life"? Butler (2004) observes that a 'hierarchy of grief' structures the ability to mourn and thus the inclusion or exclusion of individuals from the human category. The dead of 9/11 were named and grieved individually while "there are no obituaries for the war casualties that the United States inflicts" (p. 34). That night, on TV, I watched the responses of some of the people who used to participate regularly in those performances of collective remembering on the bridge above the Highway of Heroes. They had their own cultural understandings, stories and heroes of "the War on Terror". An active imagining of a community was taking place there by grieving their dead individually, in which the soldiers they did not know became a member of their family, their community.

These performances arose in response to "the War on Terror. In this study, I explore if this is the only or dominant response available in Canadian society concerning the war. I am curious about the kinds of language and knowledge that might underpin a discursive competition

over the meanings of events related to “the War on Terror”. For example, in Vancouver, an anti-war, anti-occupation demonstration in March 2006 presented “the War on Terror” as an Imperialist war: ‘Against the Imperialist War Drive,’ read posters produced by the organizers, Mobilization against War and Occupation (<http://www.mabovancouver.org>). I start my research project with the assumption that there may be some other responses or narratives of this war in the Canadian society.

My interest in exploring narratives of “the War on Terror” is rooted in my own multiple and porous identities. I belong to the Canadian Muslim diaspora, which has been labeled and categorized in particular ways in relation to this so-called war. I am a Pakistani woman who has seen the direct and horrible effects of government-organized campaigns against alleged terrorists on the lives of people in Pakistan and Afghanistan. I am a researcher who is interested in exploring how young people in Canada respond to the War and/or what sort of larger cultural understandings young people in Canada share in the form of collective memories of “the War on Terror”. As a teacher, I hope that my work will in some way help to stimulate substantive discussions, dissent, arguments, questioning and critical thinking- the real stuff of *education*. I believe that it is never too late to create a space for a critical community. This study is an attempt to create such space in which students’ collective memories may serve as a tool to stimulate and start a dialogue about sensitive issues of wars, terrorism, and peace in our multicultural classrooms. Consequently this study aims to illuminate some of the intricacies of these processes at the micro-level.

The memories of students are documented in the form of narratives of “the War on Terror” in this study. These narratives convey different messages about who we are, and where we might be headed as a nation. As Seixas (2004) mentions:

There are too many origins, too many heroes, and too many stories. We cannot escape the knowledge that there are different, but legitimate, ways to put them together, that convey very different messages about who we are, where we have been, and where we might be headed. (p. 21)

Among so many narratives, there is one narrative that the young people in Canada grew up with. It is the narrative of “the War on Terror”. A generation of young people in Canada has grown up in the face of the so-called War on Terror. Where previous generations have confronted the Cold War or the World Wars, this is the war with which today’s young people have come of age. Yet we know little of how young people in Canada understand this war and/or how this war affects their lives. Consider for example, the response of one of the young people in my study:

I remember back in grade six when 9/11 occurred. I was eating [my] lunch and the teacher busted in and said [that] a plane had crashed into two important buildings. I had no idea what she was talking about so I went about finishing my lunch. That night I was so scared. I had a nightmare that a plane was coming to get me. My parents [watched] the news all [that] day and night. They were sent home from work because they worked in an important government building.

Me and the rest of my generation grew up with the 2001, [and] 2003 initiations of the War on Terror. I wanted to join the army to help because I felt [that] it was my duty to protect my family from terrorists. (Participant #15)

According to this young Canadian, his whole generation grew up with this war. Another representative of this Canadian generation gives her response in a more emotional way:

Even seven years later, I still find the War on Terror difficult to completely grasp. The innocent civilians who, over the past seven years, have died just because of this war are equally important as humans. What affects me the most personally about the War on Terror is opening the newspaper and seeing another soldier’s death. I now feel completely insensitive to these deaths because they have become so common. This is an emotion that seriously disturbs me. It has become a routine to read about deaths in the [news] paper. It has become impossible to envision a war without such things. As the years go on, this war appear[s] to be rooted deeper and deeper in our society. The longer

it goes on, the more permanent its effects would become. This is a society I don't want for my future generations because I remember how it started seven years ago and [it] continues to haunt me to this day. (Participant #37)

These responses are collected as a part of my research project that deals with the collective memories of young Canadian people in relation to “the War on Terror”. As a teacher, I am aware of the importance of the lived experiences of students in their academic, political and social lives and in particular, their actions. Students bring with them to schools their memories, preconceptions and the narratives of their lived experiences—all of which influence and give meaning to what they will learn inside and outside of the classroom. The role of students’ memories and their lived experiences in the process of learning is the most important factor that leads me to do a research project that asks how young people understand “the War on Terror”.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

After the events of 9/11, the historical tension between the West and the Muslim World that earlier scholars noted (Miles, 1989; Said, 1978) became more intense. This tension was eventually transformed into “the War on Terror”. I want to mention here that my research project has nothing to do with what “the War on Terror” is, or what its purposes are. Rather, the purpose of my research project is to explore the war from the perspective of young people in Canada, who have grown-up alongside this war. The War on Terror is a contested term as is the phenomenon of terrorism itself. As Spivak (2004) says:

When the soldier is not afraid to die, s/he is brave. When the terrorist is not afraid to die, s/he is a coward. The soldier kills, or is supposed to kill, designated persons. The terrorist kills, or may kill, just persons. In the space between “terrorism” as a social movement and terror as an affect, we can declare victory. (p. 92)

Spivak talks about the contested meanings attached to the label of “terrorist”. There is a foggy area between the parameters of the label “soldier” and “terrorist” as their function is the same “to

kill”. I am interested in exploring whether young people in Canada consider the phenomenon of terrorism as a contested one or not. Where do they stand in this space between terror and terrorism?

Terrorism as a phenomenon has become a new focal point in our current socio-political and academic spheres. The events of 9/11 have been a critical factor in “terrorism” becoming an academic industry (Inayatullah, 2009). In turn, its development is neither linear nor does it have a specific starting point. There is no commonly agreed upon definition of terrorism (Betts, 2002, p. 19). The phenomenon of terrorism emerged from a complex set of historical and political dynamics. Spivak (2004) argues that the U.S “is fighting an abstract enemy: terrorism. Definitions in Government handbooks, or UN documents, explain little. The war is part of an alibi every imperialism has given itself, a civilizing mission carried to the extreme, as it always must be” (p. 91). Absence of a proper definition of the term ‘terrorism’ highlights the need to trace out the historical roots of this term.<sup>1</sup>

The term ‘terrorism’ was first widely used in the context of the French Revolution (Hoffman, 2003, p. 15). Although it then had opposite meanings attached to it as compared to descriptions of terrorism commonly used nowadays. One of the first descriptions of terrorism was delivered in the twentieth century. Beyer (2008) states, “On 16 November 1937, an expert committee submitted the ‘Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism’ to the League of Nations for signature” (p. 70). The international community could not establish a universal definition because no one except India ever ratified the convention. In the 1980s, Alex P. Schmidt tried to establish a universal definition of the term ‘terrorism’, and ended up

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<sup>1</sup> (For a detailed discussion about how to define terrorism and to look at the development of the term see Beyer, 2008; Hoffman, 2003).

with a hundred different descriptions of the term. Absence of a structured explanation of this phenomenon still poses challenges for practitioners and scholars seeking to understand and explore the issue of terrorism. Inayatullah (2009) mentions, “The current context is that individuals and collectivities throughout the world are far from agreeing on the nature and causes of terrorism (and indeed on who are the terrorists-state versus group/wholesale versus retail)” (p. 248). The actual purpose of my study is not to review the historical roots and development of the term of terrorism because this is beyond the scope of my research project. For those who are interested in this issue, Dennis Piskiewicz’s book *Terrorism’s War with America: A History* provides its readers with a detailed account of the issue. The book follows the evolution of terrorism from a disorganized rebel strategy through its use by nationalists and insurgents and “rogue” states, to its more recent appearance. It also examines what the United States has done (and not done) over the decades before 9/11, in terms of its respective strategies for dealing with its unconventional enemies in its war with terrorism. For most Americans, Piskiewicz (2003) mentions, “terrorism made the transformation from theoretical threat to frightening reality on September 11, 2001. The murderous tragic events of that day began the United States’ “War on Terrorism” (p. 1). Drawing on diverse textual resources he suggests that “the War on Terror” actually began four decades before the events of 9/11.<sup>2</sup>

After the events of 9/11, the Canadian government created its first anti-terrorism legislation defining what terrorism is. The Anti-terrorism Act (ATA) is one of several pieces of legislation that form the Government of Canada’s overall anti-terrorism strategy. The law’s

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<sup>2</sup> A variety of literature is available about the events of 9/11 with diverse perspectives. For the official narrative of 9/11, see *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Kean-Zelikow Report, 2004). New York: W.W. Norton & Co. For a critique of this report see David Ray Griffin (2005). *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*. Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press. For the response of Muslim Community in the United States see Anny Bakalian & Medi Bozorgmehr (2009). *Blacklash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslims Americans Respond*. California: University of California Press.

definition of terrorism is called the motive clause. This clause defines a terrorist act as one committed “for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause.” The Anti-terrorism Act (Bills C-36 and C-42) was the subject of heated debate and controversy in the House of Commons and the Senate. Because there were two problems with that definition: it could lead to profiling of people of a particular religion, Islam especially, and it could be difficult for prosecutors to provide evidence of a suspect’s personal beliefs. On Oct. 24, 2006, a Superior Court judge struck down the motive clause, saying it violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (<http://www.justice.gc.ca/antiter/home-accueil-eng.asp>). As we have seen the term terrorism itself is contested and produces another contested subject of response “the War on Terror”.

The terrain of “the War on Terror” is contested because it is a human geography. Power dynamics is involved in the construction of human geographies. Ingram & Dodds (2009) tell us:

Human geographies are also geometries of power, these geometries have to be continually remade, and people invariably find ways to re-imagine and contest them, albeit in different ways and to different extents. Creativity, ingenuity, hopes, care and disrespect often coexist with a blanket refusal to stick to the scripts handed down by power holders. (p. 11)

People find different ways to re-imagine and contest meanings attached to “the War on Terror”. Even though there is no consensus among different countries or communities about its real purpose and effects. Consider an example that may help you to understand the contested nature of this war and how people may refuse to stick to the scripts handed down by those in power. In May 2004, British war graves were vandalized in France, Iraq and Gaza, as a protest against the alleged torture of Iraqis by British soldiers, who were enforcing an occupation of Iraq of which George W. Bush was the chief architect (Megoran, 2009, p. 65-66). This event illustrates how “the War on Terror” and the resistance to it manifest themselves in a variety of ways. The same

is true for the effects of this war. The War on Terror has not affected different people and different places with the same intensity or in a uniform manner. Ingram & Dodds (2009) discuss:

While we are mindful of the globalizing nature of the war on terror and related security projects, we are also unwilling to assume that people and places are affected equally or unable or unwilling to contest things. Indeed, opposition and alternative visions have been manifest in a whole variety of ways. (p. 11)

This is the backdrop of narratives that circulate about “the War on Terror” and shape my participants’ understandings. The phrase *War on Terror* does not denote a non-contested and coherent referent object, but is caught up in complex discursive struggles for legitimacy. The American Congress passed a resolution on September 14, 2001. This resolution opened up the avenue; that has different meanings for different people, communities, and countries. As it turned out, Inayatullah (2009) argues, “the avenue that was chosen was war—war against the Hussain regime in Iraq, against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and against al Qaeda and al Qaeda-inspired groups throughout the world” (p. 249). This war began as an effort to find military solutions to terrorism. Morton (2007) says, “Rallying his shocked and frightened country, President George W. Bush Declared an unlimited war on terror. Any nation that did not wholeheartedly back the United States in this war would be treated as an enemy” (p. 359). The United States of America attacked Afghanistan. Nonetheless, at the outset, even Britain and France expressed reservations about the proof of the Taliban’s complicity in the incident. According to El-Khawas (2007), phase one of the war started when:

The U.S. went to the United Nations and obtained Security Council approval to take military action against the perpetrators who were behind the 9/11 attacks. Within a week after the attacks, Bush authorized the CIA to kill, capture and detain members of al Qaeda anywhere in the world. (p. 79)

In phase one of the war, the attack on Afghanistan was legitimized in the name of fundamentalist

terrorism. The attack on Iraq opened what Richard Perle (a leading Republican figure and former secretary of defence) had referred to in early November 2001 as 'phase two' of the war on terror (Ehteshami, 2006, p. 110). Canada decided to stay out of this second phase of "the War on Terror", while actively participating in the war in Afghanistan.

Why did Canada decide to follow the United States of America in Afghanistan? Morton (2007), in his updated edition of the book *A Military History of Canada*, discusses why Canada could not adopt a neutral position in "the War on Terror". He explains how Canada's 1988 decision to link its trade as well as its defences to the world's most powerful neighbour country left the Canadian government no choice but to follow the American government in this war. NATO also plays an important role in this war as an ally of the United States of America, while playing a far smaller role in Iraq. Today the war in Afghanistan is expanding, killing thousands of innocent Afghan men, women and children. Many Canadians are fully behind this project, just as many Canadians strongly supported British imperialism and colonialism. But other Canadians are not at all proud of the role of their government and military in this poor country. The latest Ekos Research poll shows 34% of Canadians support the mission in Afghanistan and 49% oppose (Warnock, 2010).

Whereas the Bush administration sought to frame the March 2003 invasion of Iraq as part of "the War on Terror", the alliance remained deeply split and did not formally participate in the invasion. Since then, British, Canadian, and Dutch ground forces have been engaged in counterinsurgency operations (de Nevers, 2007). The War is still rages on and producing multiple narratives of the war. A variety of literature is available about the narratives of "the War on Terror" (Duffy, 2005; Colas & Saull, 2006; Miller & Stefanova, 2007; Hughes, 2007). Much of what has been published about the War to date focuses on the politics of the war. People are

continuously representing this war in the context of its objectives, importance, and inevitability from the perspective of policy-makers and elites.

The purpose of my research project is to turn the discussion of “the War on Terror” from the perspective of those who are in power<sup>3</sup>, to the perspective of young people in Canada about this war. The War on Terror is continuously producing and colonizing different sites of collective memory, such as the Ground Zero in the U.S.A. or the Highway of Heroes in CFB Trenton (Ontario). However, my interest lies in the fact that both collective memories and “the War on Terror” are contested and, for their most parts, un-discovered topographies. My main interest is in what Bodnar (1993) calls the “vernacular memories” of young people in Canada. Bodnar (1993) differentiates between vernacular and official representations. Vernacular memories originate from people and are used to explain those events that most immediately impact the masses (e.g., “the War on Terror”). Official memories originate from powerful groups and are used to provide a sense of common venture and purpose. Bodnar’s classification between official and vernacular memories may serve as a conceptual lens to address the proposed research questions. My project deals with the narratives of collective memories originating from young people in Canada, to explore how they understand “the War on Terror” and how the event has affected their lives.

I sought out the responses to the aforementioned questions through a combination of methods, however, collective narratives are the main source of data collection. These narratives are nested within and among each other and those in turn are situated within a layer of societal

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<sup>3</sup> Anne Aldis & Graeme P. Herd (Eds.). (2007). *The Ideological War on Terror: Worldwide Strategies for Counter-Terrorism*. London: Routledge. Christopher Ankersen (Ed.). (2007). *Understanding Global Terror*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Tore Bjørgo (Ed.). (2005). *The Roots of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*. London: Routledge. Tilman Brück (Ed.). (2007). *The Economic Analysis of Terrorism*. London: Routledge. Bruce Hoffman (2008). The Myth of Grass-Roots Terrorism: Why Osama Bin Laden Still Matters. *Foreign Affairs*, 87(3), at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080501fareview/essay87310/bruce-hoffman/the-myth-of-grass-roots-terrorism.html>. Peter R. Neumann & M.L.R. Smith (2008). *The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works and Why it Fails*. London: Routledge.

narrative, formulating their own lives (and the lives of others) into narratives in order to make meaning of them (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 5). These narratives have some of their own unique properties that can be added to the collection of knowledge for future use. According to Bruner (1990), this is how humans make meaning of situations from birth on through life, by collecting unique experiences and drawing on them at another time. I will situate the concept of narrative more explicitly later in the dissertation.

I use critical discourse analysis in this study and focus on the text and rhetorical style of my participants. I analyze these narratives to see how my participants adopt different subject positions, and whether these positions are the same, oppositional or are overlapping each other. This analysis occurs through a recursive process of negotiating and renegotiating meanings (Bruner, 1986). My analytical priority is to remain open towards competing explanations (Czarniawska, 2004) or interpretations given by my participants. Although this dissertation focuses on young people living in Ontario, I think research in this area could be replicated anywhere in the country and has important significance for different groups of people. For example, how do Canadian senior citizens, or the people in the Canadian Armed Forces, or in particular the soldiers who took part in the war of Afghanistan understand this war? What are the effects of the events of 9/11 on the lives of Canadian people? With these questions in mind, let us now examine the significance such research might have for teachers.

### **Significance and Implications for Teaching**

The reason to choose young people as the participants for my study is situated in my professional background. As a teacher, I believe that young people are not passive consumers of knowledge, nor do they blindly accept the interpretations, decisions, and conclusions put forth by others. They are capable of using their agency in a way that helps them to construct knowledge

from a variety of sources, to evaluate the reliability of these sources, and to make their own decisions and conclusions. These abilities are particularly important in our contemporary global political system that have created an environment in which terror and violence have become tools of political, social and historical changes. Sometimes we assume that young people can apply critical perspectives and make reflective judgments about controversial political issues of the past but cannot apply the same abilities to controversial and contemporary political issues (Barton & McCully, 2003). I am interested in young people's understanding of the accounts of a contemporary political, social and historical issue to determine whether in fact they can make critical judgments about the present or not.

Unlike Wertsch (2002) who focused on the modern state as the producer of official narratives, in this dissertation I focus on the narratives produced by young people in Canada. In order to address this claim concretely, I will try to clarify why the concept of narrative works well for my empirical work in the field of collective memory studies. Nature and the World do not tell stories, people do. Human agency determines what gets included and excluded in narrativization, how events are plotted, and what they are supposed to mean (Riessman, 1993). As children the first and most natural form of discourse we learn is narrativization. This research may help teachers to sort out how they can really put forward new stories to young people that will make them think about the World and other cultures from more than one angle, and how they can nurture young people who are not trapped in obsolete narratives, mistaken identities, and univocal representations of the complexity of our country (Letourneau, 2006).

In this dissertation I focus on the role of narratives as a technology of collective memory (Wertsch, 2002) used by young people in Canada as a means for remembering and understanding "the War on Terror". Moreover, I want to learn about their memories in relation to this war in

terms of how their memories resemble and/or are at odds with each other. “While totalitarian states”, Irwin-Zarecka (2007) points out:

are an extreme case of silencing the private sphere, theirs is not a unique monopoly on public discourse. In democratic societies we also find large sectors of the population not having a voice in the public forum. If the recent efforts at ‘empowerment’ of marginal groups are any indication, these groups would often harbour memories sharply at odds with the established canons. (p. 73)

I am also interested in exploring if young Muslim Canadians harbor memories of the war at odds with the established canons in the Canadian society. As a human being committed to social justice and peace I want to contribute to the crucial debate about how human society should respond to terrorism and whether it considers counter-terrorism as the best solution to crush terrorism. I hope that my research will help teachers to explore how the narratives of “the War on Terror” give voice to the silence around us which may enable students to ask sensitive questions around the issues of war, peace, terrorism and their impacts on their lives. The ability to ask questions is more important for me as a teacher than providing answers, because it enables human beings to open new windows in what Rorty (1993) calls semantic monads. According to him, communities act as semantic monads when they refuse to open new channels of communication. I think that critical questioning is the most effective pedagogical tool we can use to open new windows in our society.

These narratives of young people have a great deal to offer the academy, by showing how knowledge is constructed in the everyday world and how it is influenced by socio-political context and collective memories. This study demonstrates the need for both teachers and researchers to be mindful of the similarities and the differences in collective memories when addressing memory discourse.

Remembering is a very complicated process, but at the same time, the relationships between collective memories and the cultural representations are also not simple. This study attempts to understand how young people in Canada use different cultural representations of “the War on Terror” to construct collective memory. This understanding is important because it serves as a pedagogical tool to study how people beyond the history profession understand historical phenomena (Seixas, 2004). Both Létourneau and Wertsch explored the relationships between collective memory and collective narratives of historical phenomena but they did not give as much attention to the issue of the construction of collective memories. I hope that my findings will help people to get an in-depth understanding of how collective narratives of “the War on Terror” are constructed, shaped and transmitted, and how young people in Canada make sense of them as a historical discourse. I design the following research questions to reveal different facets of my participants’ experiences and understandings of “the War on Terror”.

### **The Research Questions**

My research questions changed as I proceed in my investigation. In the beginning, I was interested in investigating the process by which collective memory circulates in Canadian society within the context of “the War on Terror”. Létourneau (2006) mentions: “Yet, very few studies have been done to understand the process by which historical collective memory circulating in a society would be grasped by people living in that society” (p. 80). As a result, I had the following research questions in mind, when I entered the research field:

1. How do young people in Canada consume and negotiate representations of “the War on Terror”?
2. What roles do different technologies of collective memory play in the construction of the collective narratives of “the War on Terror”?

However, after going through the steps of data collection and data analysis, I discovered that the range of my participants' answers was greater than that of the research questions mentioned above, and the meanings the participants attached to their narratives of "the War on Terror" were more complicated than I expected at the beginning of my project. As a result, I ended up with the following research questions for my project. The questions below are the ones that guided my analysis:

1. How do my participants understand "the War on Terror"?
2. How do the participants of this study emplot the narrative of "the War on Terror"?
3. How do my participants use a nationalist deixis in their narratives?
4. How do my participants construct collective memories of "the War on Terror"?

With these research questions in mind, let us now take a look at a brief description of how I organized my thesis to address these questions.

### **The Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized in seven chapters followed by a reference section and appendices.

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides a review of the literature related to the field of collective memory studies, narratives, representations and nationalism studies. This literature review provides a conceptual framework, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and most importantly theories that supported and informed any attempts to address the aforementioned research questions.

Chapter 2 details my methodology or what I actually did to conduct this research project. This includes the choice of research sites to collect data and participants' selection, the research design, and the methods of data collection. It concludes with a description of how the data was analyzed.

Chapter 3 presents a descriptive analysis of my data, which comprised of 99 narratives written by my participants plus four follow-up interviews. This chapter provides with the details of the emplotment in the narratives of my participants such as the main events and the characters involved in this war. This chapter basically presents the content of narrative of “the War on Terror” represented by my participants, while also paying attention to the different types of narrative arcs in their narratives.

Chapter 4 presents the critical discourse analysis of the narrative of “the War on Terror”. In this chapter I have discussed in detail the political positions of my participants on the nature and the purpose of “the War on Terror”, and in particular their positions on the American involvement in Iraq and the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. This chapter also explores the effects of this war on young Canadian people’s lives.

Chapter 5 analyzes the rhetorical style used by the participants to position themselves, the main characters of the war, and their readers in their responses. I focus on how my participants are using the nationalist deixis (Billig, 1995) to construct an imagined community (Anderson, 1983) of the Canadian nation. This chapter concludes with the fact that the dominant narrative is not the narrative of “the War on Terror”; but rather it is the narrative of Canadian nationalism that enters into the narrative of the war in different forms and from different places.

Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the data to understand how my participants make collective memories within the context of “the War on Terror”. In this chapter I have analyzed in detail the nature of the collective memories of the war, the processes of consumption and negotiation with different representations of war, and what roles different technologies of memory play in these processes. This chapter explores a third element apart from human agents and technologies of memory, involves in making of collective memory. This element is

“interpretative communities”<sup>4</sup> comprised of different influential social groups in young people’s lives.

Chapter 7 concludes this research project. The conclusion presents a brief discussion of my research findings and what I have contributed to the knowledge base as a result of my work on this study. This final chapter also includes the implications of this research project for teaching and learning and for future research.

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<sup>4</sup> Stanley Fish coined the term “interpretive community” in his most famous essay, “Interpreting the Variorum”, first published in 1976. Fish’s theory states that a text does not have meaning outside of a set of cultural assumptions regarding both what the characters mean and how they should be interpreted. This cultural context often includes authorial intent, though it is not limited to it. Fish claims that we interpret texts because we are part of an interpretive community that gives us a particular way of reading a text.

## CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

My main interest lies in exploring how young people in Canada construct collective memories of “the War on Terror”. I begin this review with an exploration of the field of collective memory studies. Then I look at narratives as a technology of collective memory in order to understand the kinds of narratives my participants may use to construct knowledge about the war on Terror. After that, I review the literature on representation of Islam/Muslims in order to compare if there are any similarities or differences among the narratives of my Muslim and non-Muslim participants, particularly in relation to the effects of this war on their lives. In the last section I review the existing literature on nationalism studies highlighting the specific role of language in the construction of an *Imagined Community* of nation.

In many ways this literature review informs the findings as well as the ways in which the findings contribute to the different fields of work such as nationalism studies, and in particular, the field of collective memory studies. Collective memory is a crucial theoretical concept that informs the conceptual framing of my research project. Theories of collective memory helped me to understand what my participants have to tell me, and how they understand “the War on Terror”. In the next section of this literature review, I outline the meaning of the key terms and concepts that surface repeatedly in the analysis of my participants’ narratives of “the War on Terror”. By beginning with how different theorists understand and explain these terms and concepts, I explain my analysis of the data and its relationship to the conceptual framework. Consequently, the literature review is organized around the following terms: “collective memory,” “technologies of memory,” and “representations.” My interest in the field of collective memory studies is due to the fact that it seeks to understand the pedagogical role memories play in how people understand, interpret and represent the world around them. It is by relating past to

present, Lowenthal (1985) tells us that:

memories become important to us. Memories are not ready-made reflections of the past, but eclectic, selective reconstructions based on subsequent actions and perceptions and on ever-changing codes by which we delineate, symbolize, and classify the world around us. (p. 210)

Therefore in the following section of this chapter, I review the major theories of collective memory that helped me to understand how collective memories are vitally concerned with representations of the past and their links to our present. I also pay attention to some specific concerns about collective memory studies.

### **What is Collective Memory**

Philosophers have been writing about problems of memory for centuries, and psychologists have been studying the issues empirically for decades (Roediger & Wertsch, 2008). An isolated attempt to measure forgetting by Ebbinghaus in 1885 has spawned an entire industry of research into the nature of remembering itself (Casey, 1987). Since then, the concept of collective memory is developing and is open to what Nora (1998) calls the dialectic of remembering and forgetting at the same time.

The development of the concept of collective memory as a social construction can be traced back to Emile Durkheim. Here, Durkheim (1968) mentions memory solely in relation to traditional societies. Such traditional societies wanted to preserve a sacred memory of their origin. In *Education and Society*, he addresses memory directly in his discussion of commemorative rituals. Although, he never uses the term “collective memory.” Durkheim notes that societies require continuity and connection with the past to preserve social unity and cohesion in the present. His study of religious practices suggests that rituals transmit beliefs, values and norms. The shared rituals provide us with a sense of collectivity, a transcendence of

the individual and the profane into a united sacred group. Durkheim (1968) states that collective thought requires individuals to physically join together to create a common feeling shared by the group. Since collective experience requires physical gathering, it is important for groups to devise methods of extending that unity when the group disbanded. He believes that totems, natural items that have been deemed sacred, hold immense power and suggests that they provide people with a device to individually remember the shared part of the group experience. Although Durkheim claims that the collective experience provides the transmittal of the past to the present, his emphasis on collective thought is based upon individual memory, the rituals and totems that trigger those memories.

Ernst Renan (1990 [1882]) discusses the role of forgetting and remembering in the construction of national identities, and points out that nations could be characterized by the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories. If you take a city such as Salonica or Smyrna, Renan (1990) argues:

You will find there five or six communities each of which has its own memories and which have almost nothing in common. Yet the essence of a nation is not only that its members have many things in common, but also that they have forgotten some things. (p. 328)

He elaborates his argument with an example from French history that each and every French citizen may not know whether he is a Burgundian or an Alan, yet every citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Renan was mainly interested in the construction of national identities as compared to memories.

One of Durkheim's students, Halbwachs actually expands his idea of collective memory beyond its original connection with rituals. Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) is responsible for the introduction of the concept of collective memory into the field of sociology. His definition of collective memory is more than a mere application of Durkheim's theorizing of collective

memory as a *social fact* that confers identity on individuals and groups (Misztal, 2003). He provides an initial theoretical foundation of the concept of collective memory. Halbwachs (1980) says, “Our memories remain collective, however, and are recalled to us through others even though only we were participants in the events or saw the things concerned. In reality, we are never alone” (p. 23). He also suggests that individual memory is constructed within social structures and institutions and argues that the only individual memories that are not constructed through the group context are images from dreams. He believes that dreams are different from virtually every other human thought because they lack structure and organization. Individuals organize and understand events and concepts within a social context, thus they then remember them in a way that “rationally” orders and organizes them through that same social construction. Halbwachs further developed Durkheim’s concept of preservation of collective experiences during periods of group isolation and social calm. Durkheim (1968) states that totems provided a continual reminder of collective experiences to members of the group. Halbwachs expanded the idea of totems to include commemorative events that serve as reminders of a collective memory. He suggests that commemorative events are important to reinforce autobiographical memories, otherwise memories faded with time without periodic memory reinforcement. Thus, the annual anniversary commemorations of September 11th, gatherings of the survivors and other people who did not directly experience the attacks, provide continued memory reinforcement with the roll call of the dead, bagpipes, recitations and floral offerings. The event becomes a collective norm for those who did not experience it directly.

Finally, Halbwachs departs from Durkheim’s approach by adopting a presentist approach to collective memory. A presentist approach states that social constructions of memory are influenced by the requirements and agendas of the present (Misztal, 2003). Halbwachs (1980)

stated that collective memory is shaped by present issues and understanding. Groups select different memories to explain current issues and concerns. In order to explain the present, individuals of a group reconstruct a past using rationalization to choose some events for remembrance, eliminate others, and rearrange events. Collective memory is defined, most often by Maurice Halbwachs, as a group's memory of its own past, which allows it to define its identity in relation to other social groups (Fine, 2005).

Pierre Nora (1998) expands upon Halbwachs' presentist approach by stating that collective memories are used by groups to interpret the past and yet, these memories become detached from the past. Nora further claims that groups select certain dates and people to commemorate, deliberately eliminate others from representation (collective amnesia), and invent traditions to support the collective memory. He notes that the representations of collective memory are those that have been selected by those in power. Thus, collective memory is both a tool and an object of power. Nora claims that as modernity emerged, these traditions lost their social meaning and significance. As a consequence, he posits that elites in the society produced "simulations of natural memory" that supported emerging nation-states. I think that one cannot avoid Pierre Nora's (1984-92), intellectual contributions because he discarded the idea of master narratives privileged by historians in favor of a new symbolic way of studying history. His work reflects post-modern discourses and led him to explore French national sites of memory (monuments, battlefields, etc.). Nora's main objective in accomplishing this monumental project was to reconstruct a collective memory based on landmarks that previous generations had found significant (Howell, 2007). Lowenthal (1985) further extends the presentist approach in the field of collective memory studies. He suggests that national histories are constructed to address present interests, and cites the development and commodification of a heritage and nostalgia

industry in the British heritage sites as examples of this social construction. Lowenthal (1985) says:

Once aware that relics, history, and memory are continually refashioned, we are less inhibited by the past, less frustrated by a fruitless quest for sacrosanct originals... We can use the past fruitfully only when we realize that to inherit is also to transform. (p. 412)

Foucault (1977) also suggests that the postmodern de-sacralization of tradition has created a social void that has been filled with commemorative activity that is used as a tool of those in political power. Bodnar (1993) carries this presentist approach a step ahead and states that public memory is not an accurate representation of the past, but is focused upon the needs of both the present and the anticipated future.

Paul Connerton in, *How societies remember*, also follows the thread of Halbwachs's argument by treating memory as a social rather than an individual faculty. Connerton assumes that societies remember with the help of recollection and bodies and neglect the role of human agency and mediational means. Both Halbwachs and Connerton believe in the powerful role of society in the shaping of collective memory. But Halbwachs does not explain how these collective memories are passed on within the same social group from one generation to the next. Connerton (1989) admits, "He [Halbwachs] leaves us with no explicit sense that social groups are made up of a system, or systems of communication" (p. 38). This point is important in the context of my research project, as I will show in my data analysis.

The main challenge I face in my research project was to search for a meaningful conceptual framework for robust, empirically accessible notions of collective memory. It is not an easy challenge to deal with because the landscape of memory has become more contested today, as the memory wars consider alternative narratives a threat (e.g., the controversies over the documentary *The Valour and the Horror* in 1992 and the display about the Allied bombing of

Germany in the Canadian War Museum in 2007) and as specific aspects of experienced events are negotiated, negated, disputed, or denied (Hirst & Manier, 2008; Campbell, 2008). As compared to individual memories, collective memories are multiple and contested (Boehm, 2006; Connerton, 2008; Campbell, 2008; Reese & Fivush, 2008). For example, sometimes monuments or museum exhibits become sites of contestation. They provoke controversies over whose curricular version of the past is represented or whose is absent. A symbol of patriotism or national glory for one group can also be a source of pain, grief and exploitation for another group. For example, in April, 2007 the real controversy over the removal of “Bronze Soldier” between ethnic Russians and Estonians was due to two opposite readings of the monument. Here Soviet authorities saw it, Wertsch (2008) explains:

As a monument to those who died while liberating Tallinn in 1944, indeed it was officially dubbed the ‘Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn’. Ethnic Estonians, however, viewed it as a symbol of Soviet and Russian oppression of their nation. (p. 135)

Nonetheless, for Russians the statue was a monument of liberation. While for Estonians it was a statue of the “unknown rapist”. Just like this statue, most of the sites of memory articulate certain matters and are silent with respect to others due to the selective, multiple, and contested nature of collective memory. This process of selection appears to establish the alleged priority of the narrative employment of one group’s claim or it works to privilege one group’s narrative employment. This group generally has the institutional power and control over public discourses or to a particular site of memory. The contested nature of collective memory therefore becomes evident when more than one community declares equally passionate links to the same site of memory. Let me give you an example here. Consider the case of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Both Muslim and Jewish communities declare equally passionate links to this mosque. However, they represent different versions of the past about this site of collective

memory. Human beings represent things in the light of their multiple and contested memories.

Let us consider the example of the German collective memory in relation to its respective Nazi past. Here Eder & Spohn (2005) state:

There have been at least three mutually exclusive narratives of this past: the Western German one of the guilty Germans as a people, the Eastern German one of anti-fascist resistance, and the Austrian one of them being victims of the Germans. (p. 45)

These narratives were contested in each of the three communities, resulting in different collective memories. As a result, the dynamics of German collective memory can in part, be explained by the fact that it was contested and multiple. Multiple and contested nature of collective memories became more evident during the twentieth century. Collective memory was not absent before the twentieth century. From Bodnar's (1993) perspective, the twentieth century has seen the rise and subsequent diminution of governmental control of collective memory. In this age of localities, regionalization, multiple narratives, and contested collective memory, media and communication technologies have created an open space, for both individuals and groups other than the governments (Halas, 2008). I am interested in exploring how collective memories are constructed in this open space.

After Maurice Halbwachs's foundational work, different theories of collective memory have been presented in the field of sociology (Zerubavel, 2003), anthropology (Cole, 2001), psychology (Middleton & Brown, 2005), history (Bodnar, 1993), literary analysis (Young, 1993), and others. As a result, critique and deconstruction of traditional concepts, models and methodologies go hand in hand with emerging alternative concepts, models and methodologies in the field of collective memory. In unraveling the epistemic fabric of what the term 'memory' has meant in philosophical, historical and social contexts, as well as in everyday discourse, these investigations have pointed out that at stake is, first of all, a conceptual construction that is

meaningful (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008). James Wertsch (2002) addresses this concern by outlining the meaning of the term collective memory.

### **James Wertsch's Theory**

Collective remembering, according to Wertsch (2002), "is a process of mediation between human agents and different cultural tools or technologies of memory available in a particular socio-cultural setting" (p. 98). What makes collective memory collective is that the same narrative tools are shared by members of a group. Wertsch (2008) further elaborates, "These cultural tools, especially in the form of narratives, shape the speaking and thinking of individuals to such a degree that they can be viewed as serving as "co-authors" when reflecting on the past" (p. 139). Collective memories are not grounded in research that led members of a group to the same interpretation of any historical event or historical representations and what they stand for. Instead, collective memories are grounded in a shared "tool kit" that shaped what people thought and said. A tool kit that had been provided through formal education, public holidays, family discussions, the media, and so forth (Wertsch, 2008).

Wertsch (2002) provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for collective memory studies. His view of collective remembering stands in marked contrast to that of Maurice Halbwachs's classical view of collective memory. Halbwachs views collective memory as a stable phenomenon over time while considers history as change over time. Nonetheless, what are the tendencies and aspirations of collective memories? Researchers of collective memory claim that collective memories are subjective in nature, have single committed perspective, reflect a particular group's social framework, are not self-conscious, impatient with ambiguities about motives and the interpretation of events, deny "pastness" of events, link the past with the present, and ahistorical or rather antihistorical (Novick, 1988, 1999; Wertsch, 2002, 2008). Wertsch

(2008) claims that collective memory is dynamic and active. However, he also recognizes:

such claims apply to the level of specific narratives, which may indeed be in permanent evolution and involve successive deformations, but at the deeper level of schematic narrative templates a striking conservatism and resistance to change seems to prevail. (p. 142)

This distinction begs the question of what sort of narrative tools are involved in my study. For my purpose, Wertsch's distinction between "specific narratives" and "schematic narrative templates" is quite helpful. A specific narrative, Wertsch (2008) says:

includes concrete information about settings, times, characters, and events, while schematic narrative templates exist at an abstract level and involve little in the way of concrete detail, and interpretation relies heavily on abstract meaning structures not anchored in specific places, times, characters, or events. Any information that contradicts these schemas—is routinely distorted, simplified, and ignored. (p. 142)

My study relies heavily on specific narrative templates because the account provided by majority of the participants includes concrete information about settings, times, characters, and events.

The detail creates narrative arcs in their texts and this is what distinguishes a specific narrative from schematic narrative templates. Some of the responses of my participants are schematic in the sense that they exist at an abstract level and involve little in the way of concrete detail.

Wertsch (2002) has extended Halbwachs's claim by drawing on the ideas of Bakhtin and others about semiotic mediation. Specifically he argues, "the textual resources we employ in collective remembering always belong to, and hence reflect, a social context and history" (p. 172). There are three themes in Wertsch's theory: collective remembering is an active and material process; is essentially social; and dynamic in nature. In chapter six, I will lead you through how Wertsch's (1991; 2002) theory supports me in understanding how my participants consume and negotiate with different textual resources to make collective memories of "the War on Terror".

### **Proliferation of Collective Memory Studies**

The proliferation of collective memory studies actually gained pace in the twentieth century. According to Winter (2006), there occurred a rush towards memory studies at the end of the eighteenth century. He divided this development into three phases. The first phase is from 1890 to 1920, when the focus was on individual memories. Collective memories were discussed in relation to only rituals and objects. The second phase is one of the parallel developments of cultural activity surrounding the construction of what Halbwachs came to call collective memory, and the third phase starts by the 1970's, when new voices emerged with new memories. These were the new 'remembrancers', the new carriers of memory; they form a new singular collective that we term the witness. In particular, the traumatic experiences of World War II, and more specifically scholarly recognition of the imperative to record the testimony to the Holocaust also contributed to a renewed rush towards collective memory studies.

According to Nora, individualism and fragmentation related to postmodernism have played the role of catalysts in the proliferation of collective memory. Nora (1989) thinks, "Memory is constantly on our lips because it no longer exists" (p. 7). As a proof of this proliferation, Tulving (2007) provides a list by asking a question as the title of his article, 'Are there 256 kinds of memory?' He arrived at this number by keeping a list of phrases over many years in which *memory* was the noun and some other term was the modifier. He happened to write the essay when the number of terms hit 256, but if there is one fact of which we can be certain, it is that his list underestimates the actual number of terms. Certainly the future will see his list expanded. Nora (2002) gives many reasons for this proliferation of collective memory or "memorialism". Here, he argues:

It has taken many forms: criticism of official versions of history and the recovery of areas of history, previously repressed; demands for signs of a past that has been confiscated or suppressed; growing interest in 'roots' and genealogical research; all kinds of commemorative events and new museums; renewed sensitivity to the holding and opening of archives for public consultation; and growing attachment to what in the English-speaking world is called 'heritage' and in France 'patrimoine'. (p. 12)

I think that the proliferation of collective memory studies as a dynamic field of study is due to its potential to grasp public representations of the past, and in particular due to the role played by new technologies of memory like media and communication technologies in people's lives. Seixas (2004) says, "Memory studies, starting not with a focus on the practices of historians but with the beliefs of everyone else, have seen explosive growth in the past decade and a half" (p. 5). The proliferation of collective memory studies is also an effect of the techniques that make it possible to record and distribute various representations of past experiences immediately all over the world. That is why one may speak of an immediate history fabricated by the media that produces increasingly differentiated collective memories (Halas, 2008). In fact there are a variety of reasons for this proliferation of collective memory studies, and they all go to highlight that past events have no more single meanings and that a present that is overlaid with multiple accounts of the representations of past allows for narratives of vernacular memories (Bodnar, 1993). Despite all this development and proliferation, the field of collective memory is still facing numerous problems.

### **Problematizing Collective Memory Studies**

The field of collective memory is facing problems with respect to paradigmatic issues, methodology and conceptual framework. Even though we are living through a "memory boom" (Nora, 2002), the field of collective memory is criticized by some scholars due to some socio-political and theoretical concerns. According to these scholars, an obsession with the past has

pernicious social and political consequences (Maier, 2000; Hynes, 1999; Bell, 2002). For example, Bell (2002) has provided an account of the limitations of 'collective memory' as it is employed in the analysis of nationalism, and argues, "for some it is simply too vague to be of much use, conflating and confusing different phenomena' and subsuming historical complexity under an after all-embracing terminology" (p. 74). For Gedi & Elman (1996), "it is simply a fashionable label that has unnecessarily supplanted existing terms such as myth, consciousness, ideology, stereotype and so forth" (p. 127). Some other scholars are not that skeptical. Poole (2008) claims, "collective memories are fallible because there are no established procedures of reflection and criticism within the discipline, and because of this memory stands in need of correction, and the corrective is provided by the discipline of history" (p. 76). Nonetheless, the success of memory studies has not been accompanied by significant methodological advances in the field of research. Most of the studies done (Maier, 1988; Spillman, 1997; Winter & Sivan, 1999; Novick, 1999; Osborne, 2001; Winter, 2006; Bell, 2007) on collective memory focus on the representation of specific events or material structures, like monuments or museums, within particular chronological, geographical, and media settings without reflecting much on the structural mechanism that contributes to the recreation of collective past. Like Wertsch (2002), Kansteiner (2002) is also concerned about this problem and says that collective memory studies have not yet sufficiently conceptualized collective memories as distinct from individual memory. He further argues that collective memory studies have also not yet paid enough attention to the problem of reception both in terms of methods and sources. Therefore, works on specific collective memories often cannot illuminate the internal mechanism of collective memories..

Even clear definitions of collective memory are still difficult to find, and the proposed properties and boundaries of collective memory tend to vary between theorists depending on

their discipline and domain of analysis: collective memory is still “a term only beginning to emerge” (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 30). One of the views is that terminological confusion about collective memory is due to the multiplicity of relevant under theorized phenomena, not to their non-existence (Sutton, 2008). Olick (2008) still complains (after ten years of his work in 1998) about the ‘non-paradigmatic, trans-disciplinary, center-less’ qualities of the enterprise, qualities that seem to have persisted despite (or perhaps because of) the exponential growth of work on ‘collective memory’ and related topics. Olick (2008) points out two main problems in this regard:

First, so many of the questions about collective memory depend on a deeply interpretive understanding of rich historical materials and contexts (a condition that resists generalization, both because the empirical materials are historically unique and because few of us have expertise beyond one or two such contexts). Second, the numerous different disciplines employing the concept of collective memory and contributing to its refinement often have their own esoteric qualities, and distinct discourses. (p. 39)

These disciplines are not willing to compromise on their qualities and discourses. Lebow, Kansteiner, & Fogu (2006) indicate three main vectors in the field of collective memory:

First, collective memory studies are largely content oriented. Second, collective memory studies need a rigorous theoretical framework. Third, despite these shortcomings, collective memory studies constitute an ingenious intellectual hybrid that integrates seemingly contradictory epistemologies from classical hermeneutics to postmodern theory in a very productive fashion. (p. 238). I think that the real problem lies in the fact that to date, most analysis and discussion of collective memory tend to talk about collective memory at a broad level, where the “collective” in question is a nation or a culture (see Hirst & Manier, 2008). Moreover, most studies of collective memory have concerned very broad issues, including the role of collective memory in shaping cultural identity (Eyerman, 2004), in maintaining ethnic conflict (Cairns & Roe, 2003),

and in justifying political ideology (Misztal, 2005). The term “collective memory” has been used to refer to vastly different phenomena ranging from groups of three people remembering a simple narrative (Weldon & Bellinger, 1997), to the use of memory artifacts like museums, books, libraries, and language (Schudson, 1995), to national collective memory of Americans for Abraham Lincoln, a historical figure of whom no individual has a personal memory (Schwartz & Schuman, 2005).

To find a comprehensive term for the concept of collective memory as an independent field of study, scholars have used many terms such as “social memory”, “collective remembrance” and “popular history making”, or altogether rejected the need for new terminology in favor of the old-fashioned concept of “myth”. The list also includes terms such as “national memory”, “public memory” and “vernacular memory” (Fentress & Wickham, 1992; Winter & Sivan, 1999; Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Many of the contributors to *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* find the term “collective memory” unnecessarily vague and pursue other terminological strategies to solve the problem. Seixas (2004) highlights in his introduction that the contributors to *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* adopt an “inclusive notion of historical consciousness by incorporating all those modes of understanding that are included in ‘collective memory’” (p. 9). Seixas himself prefers to speak of “historical consciousness” because it appears to be virtually synonymous with collective memory, but with a more broad popular understanding of the past for him.

### **Solution to the Problems of Collective Memory Studies**

Different scholars suggest different solutions to the problems of collective memory. Tonkin (1992) suggests replacing the term *collective memory* with *social memory* in order, “to accommodate inequalities and changing affiliations while acknowledging the role of socializing

processes” (p. 126). The search for a more appropriate substitution is not merely an issue of semantic nuances but is indicative of conceptual differences. In the early 1980’s, a group of scholars in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham developed the term popular memory to advance a neo-Marxist model of two sets of dialectic relations between “popular” and “dominant” memory, and between “public” and “private” memories (Beiner, 2007). In an effort to explain the term, Halas (2008) argues:

In its collective aspect, memory is only a metaphor because there is no actual memory of a society as a whole. What is meant by the term are the processes of communication and symbolic representations of the past experiences of a group. (p. 105)

However, many scholars do not agree with this. For example, Lebow, Kansteiner, & Fogu (2006) assert:

Although collective memories have no organic basis and do not exist in any literal sense, the term collective memory is not simply a metaphorical expression. Collective memories originate from shared communications about the meaning of the past that are anchored in the life-worlds of individuals who partake in the communal life of the respective collective. (p. 291)

This definition situates collective memories into social context and distinguishes them from individual memories. While, Sutton (2008) does not believe in this segregation, she suggests an integrated and pluralistic framework for collective memory studies. Furthermore she argues, “we want to examine relations between memory-related phenomena empirically, as the focus for explicit study, rather than starting with any assumed division of proprietary labors between psychological and social sciences” (p. 57). It is a fact that both individual and collective memories not only run on parallel axes but also have a network in between. This network connects them through different nodes according to the context. However, Olick (2008) notes that despite “the mutual affirmations of psychologists who want more emphasis on the social and sociologists who want more emphasis on the cognitive, in fact actual cross-disciplinary research

has been much rarer than affirmations about its necessity and desirability” (p. 23). Olick calls for “at least a basic lexicon so that we do not all feel compelled to reinvent the wheel in our first footnotes, paragraphs or chapters” (2008, p. 22). In sum, the field of collective memory is still facing problems as a field of research due to a weak conceptual framework, methodological issues and clear meaning of the term. I think that the terminological, conceptual, and methodological problems of collective memory studies can only be negotiated by using empirical research, careful scholarship, and clear-sighted theoretical analyses.

### **Paradigmatic Issues in the Field of Collective Memory Studies**

To get closer to the particularity of collective memory research, I needed to focus on the paradigmatic issues around my research project. It is a fact that despite the proliferation of the work employing the term ‘collective memory’, the field retains non-paradigmatic, trans-disciplinary, center less qualities (Olick, 2008). To begin explorations of the complexities of the contested nature of collective memories as they are mediated through technologies of memory, it is necessary to adopt a dialogical approach towards paradigmatic issues. Many theorists argue in favor of cross-disciplinary research to solve paradigmatic issues in the field of collective memory (Olick, 2008; Radstone, 2008), and to design innovative ways of understanding representations of the past in order to study past, contemporary, and future collective memories. Sutton (2008) says, “there is a strategic room in memory studies for deterritorializing, refusing to privilege any particular location—whether in neurobiology or in narrative, in cognition or culture” (p. 23). Of course, to solve paradigmatic issues researchers need a grand synthesis of the various strands of contemporary theorizing about collective memory studies and an integration of different epistemologies that will win the allegiance of most theorists.

I have used mainly the work of sociologists because my research project is focused on the social and cultural use-value of collective memories. This focus enables me to experimentally examine how a specific group of people make collective memories in relation to “the War on Terror”. This approach has the advantage of allowing me to investigate the interaction between individuals as active agents and technologies of memory available in a particular socio-cultural setting, rather than considering individual and collective memory as two discrete systems or phenomena (Wertsch, 2002). This investigation is important because the collapse of time, space, and territoriality associated with globalization, media, and communication technologies are changing the dynamics of collective memory in the twenty-first century. Collective memories are becoming more dynamic, selected, multiple, shared, and contested in their nature.

### **Contested nature of Collective Memories**

In many circumstances, collective memories are situated in the social context. At the same time collective remembering is not a linear process of “encode-store-retrieve”. A transformation occurs, when human agents’ lived experiences, worldviews, interpretations and understandings intersect with different technologies of memory. Sahdra and Ross (2007) investigate this transformation when they discover that people who were linked firmly with a particular ethnic group experienced greater difficulty remembering those events in which their own group had committed violence than those who were not linked to that group, although both groups of participants displayed similar memory levels for positive events. This example shows why Bartlett (1995) reacted against the over simplicity of approaches taken by people like Ebbinghaus. According to him, memories can be shared but not necessarily in agreement regarding what happened. Even within the same generation and same society, individuals have very different and often conflicting viewpoints about the same event. Wertsch (2002) mentions:

It is also to be expected that the future will witness the emergence of new forms of collective remembering. In particular, it is likely that groups operating at levels other than the state will play new and more important role. (p. 175)

Aboriginal people's collective memories about residential schools in Canada or white people's settlement in Canada are examples of this new trend in the process of collective remembering in groups operating at levels other than the state. Bodnar (1993) has also shown how this had already begun to take place in the United States as ethnic groups, small communities, and other collectives took on increasingly important roles in the negotiation of collective memory during the twentieth century.

One of the most interesting sites of research, in the field of collective memory, are sites of collective memory as they have become the sites of contestation due to the presence of multiple identities and newly empowered alternative accounts of conflicting and heterogeneous pasts. The notion of 'site of memory' became known as the title of a seven-volume work edited by Pierre Nora. According to Nora (1989), a site or place of memory refers to the various symbolic 'sites' or cultural expressions of collective memory such as geographical regions, monuments, commemorative ceremonies, well-known personalities, political movements, institutions or social habits described by Nora as the "focal points of our national heritage". However, Nora is concerned less about how a site of collective memory may also be a site of contestation. Some of the most stirring symbols of French culture during the 1980s and 1990s such as the 'Islamic headscarf' (resulting from controversies over Muslim schoolgirls claiming the right to wear the veil in secular state schools or over social unrest in the immigrant ghettos of large cities) or the 'suburb' are absent from *Les Lieux de memoire* (Carrier, 2005). Some examples of the sites of the contestation over collective remembering include family issues (Reese & Fivush, 2008), museums (Boehm, 2006), monuments and memorials (Osborne, 2001),

history textbooks (Montgomery, 2005), and national holidays. For example, Stovall (2008) discusses:

The furor that erupted in reaction to Maya Lin's design for the Washington, DC memorial to Vietnam War veterans, to current debates about how to remember the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks, questions of how we remember and conceive of the past still have the power to excite controversy and passion. (p. 138)

Another example of the sites of contestation over collective remembering is the representations of the Aboriginal Canadians in Canadian museums, which has undergone fundamental change as newly empowered alternative memories of the past and their relationship to the present have emerged (Paul, 2006; McLeod, 2007). Rothberg (2007) suggests:

The presence of conflicting and heterogeneous pasts continues to haunt nations around the globe... Against this backdrop, the need for new ways of thinking about collective remembering in intercultural contexts must be recognized as matters of life and death. (p. 81)

However, a great deal of contestation is involved in the new ways of thinking about collective remembering. Consider the controversy around the display about the Allied bombing of Germany ... in the Canadian War museum, Ottawa. In 2007, plans were underway for an exhibit on the Allied bombing of Germany during the Second World War, but as the project unfolded, the "politics of memory" (Krammer, 1996) became increasingly heated as Canadian Veterans and eventually politicians became deeply embroiled in what Linenthal and Engelhardt (1996) call a "history war". In this case the controversy led to the resignation of the head of the museum in June 2007 ([www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/...war-museum-ceo-070625.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/...war-museum-ceo-070625.html)). Such contestations and controversies are at the center of many analysis of collective memory (Boehm, 2006). An attempt to understand the process of collective remembering can help us to explore sites of contestation like "the War on Terror" because some representations of this war are situated in the material technologies of memory like the mass media: materials often saturated

with pre-approved, government-sanctioned images of war. While on the other hand, Wiki Leaks' the Afghan Diary released on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2010, provides alternative narratives of the War on Terror. It is a compendium of over 91, 000 reports covering the war from 2004 to 2010. The outcome is a collage of both officially approved and alternative collective memories of the war.

In some cases, alternative narratives can be directed against the hegemony of the master narratives or official narratives and can create counter memory. A symbolic conflict can take place in a political context and usually counter memory is created by marginalized groups that remain in conflict with the mainstream society. Sometimes the situation is reversed. Groups engaged in a political conflict promote competing visions of the future (Zerubavel, 1995, p. 11). The concept of counter memory was introduced by Michel Foucault who pointed to the oppositional, subversive constructions of meanings of historical events. Foucault (1977) has argued for the development of "counter memory". Counter memory is a version of the past aimed at deconstructing the relations between knowledge and social powers. Counter or "unofficial" memory is a fragmentary and flexible narrative developing in continuous dialogue with the dominant institutional collective memory. However, by the very fact of its presence, this dialogue of the local, unclosed narrative with the official one continually challenges the authority of official narratives (Goldberg, Porat, & Schwarz, 2006).

Collective remembering of problematic episodes (e.g., "the War on Terror") may challenge selected narratives of the past and can pose a threat to the dominant power structures. As Beiner (2007) says, "Memory proves to be subversive so that, in the famous words of Milan Kundera, the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (p. 304). This struggle is an outcome of the process of mediation between humans as active agents and technologies of memory provided by the society. The history of memory is indissociably linked

with the complex story of the emergence of a bounded, coherent self who comes to be understood as the possessor of memories (Radstone & Hodgkin, 2003), who has agency and creativity to unlock the process of collective remembering. Human beings interpret, relate, select, record, share, and tell their memories with the help of different technologies of memory. Human agency plays particularly an important role in the selection and the particular use of a technology of memory.

Wulf Kansteiner (2010) raises a few questions in the recent issue of *Memory Studies* about the construction of collective memories, in relation to the work of some scholars (e.g., Welzer, 2010; Hower & Kut, 2010; Narine, 2010). He also mentions an agreement between these scholars about the relative powerlessness of individuals in processes of collective memory construction. Kansteiner (2010) asks:

If this consensus reflects matters on the ground, or if it is primarily a result of the thought styles of our still relatively young academic endeavours. Does it make any sense to raise once more questions about the concepts of the individual and the collective in social memory studies? (p. 3)

These questions have been asked by many scholars (Bell, 2002; Poole, 2008; Olick, 2008) and are extremely important for the field of collective memory studies. In this research project, I attempt to explore some possible answers of these questions. I also try to address Kansteiner's (2010, p. 4) concerns that if social memory exists exclusively in the form of communication between subjects (Welzer, 2010), would it not make sense to argue that some people have a lot more control over these communications than others? And how and under what circumstances do individuals and collectives escape the gravitational pull of powerful social master narratives and imagine the past in new formats and stories?

I argue that the terrain of collective memory is like the topography. The topography of collective memory is complex and uneven. Collective memory neither exists exclusively in the form of processes such as, communication between subjects (Welzer, 2010); participation in traditional rituals and the exchange of family stories (Ramos, 2010), nor can only be grasped through concepts of individual agency (Narine, 2010). The topography of collective memory is made up of a complex terrain that includes human agency, a toolkit (Wertsch, 1991; 2002; 2008) comprises of technologies of memory, and *interpretative communities*. The construction of collective memory depends on the process of negotiation between these three elements. In the next section, I discuss the concept of “technologies of memory” to elaborate my argument.

### **Technologies of Memory**

The process of collective remembering is not situated within the individual. Instead, it is distributed across individuals as active agents and the cultural tools or technologies of memory they employ to think and remember. These technologies of memory come from a “tool kit” (Wertsch, 2002) provided by a particular socio-cultural setting. Wertsch (1991) borrowed Vygotsky’s formulation of a socio-cultural approach. According to this approach, higher mental functioning and human action in general are mediated by tools (psychological and technical tools). It is a claim that Vygotsky did not discuss in detail and in particular he did not use it to examine the diversity of tools available to human beings. Wertsch (2002) suggests that meditational tools or technologies of memory be viewed not as some kind of single, differentiated whole but rather, in terms of a variety of technologies of memory or the diverse items that make up a *tool kit*. Middleton & Brown (2005) extend this approach in their book on remembering and forgetting. They point out that memory concerns not only the past, but also the future, and that the relation between the past and the future is not given but depends on human

agency as well as on mnemonic tools, technologies and databases. Collective memory is not an exclusively social/collective or cognitive/individual phenomenon. Memory depends on semiotic mediation, i.e. presupposes the use of signs and tools that are by definition social or 'socio-historically evolved' (Wertsch, 2002). The main aspect in the work of Middleton and Brown (2005) is that they treat mediators as 'actants'. Their perspective is different from Wertsch (2002), who claims that agency is always distributed between human beings and material technologies of memory. As a consequence, collective memory is not a biological/object-related phenomenon, but is studied as a symmetrical process of cultural mediation between people and objects or technologies of memory.

Technologies of memory available to agents, as they engage in remembering, range from textual tools like narratives, documents, or books to non-textual tools like monuments or landscapes. The tool kit also includes digital tools like media or the Internet and oral tools like oral histories or songs. Gergen (2003) talks about the postmodern 'multiphrenia' of memories that are exteriorized in print, film, photograph and cinema. Contemporary media technologies, and mass cultural forms such as television and cinema, contain radical possibilities as they allow for the transmission across society of empathy for the historical experience of other (Lansberg, 2004). These media technologies are playing an important role in producing and disseminating vital mnemonic imaginaries and technologies of memory like multiple narratives through a variety of national and regional spaces. As Volkmer (2008) notes, "Not only in the U.S.A. but in deregulated media markets around the world, in Asia (India), South America (Brazil), and Europe, cable and satellite systems delivered a variety of transnational and national television channels" (p. 38). As a result, an important phenomenon like "the War on Terror" is no longer necessarily centered around official narratives, but 'de-centered' and delivered through a variety of platforms,

which includes not only television but personal websites (blogs), mobile phone communication, Google, YouTube, debates on myspace.com, or ohmynews, a platform for citizen journalism (Volkmer, 2008). To some extent, collective memory is still bound up with power and control over certain technologies of memory. Some technologies of memory, such as school curricula, museums, commemoration ceremonies, memorials, and plaques or any other form of cultural systems of representations that transform our common spaces into locales of remembrance (Nora, 2002), still represent selected collective memories. Poole (2008) states that the practices by which collective memories are constructed, are very different in a world of mass media than in pre-literate societies and shows concerns about the political narratives behind these practices by which collective memories are delivered. Wertsch's (2002) is also skeptical about the political narratives behind the process of consumption in collective memory. He mentions that when it comes to collective memory, it is important to remember that a political narrative (e.g., that of triumph-over-alien-forces) always works as an underlying cultural tool behind the construction of the narratives. Letourneau (2006) also talks about one of these political narratives that plays an important role in remaking of collective memory in young Quebecois. He claims that collective memories of young Quebecois are driven by a specific political agenda, that of the building of a new Quebec nation.

Collective memories are no longer selected and represented only by elites. Instead, collective narratives are multiple and thus can provide unexpected details due to the proliferation of a variety of technologies of memories. The narratives of "the War on Terror" are an example of such narratives that are available through a variety of technologies of memory. Communities use these technologies of collective memory to reconstruct their collective narratives. One example of such technologies is monuments. Carrier (2005) defines monuments as 'dialogic' sites of

memory. The broader aim of his study is to analyze the status of monuments as sites of memory while paying particular attention to their political expediency in relation to the language with which they are given meaning. Another view is that merging personal and collective identity and memory, monuments replace the real site of memory while shaping the past within a struggle for supremacy (Miztal, 2003), while commemorations also shape the past in a highly contested manner because they generally highlight surviving disagreements about the meaning of the past.

Wang (2008) mentions:

To understand the processes, practices, and outcomes of social sharing of memory, or collective remembering, one must take into account the characteristics of the community to which a significant event occurred and in which memory for the event was subsequently formed, shared, transmitted, and transformed. In other words, one must look into the social-cultural-historical context where the remembering takes place.. (p. 305)

Collective remembering has become a complex process. As compared to our previous generations, we are deeply engaged with what Wertsch (2002) calls cultural tools or technologies of memory. We do not recall our internal memories in a vacuum. We use different tools in the form of text, images, databases, and narratives. Most of our collective memories are in the form of texts, such as books, documents, the Internet and the media. The expansion of the print and electronic media, the art market, the leisure industry, digital photography, and cinematography, created powerful conduits for the dissemination of texts, images and narratives of the past (Winter, 2006). As Kansteiner (2002) mentions, “the media, their structure, and the rituals of consumption they underwrite might represent the most important shared component of peoples’ historical consciousness” (p. 195). José van Dijck in her book, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (2007) explores the concept of collective memory, which she calls cultural memory, and the role of the media in modifying and developing ideas of collective memory. She explores how different tools in the field of digital technology are networked, and memories are reaching far

wider, to anonymous audiences. Dijck (2007) argues, “Technologies of self are—even more so than before—technologies of sharing” (p. 48). She also looks at how memories in the form of digital images are increasingly circulated and copied to create collective memories, such as those that came out of Abu Ghraib prison. Her work helps researchers to explore the ways in which technologies of memory are altering the ways in which collective memories are used in the narratives. It is important to remember here that different groups (across time and space) use the same technologies of memory in different ways. This usage is neither “right” nor “wrong”, but rather is a part of the multi-layered landscape of meanings associated with the same event or an object.

More recently, new technologies of memory such as the Internet, e-mails, YouTube, and text messages have become increasingly important ways through which individuals consume and negotiate historical representations. It is a general assumption that we are living in *cyberspace* due to proliferation of all these technologies of memory. William Gibson introduced the term *cyberspace* in his science fiction novel *Neuromancer* (Gibson, 1984, p. 51). Fuchs (2008) says, “Cyberspace is a type of social space where communication is technologically mediated and that is organized on a global time space scale, it is a system that mediates and influences our cognition, communication, and consumption in everyday life” (p. 52). Information originating from the Internet gives users the chance to see situations from different points of view and to evaluate and compare the information from different biases. Jefferson (2007) notes, “There is also no time bias on the reporting of information; it is posted as it occurs without regard for deadlines and schedules. Information is available whenever the users choose to retrieve it (pp. 14-15). The journal *Foreign Policy* ran an article on the “YouTube Effect”. In this article Naim (2007) notes:

YouTube includes videos posted by terrorists, human rights groups, and U.S. soldiers in Iraq. Some are clips of incidents that have political consequences or document important trends, such as global warming, illegal immigration, and corruption. Some videos reveal truths. Others spread disinformation, propaganda, and outright lies. All are part of the YouTube effect. (p. 103)

These recent technologies of memory do grant new means of mnemonic representations and communication, but in addition may grant revolutionary transformations to the mnemonic practices, and the process of consumption and mediation among human agents in a cyber age. In particular, the representations of wars are primarily informed by the master narratives, presented in mainstream media: narratives often saturated with pre-approved, government-sanctioned images of war. The war in Iraq is an example of these master narratives, which is relocated in the mainstream media in the tradition of dominant public discourse. A study which compared the war coverage on websites of leading news media in the U.S.A., the U.K., Egypt and Qatar shows that the war is reflected in dominating national frames, not only connecting the event to the national centre but also to the dominant national public discourse (Dimitrova and Connolly-Ahern, 2007).

However, it seems that the construction and representation of conflict related events and particularly wars have been profoundly transformed by network technologies in conjunction with an advanced process of globalization of the 'public' discourse (Volkmer, 2008). Network technologies play an important role in our lives and the construction of a fluid identity. Gergen (2003) describes this process:

Network technologies undo the locally centred self and identity becomes fluid, shifting in a chameleon-like way from one social context to another because films, books, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet all foster communication links outside one's immediate social surrounds. They enable one to participate in multiple systems of belief and value, in dialogues with novel and creative outcomes, and in projects that generates new interdependencies. (p. 126)

In this process a variety of resources or network technologies play a vital role. These technologies have made our borders porous and flexible. Wertsch and Roediger (2008) give the examples to explain the roles of technologies in the process of remembering:

As a contemporary example in the early twenty-first century, consider the new skills and strategies that have emerged with the appearance of Google, Google Scholar, and other search engines on the Internet. The remarkable speed and power of these tools permit us to participate in a form of collective remembering for all sorts of remarkable information. (p. 322)

The proliferation, frequent use and high speed of all these technologies of memory raise the question of how human agents consume them, and what roles these technologies play in the constructions and representations of “the War on Terror”. The process of collective remembering is not a linear process. Anderson (2006) discusses how a transformation occurs in this process:

The past is mined to shape new narratives able to present current conflicts in the language of old familiar ones. At the intersection of myth and memory, fictional forms mingle with those of non-fiction, as news of war is understood through cultural tropes and media formats. The politics of memory is made manifest by the fragments that are retrieved and those that are repressed, for war could not be carried out if its negative, counter-narratives of death and brutality were starkly drawn. Because a fundamental aspect of war involves destruction and death, it is at times inevitable that representations of its horrors emerge, such as the photographs from Abu Ghraib. As those uncontrollable, dark images enter the cultural sphere, they will be rhetorically reinterpreted and made culturally acceptable. (p. xvi)

The rise of new technologies of collective memory, in particular the Internet and sites such as YouTube, Google Video, MySpace and Facebook provide with the opportunity to find new venues for the process of collective remembering. These venues differ from their predecessors (radio, television, print and film) in that alternative narratives coexist—on the same sites. Dijck (2004) mentions, “A range of cultural forms, such as diaries, personal photographs and so on, prefigure people’s choices of what and how to capture memories” (p. 265). These are what Foucault (1977) would label ‘normative discursive strategies’, which either explicitly or implicitly structure our agencies.

Sturken (2008) addresses technologies of memory most directly. She connects the field of memory studies to cultural studies, media studies, communication and visual culture. She talks about the key ideas within these fields and connects them to memory studies, including mediation, and technologies of memory. Within these fields she observes a transformation from a focus on objects to the process, and more concentration on the constructed and political nature of collective memory. She observes the relationship between personal and collective memories with the help of memory objects, like personal photographs that end up in the public sphere, or the role of Hollywood films in our memory. In her study, technologies of memory include objects such as memorials and souvenirs, plus technologies of mass and mediated forms, which are ever more visual; an example is the still photograph. Sturken (2008) asserts, "Cultural and individual memory are constantly produced through, and mediated by, the technologies of memory" (p. 75). Van House & Churchill (2008) further expand on why memory studies should be vitally concerned with past, present and emerging technologies of memory and socio-technical practices of memory-making and memory retrieval. They focus on some specific concerns about current developments in digital memory technologies. Van House & Churchill (2008) argues, "what is remembered individually and collectively depends in part on technologies of memory and the associated socio-technical practices, which are changing radically" (p. 31). In the process of remembering, the main character is the human agent. Human agent uses technologies of memory to construct collective memory.

Just as one cannot imagine a culture without cultural tools or technologies of memory, one cannot imagine an activity without an agent. Wang (2008) states, "one cannot separate a dance from the dancer, so one cannot separate a collective memory from the collective and its individual members who are the creators and carriers of the memory" (p. 305). These individual

members consume and negotiate representations of historical events as active agents. Scholars have recognized the capacity of human agency to devise new ways of thinking and framing problems and to develop new languages to express them. Roman and Stanley (1997) argue, “Young people are not passive receivers of knowledge waiting to be acted upon by ‘the right’ or ‘correct’ interventions, Students are themselves active agents of cultural production” (p. 205). Collective memories were difficult to manipulate in the age of print media. They are presumably even more difficult to control in the age of the Internet, global media and multiple narratives. Wertsch (2002) is particularly interested in narratives as a textual tool or technology of memory.

### **Narrative as a Technology of Memory**

All memories, whether held by an individual or in a textual form, are narratives. Human beings cannot recall any memory without the processes of selection and interpretation. The process of selection, interpretation, sequence and structure turn narratives into a contested enterprise. A narrative is a powerful cultural tool or a technology of memory frequently used by people to remember and reconstruct their experiences. Levesque (2006) says, “They are imaginative constructs of social discourse that provide people with coherent interpretations of past, present, and projected human experiences” (p. 16). I use narratives as a tool to get access to my participants’ understanding due to its particular qualities mentioned by Stueber (2008). She says:

Narratives can provide hints and clues about how to apply our basic mode of understanding to another person’s reasons through empathetic re-enactment in situations where that seems to be *prima facie* difficult because of great cultural or social differences between interpreter and the person to be interpreted. (pp. 34-35)

Narratives not only provide me with opportunities to apply my mode of understanding to the students’ reasons but this practice was also beneficial for my participants. Considerable work has

demonstrated the importance of creating story-sharing opportunities for students (e.g., Engel 1995; Keller et al. 2006; Nicolopoulou, 2007). Compelling arguments have been made by Daiute (2000, 2002), Shultz et al. (2006), Weis & Fine (2000), and Fine & Weis (2003) for including narrative practices in elementary, middle, and high school settings. Daiute (2000) suggests that teachers offered students opportunities to experiment in their narratives with different approaches to situations, even if they are not culturally expected or accepted. Weis & Fine (2000) and Fine & Weis (2003) argue to promote classrooms that empower students to give voice to their experiences and warned teachers and other adults against silencing the difficult issues that are important to students.

I use narrative as my major instrument of data collection because narrative is an educative, interpretive and meaning making tool as Bruner (1996) claimed. He points to the fact that a narrative has an important role to play in the construction and assimilation of knowledge, and identifies humans as natural narrators. Furthermore, Bruner argues that if education is to be effective, it has to help learners to use meaning-making and constructional tools so that they can interpret, adapt to and live in the world in which they find themselves. One such tool, he suggests, is narrative. By offering teachers a window into the stories of young people in Canada, I hope to facilitate a feeling of connectedness to their students' experiences of the world around them through narratives. Polkinghorne (1995) suggested, "Stories are linguistic expressions of this uniquely human experience of the connectedness of life" (p. 7). Through the use of the War on terror narratives, it is my hope that teachers may find connections within their own stories as well as connections to the stories of their students. I hope that they may feel, each in their own way, a terrain of tension within their own paradigms and practices. A terrain that might be explored if the teachers would be open to these narratives of "the War on Terror". It is in times

of tension (Dewey, 1938/1998; Vygotsky, 1978), or when we notice a “bump” in our planned or lived stories that we pause to rethink and sometimes deconstruct our views and practices (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 35). Many scholars have also explored the role and use of narrative in teaching and learning throughout a variety of contexts, including formal and informal teacher education (Witherell, 1995; Witherell & Noddings, 1991; McEwan & Egan, 1995; Florio-Ruane, 2001). Witherell and Noddings (1991) eloquently present a foundational stance to use narratives as a curricular tool:

the belief that narrative and dialogue can serve as a model for teaching and learning across the boundaries of disciplines, professions, and cultures....We take classroom discourse to be at the very heart of the teaching-learning process, as it represents the meaning systems mutually constructed by teachers and their students....The power of narrative and dialogue as contributors to reflective awareness in teachers and students is that they provide opportunities for deepened relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical action. Understanding the narrative and contextual dimensions of human actors can lead to new insights, compassionate judgment, and the creation of shared knowledge and meanings that can inform professional practice. (p. 8)

By drawing on my own experience as a teacher, I believe that students are both imaginative and logical in their thinking. Narratives generally engage their attention and help to make new knowledge meaningful to them. In my research project, the narratives of my participants work as tools for thinking and remembering “the War on Terror”.

The past several decades have witnessed continuous interest in the narratives and its relationship to the process of collective remembering (Wertsch, 2002; Rüssen, 2004). Collective remembering is an active and ongoing process during which human beings participate in recalling, interpreting and further crystallizing their lived experiences, eventually, into memory

representations, often in the form of narratives. Wertsch (2002) asserts, “Collective remembering is an inherently distributed phenomenon. It is defined by an irreducible tension between active agents and the textual resources they employ, especially narrative texts” (p. 175). It is distributed because everybody is not using it equally. One must understand that narratives are not made from whole cloth but are grounded in selectively remembered and interpreted experiences. Therefore, there are different ways in which narratives are produced, consumed and then changed over time. Frye (2006) has discussed in detail the effects of narrative discourse and answered the question, “Are there narrative categories of literature broader than the ordinary literary genres?” According to him, there are four such narrative categories: the romantic, the tragic, the comic, and the ironic or satiric. For Frye anatomizing involves synthesis as well as analysis, or rather analysis in the service of a “synthetic overview”. White’s (1987) ideas about narratives are especially useful for thinking about their role in collective memory. He (1987) discusses:

Narration and narrativity are instruments by which the conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in a discourse. These events are real not because they occurred but because, first, they were remembered and, second, they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence—in order of narrative. (p. 20)

White’s work is very helpful in understanding the question of the value attached to narrativity in the representation of real events. I consider narratives as instruments by which the conflicting claims of “the War on Terror” can be mediated in a discourse. In this study, narratives also work as the starting point for an active dialogue with the representations of this war rather than something to be simply accepted or rejected (Wertsch, 2002). According to Fivush (2008), “Narratives allow for deeper layers of meaning and evaluations that move beyond descriptions of events to imbue life experiences with psychological motivations and intentions, essentially

creating a human drama” (p. 21). Narratives can be a potential tool of repression and misinformation as well as empowerment and enlightenment. It is due to the multiple and contested nature of collective memories that different narratives compete symbolically in the public sphere for legitimate interpretation going as far as the transformation of the basic frameworks of meanings (Halas, 2008). There are different narratives that are competing in the public sphere such as, grand narratives (Stanley, 2006), official narratives (Peters & Lankshear, 1996), and meta-narratives (Lyotard, 1984). Differing experiences and perspectives of social ruptures create heterogeneous and some time conflicting narratives of the wars or people’s narratives of the war.

On a metaphorical level though, these *small* narratives are somewhat of an antidote formulation to a longstanding tradition of *big narratives* (“grand narratives”, Lyotard, 1984; Stanley, 2006; or “official narratives”, Goldberg, Porat, & Schwarz, 2006). In an attempt to empirically explore the relations between official narratives and individual accounts of the past, Penuel and Wertsch (1998) have analyzed the narrative characteristics of students’ compositions on American history in comparison with the official American narrative. The students’ texts revealed a high degree of accord with the official narrative in the representation of agency, the key points and the narrative schemes. The results of this narrative analysis were taken by the authors as evidence of the power of master narrative to form collective memory. On the contrary, in another study, Goldberg, Porat, and Schwarz (2006) approached the representations of the collective past as a cultural tool used by individuals. It was done, by analyzing the narrative characteristics of the accounts of the past. They have shown that images of the collective past held by the students highly resemble a version of collective memory critical of the state of Israel and of its founding social groups.

The representations of “the War on Terror” can best be understood as a process of negotiation between my participants as active agents, and the narrative texts available through different representations of the war. These narratives bring with them a social position and perspective of my participants (Wertsch, 2002). As narratives’ metaphors and images can tell us a great deal about how individual and groups understand the social and political world. Furthermore, these narratives may reveal deep fears, perceived threats, and past grievances (Ross, 2001). Carr (2008) suggests:

Storytelling obeys rules that are imbedded in action itself, and narrative is at the root of human reality long before it gets explicitly told about. It is because of this closeness of structure between human action and narrative that we can genuinely be said to explain an action by telling a story about it. (p. 26)

This relationship between narrative and human actions permit me to understand how my participants become committed to certain values and certain interpretations and how they become interested in certain representations of “the War on Terror”.

## **Representations**

Representations cover a complex terrain of theoretical positions and discourses concerned with questions of subjectivity, cultural differences, and race. Said (1978) argues, “representations have purposes, they are effective much of the time, they accomplish one or many tasks” (p. 273). Representations also amount to a system of particular meanings about a phenomenon or a group or a culture that respond to the requirement of contemporary politics, work in global context, and applicable across historical time. Said (1978) also reveals the main logic behind the politics of representation in the epigraph from Marx that he uses to frame his critique of Orientalism: “They (Orientals) cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”. Before exploring who is represented by whom and what sorts of meanings are

attached to these representations, I will briefly discuss the theory of representations.

### **Hall's Theory of Representations**

Stuart Hall theorizes 'representation' as the product of assigning particular meanings to an event, an object, a culture or a group. Hall (1997) discusses "the ways in which social practices take place within representation and how they are saturated with meanings and values which contribute to our sense of who we are—our culturally constructed identities" (p. 211). Representation, described by Hall (1997), is "something which images and depicts, and that which stands in for something else, both of these ideas are brought together in the notion of representation" (p. 6). Hall suggests that this idea of representation is "too literal" and that the representation is "giving meaning" to the thing being presented. He discusses the need to consider "whether these things do have any one essential, fixed or true meaning against which we could measure, as it were, the level of distortion in the way in which they're represented" (p. 7). According to Hall's view of representation, there can never be one interpretation of an event. The interpretations taken from a representation are dependent upon the cultural, social, and intellectual knowledge of the viewer. Consequently, there is no one true meaning of any representation. Hall (1997) further argues:

A representation does not capture an event and depict that event because there was no "true" defined event to begin with, rather the act of representation becomes part of the event and the meaning of said event will depend on what people interpret, which depends upon the way the representation is presented. Representation becomes a necessary part of the event. (p. 16)

Hall's (1980) examination of the world of mass media and the conveying of dominance from producers to consumers of texts in his article "Encoding/decoding" is particularly useful for my study. He uses broadcast news agencies as an example for the contextual analysis of decoding

and readings. The producers develop stories intended to relate certain messages to the viewing audiences. Using political jargon or analysis has the potentiality of missing the targeted audience based on the viewers' level of understanding and interpretation. The viewers who find difficulty in following the analysis or message sent through the communication line do not "read" the messages as intended by the producers. Hall (1980) explains that the "viewers are not operating within the 'dominant' or 'preferred' code" (p. 135). In this instance, the viewers' reading is constructed with what Hall calls symbolic vehicles decoded to fit the current perception of understanding and reality. Hall offers the three following variations for the reading of an intended message that include "preferred", "negotiated", and "oppositional".

The position of "preferred" reading requires the viewer to fully accept the concepts and codes of the text. The dominant views of this reading are so prevalent that they seem natural to the viewer. This constitutes the "hegemonic viewpoint". According to Hall (1980), "The definition of a hegemonic viewpoint is (a) that it defines within its terms the mental horizon, the universe, of possible meanings, of a whole sector of relations in a society or culture; and (b) that it carries with it the stamp of legitimacy—it appears coterminous with what is 'natural', 'inevitable', 'taken for granted' about the social order (p. 137). This is the position that is clear to the viewer based on the dominant views of the society. The acceptance of the "preferred" reading is key in understanding the power of dominant representations in films. The second reading is a "negotiated" one in which the reader accepts the intended meaning while negotiating it with the context of the reader. The reader accepts certain aspects of the text while disagreeing with others. The final type of reading, "oppositional," is considered counter-hegemonic. While understanding the "preferred" reading, the viewer rejects the dominant meanings and representations presented by the text. The reader finds disagreement with all of the text. The War on Terror has been

represented through different technologies such as media, the Internet, museums, and commemorative activities on the highway of Heroes. However, another parallel wave of representations also reappears within and through these technologies. Said (1983) explains this wave in these words:

Whenever in modern times an acutely political tension has been felt between the Occident and its Orient (or between the West and Islam), there has been a tendency in the West to resort not to direct violence but first to the cool, relatively detached instruments of scientific, quasi-objective representation. In this way Islam is made more clear, the true nature of its threat appears, an implicit course of action against it is proposed. In such a context both science and direct violence come to be viewed by many Muslims, living in widely varied circumstances, as forms of aggression against Islam. (p. 24)

What Said discussed in early eighties is equally valid today. The War on Terror has become the main source of political tension between Muslims and the West. Representations of Islam/Muslims in a particular way have become more pervasive and influential in the West.

### **Representations of Islam/Muslims and “the War on Terror”**

The canonical, orthodox coverage of Islam that we find in the academy, in the government, and in the media is all interrelated and has been more diffused, has been more persuasive and influential, in the West than any other “coverage” or interpretation. The success of this coverage can be attributed to the political influence of those people and institutions producing it rather than necessarily to truth and accuracy. This coverage has served purposes only tangentially related to actual knowledge of Islam itself. The result has been the triumph not just of a particular knowledge of Islam but rather of a particular interpretation, which however has neither been unchallenged nor impervious to the kinds of questions asked by unorthodox, inquiring minds. (Said, 1985, p. 161)

Said talks about the role of producers in the production and promotion of the representations of Islam/Muslims, which has no relation to actual knowledge of Islam. He also talks about an official narrative of the triumph of a particular knowledge of Islam. The events of 9/11 and 7/7

have re-ignited the canonical and orthodox representations of Islam/Muslims. Books on Islam, *jihad*, Muslim militancy, Islamic terror and on groups such as Al-Qaeda or the Taliban have mushroomed in the last few years (Lewis, 2003; Pipes, 2002; Berman, 2003; Burr & Collins, 2006), in which Muslims are represented as dangerous and non-civilized so effectively and so universally that the terms “Islam” and “Muslim” have come to inherently invoke suspicion and fear on the part of many. These violent images have too often become props for the construction of Islamophobic political discourses. Gottschalk & Greenberg (2008) attempt to demonstrate these anxieties by examining one particular type of expression: the political cartoon and argue, “the widespread use of caricature in American cartoons is used to represent Muslims in a way that finds little parallel with caricatures of Americans-or, for that matter, Christians and Jews” (p. 6). These political cartoons are just an example of constructing particular meanings around particular bodies with the help of representations.

Human beings give things meaning by how they represent them. The words they use about them, the stories they tell about them, the images of them they produce, the emotions they associate with them, the way they classify and conceptualize them, and the values they place on them (Hall, 1997). The dark image of the Muslim world as a decadent and dying civilization, a backward, irrational, and sensual world was reinforced and made its way into popular cultural representations through different tools such as, fiction, TV images, Hollywood productions, and media reporting. As Said (1983) discusses, “all our knowledge of so complex and elusive a phenomenon as Islam comes about through texts, images, experiences that are not direct embodiment of Islam (which is after all apprehended only through instances of it) but representations or interpretations of it” (p. 160). As a result, it has become easier to exploit the people’s fear of terrorism by using unconnected images, and by giving them selected meanings.

In some cases this type of representations work to create a perfect reading that Islam itself approve of terrorist activities. By not placing the images in their correct context and by repeating stereotypical stories, about Islam/Muslims, these representations encourage their consumers to construct particular meanings around the Muslim body. Herman (1999) says, “a ‘wanted-dead-or-alive’ bravado also pervaded newspapers, television, and classrooms throughout the country” (p. 126), as a result of these representations. Relations of power play an important role behind this representation of Islam/Muslims, and reflect how certain colonial traditions of constructing knowledge about Islam/Muslims are continued in today’s postcolonial world.

Relations of power are used to fix Muslim identities within relations of domination and subordination. As Hall (1997) explains, power should be understood not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion but also in broader cultural symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way. Hall describes stereotyping as “a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence” (p. 259). Foucault (1989) explains: “We are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power” (p. 94). The historical factors making this process possible reside in the history of Colonialism and its persistence in the twenty first century (Rashti, 2005; Gregory, 2004; Rizvi, 2005). This persistence of colonial discourse makes it difficult to address the question of how people in power are able to interpret and reinterpret the knowledge about Muslims and Islamic culture according to their own imaginations and political purposes (Rashti, 2005). Instead, it exists as a very flexible set of metaphors, images, cultural symbols, and narratives through which people in power affirm and promote the existing structures of power to legitimize the colonial discourse of “Othering” around Islam/Muslims.

The colonial discourse of “Othering” provides the framework within which new forms of ideological and practical strategies started to develop in the context of “the War on Terror”. Rizvi (2005) points out, “such constructions involve the creation of new interpretive categories in other circumstances old discourses persist, often through the use of new ideological forms—new code words that obscure the exercise of power, prejudice, and discrimination” (p. 171). The War on Terror offers a window of opportunity for a new range of technologies of power and the construction of knowledge around the Muslim subjects that can be used to watch, control, and when necessary, to exclude the Islamic ‘Other’ from an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983). After 9/11, an essentialized discourse about Islam and Muslims has regain its force and constructs the Islamic other against what Said (1978/1985) has referred to as an “orientalist imaginary” (Rizvi, 2005; Rashti, 2005; Miles, 1989). This orientalist imaginary offers a disciplined way of exposing how representations serve the interests behind power and manipulation, and focuses most readily on divergence instead of convergence. This representation is producing, naming, signifying and interpreting knowledge about Muslims as “Other” on racialized lines. These representations in turn produce a proliferation of discourses about Islam and Muslim identities. Ibrahim (2001) describes how particular meanings are fabricated around the “Other”, “they are telling me how my name is already “read”, “marked”, “positioned” and “imagined”. It is imagined and read in ways that can only be performative acts of history. Here, Ibrahim *is*, and is already known” (p. 11). To attach certain meanings around a Muslim body requires certain practices and tools.

Bhabha (1994) raises another important question here: “What does need to be questioned, however, is the mode of representation of Otherness”? The mode of representation of Muslims as “Others” is evident in television, cartoons, in newspapers, and even in movies.

Popular films ranging from Hollywood blockbusters to children's cartoons are depicting "crude and exaggerated" stereotypes of Muslims that perpetuate or contribute to Islamophobia.

According to a study, published by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, films as diverse as *The Siege*, a portrayal of a terrorist attack on New York starring Denzel Washington and Bruce Willis, the Disney film *Aladdin* and the British comedy *East is East* have helped demonize Muslims as violent, dangerous and threatening, and reinforce prejudices. While *The Siege* is attacked for inter-cutting Islamic ritual and terrorist violence, potentially linking the two in the minds of audiences, *Aladdin* faces criticism for depicting Arabs as "ruthless caricatures" with "exaggerated and ridiculous accents". The study titled "The British media and Muslim representation: the ideology of demonization" argues that Hollywood plays a crucial role in influencing how the public views Muslims. A survey conducted as part of the research revealed that Muslims in Britain felt negative images of their faith on the big and small screen had consequences in their daily lives. The interviews conducted for this survey reflect a direct correlation between media portrayal and the participants' social experiences of exclusion, hatred, discrimination and violence. As well as deep unease with big screen portrayals, the research also found a perception of "unashamed bias" in the media against Muslims, with 62% believing the media to be Islamophobic and 16% describing it as racist. Only 4% considered its representation "fair" (Ward, 2007). The accounts of the participants in the study mentioned above indicate that the negative portrayal of Muslims is heavily presented in the films that are produced in both the UK and US. Films portray Muslims mostly as terrorists who randomly kill people (usually innocents) or blow things up (including themselves), hijackers, misogynistic or stupid. Some respondents of the survey believe that the film industry is used as a tool in the foreign policy by the Western countries in terms of demonizing and gaining public support against a fashioned

enemy. This representation of Islam/Muslims is not an outcome of “the War on Terror” or the events of 9/11 or 7/7. According to Miles (1989):

The European image of Islam first emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and involved portraying the Islamic Other as barbaric, degenerate and tyrannical, and these alleged characteristics were rooted in the character of Islam as a supposedly false and heretic theory. (p. 18)

However, as far as the relationships between the Muslim world and Europe are concerned, long before the traditions of Colonialism, and Orientalism—including immense slave trade and slavery— ambiguity, suspicion, mistrust, stereotyping, and misrepresentations were present on both sides. This dynamics of relationships was permeated through religious, intellectual, military, and economic channels. It can be an interesting study to see how the very same five channels seemingly bear the burden of this historical discourse in the twenty first century.

The problem is that the representations of Islam/ Muslims in a particular manner have refused to change. What has changed after 9/11 is the circulation of some new ghostly nouns for the Islamic Other as the foreigner, the terrorist, the fundamentalist, the displaced, and so on in which meaning is grasped instantly and intuitively. Young (2007) reminds us:

Anything, it seems, any noun can become ghostly if the word is applied to it as an adjective, as if it were a piece of tasteless dead meat needing to be brought to life by the tang of sauce. Sometimes it brings to life an agent, sometimes an object. (p. 304)

The mechanism of “Othering” is used to paste all these ghostly nouns onto the Muslim body in the post 9/11 period, and the meaning they communicate are both extremely pervasive and extremely difficult to challenge as historically specific constructs rather than as natural model of world (Furniss, 1997). The representation of Muslims as “Other” has racialized dimensions because it works on the basis of categorization and exclusion. The narratives of political, militant, and fundamentalist Islam, produced and sustained by an enormous network of writers,

policy makers, journalists, and speakers, are no less damaging and insidious than their counterparts in the entertainment world (Lewis, 2003; Pipes, 2002; Berman, 2003). These narratives do not work through explicit, argumentative forms of presentation. They work through simplistic and fixed notions of race and identity. Nacos & Torres-Reyna (2007) write:

Decades ago, the Kerner Commission (National Commission on Civil Disorder, *Report*, 383) warned that the white American, if conditioned by the media's incomplete portrayal of Black America, would "neither understand nor accept the black American". In the ongoing "war on terrorism" climate and its focus on "the ugly Muslim", one could similarly argue that an incomplete mass-mediated picture of Muslims in America prevents the non-Muslim American from understanding and accepting the Muslim American. (p. 53)

These western perceptions of Islam are more than a reflection of the West's incomplete understanding of Islam. This perception is also situated in a deep-rooted colonial legacy of dividing the world into 'Black and White' or 'Good and Bad'. The same hold true for the Muslims perception of the West. Both worlds see one another through the eyes of their own self-understanding, as they strive to come to terms with their own identity and their views of the other (Kalin, 2004). Recent scholarship in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the European Union (Allen & Nielson, 2002; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2005; Hamdani, 2005; Sheridan, 2006; Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students, 2007; Tryer & Ahmed, 2006; Vyas, 2004), discusses the effect of these misconceptions on moderate Muslims—apart from the social and economic disadvantage that such discrimination inevitably incurs—is frustration, anger and sadness. Muslims occupy a marginal space in the national imagination of Canada because the exclusionary discourse serves to homogenize all Muslims and to pigeonhole them into the category of 'Other'. Bell (2006) mentions:

It is instead to remake the boundaries of the nation and to identify those subjects who

cannot make claims within it. The legitimacy of such action rests on addressing indeterminate risks to Canada supposedly occasioned by the presence of foreign, 'dangerous' others. (p. 76)

In the context of Canadian society, the process of Othering plays an important role in the inclusion or exclusion of Muslims in the *imagined community* of nation. I elaborate further on this specific issue in detail in chapter five of this dissertation. Bannerji's (2000) argument in the context of visible minorities is also relevant for Muslim Canadians:

Concomitant with this mania for the naming of 'Others' is one for the naming of that which is 'Canadian'. This 'Canadian' core community is defined through the same process that others us. We, with our named and ascribed otherness, face an undifferentiated notion of the 'Canadian' as the unwavering beacon of our assimilation. (p. 65)

Without an understanding of the relationship between the Canadian core community and its "Others", it would be hard to understand how Muslims are imagined in Canada. Without revealing the revitalized false binaries of 'good' versus 'evil', 'peace-lovers' versus 'terrorists', or the 'barbarian' versus the 'civilized', and, evocative language that constitute the imagined community of Canada, it would be difficult to understand, why Edward Said prescribes a kind of *analytic pluralism* as the form of critical attention appropriate to the cultural effects of the nation. In *Covering Islam*, Said (1983) mentions:

For the nation, as a form of cultural elaboration (in the Gramscian sense), is an agency of ambivalent narration that holds culture at its most productive position as a force for subordination, fracturing, diffusing, reproducing, as much as producing, creating, forcing, guiding. (p. 171)

Said makes some vital observations in his book that the West's relationship with many countries is informed by a media that does not always do justice to the people they cover—in many cases, the media generalizes and demonizes. Making one of the most important points in the book, Said reminds us that Islam (like "Christendom" or "the West" or any broad cultural category) is not a

monolithic homogeneous structure. However, as a result of the representations of Muslims in media many journalists, pundits, spokespeople, and citizens see and portray them as dangerous and terrorists. This trend is not an outcome of the events of 9/11 or “the War on Terror”. In *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001), Shaheen further elaborates Said’s thesis. According to him, between 1896 and 2001 Hollywood produces more than nine hundred movies depicting Arabs as terrorists, rapists, con men, and other unsavory characters—without one positive portrayal. Shaheen has also documented stereotypes in television (1984) and comic books (1994). This uni-dimensional and monolithic representation of a highly heterogeneous community of Muslims was reinforced after the events of 9/11.

Canadian Muslims are an ethnically/culturally diverse group of people with a variety of historical backgrounds, yet the tone of the representation of Islam/Muslims implies that all Muslims are the same. It is interesting to note that only 15% of the world’s Muslims have roots in the Arab world, and yet this group is frequently deployed by the mass media to represent all Muslims (Johnny & Shariff, 2007). Within Canadian Muslim communities there are significant differences in religious and ideological belief and practice, in their historical and cultural norms and values, the detail and sophistication of which are beyond the scope of the present study. As this study shows this representation has created a marginal space for Muslims in the ‘imagined community’ of Canada. As a result, another dimension of my theoretical orientation relates to issues of the imagined community Anderson (1983) of nation and the role of language in the construction of this community in the narratives and the interviews of my participants.

### **An Imagined Community of Nation**

To analyze how an imagined community of Canadian nation works in the 99 narratives and four follow-up interviews of my participants, I rely heavily on the concepts borrowed from

the field of nationalism studies. I am certainly indebted to the work of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, who made use of Renan's (1882) argument that the role of both remembering and forgetting is crucial in the construction of an imagined community of nation.

### **Anderson's Theory of an Imagined Community**

Anderson (1983) elucidates how the nation-state came to be alleged as the whole and genuine large-scale unit of society. Before the imagining of the nation-state, the governing inclusive social structures were religious and imperial dynasties. After a series of calamities, including generational wars over religious system and control, the conventioning of the sovereignty of nation-states, that is the *purpose* of the nation-state, came to interchange the impression of empire as the principal and *natural* political order. By investigating the use of maps to exemplify national borders, museums to exhibit history, and self-identification on censuses, Anderson gives an idea about how citizens were made to envisage nation-states and themselves as inhabitants of those nation-states. Media provides the public imagining of the nation-state in a specific mode. According to his theory, certain metaphors strengthened the state's power and the establishments publicized those metaphors. Thus, Anderson states that nation-states developed into what they were envisioned as.

Utilizing instances from Europe, the Americas and Asia, Anderson recounts a chronicle of how nation-states, the inheritor to kingdoms and other social structures, were consequently imagined and socially erected. A fundamental constituent of his thesis is that the nation-state is no more wholesome or pure than any other kind of social institute—in fact, it is peppered with conflicts. Anderson emphasizes that there are intrinsic irregularities in the imagining of the nation-state. For example, he says that the nation-state is pictured to be primeval. However, in reality the nation-state is an inherently contemporary creation, which was molded to aid the

capitalist system. As the nation-state progressed in sync with the modern era, the thought of assisting social welfare entwined with the imagined future and evolution of the nation-state as an engine for constant enhancement of human existence.

Anderson's (1983) argument of being reminded of what one has already forgotten is a normal mechanism by which nations are constructed and how national memories, themselves underscored by selective forgetting, constitute one of the most important mechanism by which a nation constructs a collective identity or an 'imagined community'. This argument guides my investigation of "imagined communities in the responses of my participants. According to Anderson, language plays an important role in "imagining". He further suggests:

an ordinary eye he or she is born with-language-whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue-is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed. (p. 154)

Then Anderson illustrates how a kind of ellipsis in that language works ceaselessly to oblige people to remember/forget historical events selectively. He defines nation as an imagined political community that is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. According to this construction, an imagined community involves the imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of space, time, and membership. Anderson stressed that the community has to be imagined because it is conceived to stretch beyond immediate experience: it embraces far more people than those with which citizens are personally acquainted. This unity cannot be apprehended physically, it can only be imagined.

Of course not all theorists of nationalism agree with Anderson's formulation. For

example, Miller (2000) presents an argument in the defense of the principle of nationality and emphasizes the inevitability of a shared national identity. According to him, nationality comprises three interconnected prepositions: personal identity; ethical in nature; and based on a political self-determination. He rejects the idea of trans-nationalism and claims that a national community is comprised of five elements together:

A community constituted by mutual belief, extended in history, active in character, connected to a particular territory, and thought to be marked off from other communities by its members' distinct traits—serve to distinguish nationality from other collective sources of personal identity. (p. 31)

Here the boundaries of a nation are not imagined or fluid. Rather, a fundamental constituent of his thesis is that the nation-state is a wholesome or pure community with distinct traits. For the purpose of my study, Benedict Anderson's idea, the 'imagined community' is an important lens used by my participants to focus on the ways in which they construct their relationships to cultural, religious, political and historical collectivities in relation to "the War on Terror".

Political theorists are continuously engaged with political debates about nationality as the source of solidarity or nationality as a source of inclusion/exclusion. This is not an appropriate place to go into the depth of this debate because my research project has nothing to do with how theorists construct imagined national communities. This project also deals with how young people in Canada with a variety of religious, ethnic, political, historical and cultural backgrounds construct an imagined community of Canadian nation.

The shaping of temporal and spatial experiences and consumption of the narratives available through different technologies of memory about "the War on Terror" is quite important in the construction of Imagined Communities. Attributes of spatial, temporal and communicative (usually linguistic) connectedness clearly contribute to the sense of inclusion and exclusion to

the imagined community of Canada. As I will show in my chapter six, these attributes are quite evident in the narratives and the interviews of my participants and clearly contribute to the sense of either inclusion or exclusion in the imagined community of Canada. My participants frequently construct imagined spaces or communities beyond any geophysical boundaries through some particular rhetorical episodes in their texts (Billig, 1995).

### **Billig's Theory of Banal Nationalism**

Building upon the ideas of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, Billig (1995) suggests, "nation-states are not founded upon 'objective' criteria, such as the possession of a discrete language. Instead, nations have to be 'imagined' as communities" (p. 10). He builds his theory upon Gellner's argument that nationalism is an outcome of nation-states and that the political principles of nationalism appears as if they are natural. Billig also discusses the role of collective remembering and forgetting, and of imagination and unimaginative repetition in the construction of these 'imagined communities'. For the purpose of my research project, I mainly used his discussion of how politicians and newspapers employ a routine 'deixis', which is continually pointing to the national homeland.

The first theorist to consider the role of deixis in narrative was Karl Bühler, the Austrian psychologist and semiotician. He distinguished the deictic field of language from its symbolic field, and named the orientational axes of the deictic field the *Origo of Here/Now/I* (Cited in Galbraith, 1995). This orientation of utterances is so taken for granted by the speaker, argues Bühler, that the reader/audience is typically able to immediately shift his/her perspective to that of the speaker. This particular use of, what Bühler calls perceptual deixis is further examined by Michael Billig in his book on taken-for-granted forms of nationalism *Banal Nationalism*.

Billig pays attention to small words such as ‘We’, ‘us’, ‘people’, ‘they’, or how the definite article ‘the’ is continually playing its quite part in a routine ‘deixis’, which banally point out ‘the’ homeland, and draws out the nationalist assumptions within their conventional usage. Billig (1995) points out, “The crucial words of banal nationalism are often the smallest: ‘we’, ‘this’ and ‘here’, which are the words of linguistic deixis” (p. 94). The small words—mostly overlooked—play an important role in the construction of an imagined community of nation.

His work helped me to understand the role played by language in the construction of an imagined community of nation in the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants. I have used Billig’s analysis of deixis in combination with Anderson’s formulation to understand the narrative of “the War on Terror” through an analysis of the rhetorical style of my participants. The narratives of nationhood allow people to live beyond themselves. Billig (1995) notes, “nationhood is not something remote in contemporary life, but it is present in ‘our’ little words, in homely discourses which we take for granted” (p. 126). My participants also inhabit this world of nations. This world is present in their little words or “deixis” taken for granted by them. An investigation into the construction of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) is conducted in the responses of my participants through Billig’s (1995) notion of linguistic ‘deixis’. There is an inter-play of the deixis of little words like ‘we/us’ and ‘them/they’ in most of the narratives that brings my participants into a cycle of representations. These representations lead them to imagine multiple imagined communities of nations, constructed on the basis of including ‘self’ and excluding ‘other’. I will show in chapter five, how a pervasive nationalist narrative, which constructs Canada as a ‘WE’ of imagined community, is articulated by my participants through participating in acts of collective memory in this research project. Stanley

(2006) discusses how acts of collective memory work in the construction of an imagined community:

Participating in acts of public (collective) memory is one way of linking people as if they were members of the same community while simultaneously marking certain spaces as quintessentially Canadian. In this marking, Canadian people, spaces, and things are set apart from those of other nations-especially, in the Canadian context, from those of the great Other to the south, the United States. The problem with imagined community is that if some people are imagined as within the community, as belonging to the nation, others are imagined as being outside of it, inexorable aliens who are not and cannot be like one's self. (p. 33)

In response, I have provided extensive examples from the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants in my chapter five that show how a nationalist narrative is articulated through a particular rhetorical style used by the participants of this study. I seek to put the conceptual framework provided by this literature review, to work in connection with a body of empirical evidence from my research project to get into the collective memory of young Canadian university students, “memory that is a kind of engine of their historical consciousness” (Létourneau, 2006, p. 71). These are the theorists who supported me in understanding what my participants have to tell me about the war. This review was selective and limited at the start. It expanded as the results of data analyses dictated further reading of relevant material.

### **The Conceptual Framework**

Theory is often utilized as the framework for organizing a research study, steering the types of questions asked and the data collection procedures used by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). I used written responses and the follow-up interviews as instruments of data collection, and then applied theories of collective memory, representations, and nationalism studies to analyze the data. Miles & Huberman (1994) consider a conceptual framework to be the “current

version of the researcher's map of the territory being investigated" (p. 20). The territory being investigated in my research project is comprised of the 99 narratives of "the War on Terror" written by young people in Canada . The narrative tools my participants employ ... are provided by the particular cultural, historical, and institutional settings in which we live" (Wertsch, 2002, p. 57). Reading these narratives is a powerful and compelling experience. These narratives help us to understand the nature of my participants' collective memories of the war, their thinking, and their imaginations. According to Wertsch (2002), a great deal of thinking is shaped by narrative: "We are especially 'story-telling animals' when it comes to recounting and interpreting our own and other's actions" (p. 56). More broadly theories of collective memory, representations, and nationalism studies informed my research by providing a framework upon which to build an understanding of how young people in Canada understand the war on Terror. I have discussed in detail the theories and models used in this study. I apply the theories and models discussed in chapter 1 throughout the analytical process of this study as a conceptual framework. The next chapters demonstrate how I design and conduct my research. The conceptual framework of my study includes the most influential concepts derived from this literature review, my own assumptions and presuppositions. The following Figure 1.1 depicts this conceptual framework graphically:

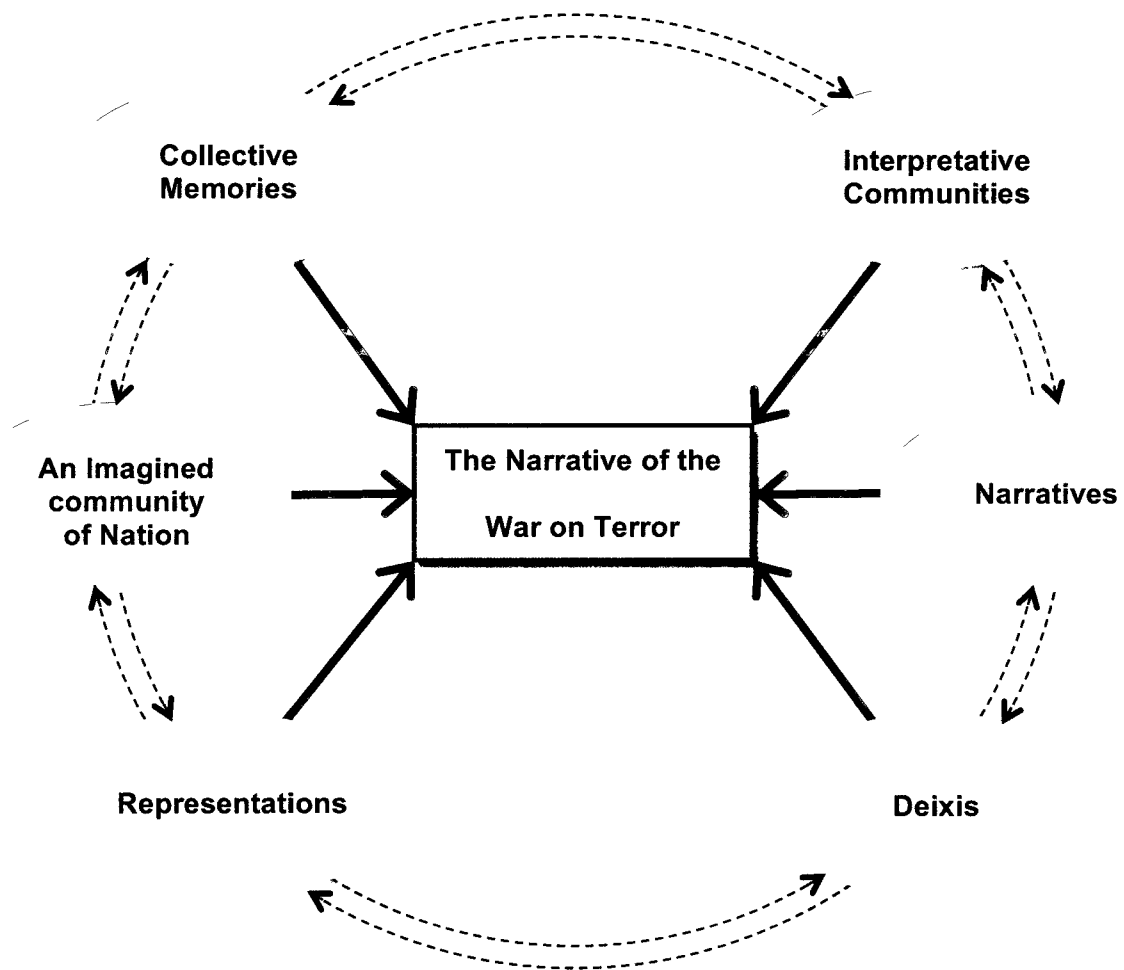


Figure 1.1 The Conceptual Framework

## CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I have outlined my methodology in detail to explain how I design, conduct, and complete my study. The literature review of the previous work in the field of collective memory studies, representations, and nationalism studies reviewed in Chapter 1 suggests the need to develop an adequate research design to answer my research questions. The outline of my research design begins with a brief discussion of different methods used by researchers in the field of memory studies. Then I give a rationale for using different methods in this research. This discussion is followed by a description of two other instruments, the demographic questionnaire and the follow-up interviews I use to collect my data. The chapter continues with the details of how I recruited my participants, the nature of my sample and the sites of research. In the end, an overview is presented to describe how the data are collected and analyzed, and certain limitations of my study.

### **Research Design**

One of the major challenges in the field of collective memory studies is the absence of systematic set of methodologies. Roediger and Wertsch (2008) mention, “One challenge we see for the future of memory studies as a discipline is to develop a rigorous and systematic set of methodologies that will provide for a wide range of analyses” (p. 18). In an attempt to deal with this challenge, researchers use a variety of methods and their selection generally depends on their own disciplines. These methods include ethnography (Furniss, 1997; Fine & Weis, 2003), autobiography (Freeman, 2006), interviews (Mattingly, 2007), surveys (Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer, & Morales, 2005), conversational retelling (McVee, 2005), or scoring manuals for coding the memories for narrative structure (Singer & Blagove, 2002).

## **Research Methods Used in Memory Studies**

There are certain advantages and disadvantages of each research method. Researchers' decisions about research methods generally depend upon their own paradigms, the specific context of the issues they want to study, and most importantly, the traditions of their own disciplines. But what is the bottom line of decisions about any type of research design? Maxwell (2005) says, "The bottom line of any decision is the actual consequences of using it in your study; what would be an excellent decision in one study could be a disaster in another" (p. 79). Consequently before making any decisions about my research design, I take a look at different methods to understand how different researchers use each in memory studies. For instance, Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer, and Morales (2005) carried out a quantitative study of memories for facts about the 2003 Iraq war, as well as of memories for events that had been reported by the media but later retracted as false. They carried out surveys in the universities of USA, Germany and Australia and used rating scales in their questionnaire. Surveys are efficient for collecting large amounts of information. If correct procedures are followed, the margin of error is relatively small; statistical techniques can be used to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance; surveys are flexible and enable the researchers to collect a wide range of information; are standardized; relatively free from several types of errors; and are relatively easy to administer.

The problem is that polls and surveys provide us with a lot of quantitative data, but very limited insight into human experience and understanding. Some other reasons for not using surveys for this study is that surveys are not appropriate for studying complex social phenomena, structured surveys and particularly those with closed ended questions may have low validity when researching affective variables, plus potential damage of deficient sampling procedures is also a problem.

Another quantitative method used by memory researchers is a scoring manual. This method is used to score stories, narratives of many kinds (e.g., dreams, autobiographies, or folk tales), and free verbal texts like recorded free associations or therapeutic sessions. This method was originally developed to provide an operational measure for Sigmund Freud's concept of the primary process of thinking and its control. It is more useful for research in the field of psychology or clinical practice with a psychoanalytic orientation (Holt, 2008, p. 153).

Collective memories do not only occur for directly experienced events. According to Zerubavel (1997), "collective memories are not necessarily representations of one's own personal experience, but they can be "memories" for the experiences of the group throughout history" (p. 162). Moreover, he argues that collective memory requires collective remembering (and collective forgetting). Schudson's argument (1995) that collective memory occurs for events experienced by all group members even when the exact nature of the experience may differ between group members helped me to decide why auto-biographical research was not suitable for my project. Because by Schudson's definition, experienced events, such as the attacks of 11 September 2001, can result in the formation of collective memories, even though each participant's specific experience of this event (e.g., where they were, how they found out) may bear little or even no resemblance to the experience of others participants involved in my study.

Another method used by a limited number of researchers is conversational retelling (Chafe, 1998; Norrick, 2000). As a result, there is a limited literature on this method, which involves one speaker repeating a story over time in conversational settings (Norrick, 2000). In this method, participants are asked to tell their stories many times. According to Norrick (2000), "Retold conversational stories provide a natural testing site for analyzing narratives" (p. 67).

McVee (2005) uses conversational retelling in her mix-method study to re-plot a teacher's narrative to explore what happens when a "privileged" white, female teacher uses multiple narrative retellings to revisit an experience of racial displacement in a 100% black school. A major weakness of this method is that it focuses on the basic narrative and distills only the basic narratives mask differences across narratives (Norrick, 2000). I do not use this method because it focuses on changes in the individual's nature not in collectivity.

Interviews are frequently used by researchers in the field of memory studies due to a variety of advantages. These advantages include direct feedbacks from the participants, opportunities to probe, observation as an additional evaluation method, rich data with details and new insight, personal interaction with respondent, flexibility, and opportunities to explain or clarify questions. I have also used interviews in my study to gain rich data with details and new insight into the narratives of my participants. However, research methods in the fields of collective memory studies need to be differentiated from methods used in memory studies.

### **A Multi-Method Approach**

The absence of an agreed upon set of methodologies specific to the field of collective memory studies, provides me with an opportunity to adopt an open and more flexible approach towards the methodological issues in my research project. Designed to reveal different facets of my participants' experiences and understandings, the following three methods were used to collect data: (1) in-depth interviews, (2) written narratives, and (3) demographic questionnaires. In this study, I also use a set of questions to stimulate my participants' memories and to generate narratives of "the War on Terror". After collecting demographic data about my participants through a demographic questionnaire, I asked my participants to write the narrative of "the War on Terror" according to the questions given in the questionnaire. After a month of collecting my participants' narratives of the

war, I conducted four follow-up interviews to expand their narratives.

Using a multi method approach in this study provided me with opportunities for an in-depth exploration, and to collect a sufficient amount of data regarding my participants' understandings of the war. Based on the individual narratives, integration of interview responses and demographic questionnaire information allows for both textual and critical discourse analysis of participants' experiences as a whole. Just as the multi-method approach is used to collect data, a multi-level approach to analysis is implemented. I use a combination of critical discourse and textual analysis. This blended approach provided me with multiple lenses for data analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers an approach, which focuses on fragments of the language used by my participants, while textual analysis examines larger units of text devoted to participants' accounts of events. Understandings gained from close attention to language and narrative construction are then deployed in exploring how my participants understand and experience "the War on Terror". Although all participants have unique experiences expressed in distinctive data sets, clear patterns emerge. Firstly, particular patterns of narrative arcs are evident in both the content and structure of narrative constructions. Secondly, a hegemonic narrative overlaps the unique experiences of my participants in relation to "the War on Terror".

My decision about research methods was also based on the specific context of the issues I want to study. I decided to mix different methods in a way that facilitates a better opportunity for me to explore the answers of my research questions in the field of collective memory studies. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue, "many research questions and combinations of questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions" (p. 18). I decided to answer my research question through mixed research solution.

I borrowed my basic methodological approach from Létourneau's (2004) inquiry. He

used narratives of young French Canadians to understand their representations of their collective history of Quebec and found that practically all students used a narrative that is at odds with the official narratives available in Quebec. Their narratives were more influenced by cultural narratives situated in the historical experience of Quebec as compared to the narratives available through the curriculum, history textbooks, or public school system. Létourneau's decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to include were also feasible for me as a Ph.D. student. I could easily get access to my participants in a university as compared to schools, offices or any other public place. Another reason behind my choice of the sample is that it is characterized by religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Létourneau's (2006) use the purposeful sampling method to recruit his participants. I also use purposeful sampling method. My goal is to adequately capture the heterogeneity in the sample (Maxwell, 2005). To avoid the limits and the deficiencies of quantitative methods, as I have mentioned above in relation to a few quantitative methods like surveys or scoring manuals, Létourneau (2006) decided to use a qualitative process. He asked young people who were studying in high schools and a university of Quebec to write narratives about the history of Quebec in 45 minutes. The exercise took place in the classroom with their teacher present, but not, however, providing any input. His participants had a French-Canadian cultural background. Although the results of his research cannot be extended to all young people in Canada, his methodology can be. Létourneau (2004) uses the terms *re-acknowledged* and *de-acknowledged* to define collective memory. He considers these terms important for collective memory because according to him:

they imply that memory (the past re-acknowledged) is the active, conscious, and therefore selective, remembering of what has been in order to extend its positive impact and to favour the primacy of good (of good effects) over bad (harmful effects) in building the future. (p. 16)

Collective memory is both remembering and forgetting or both recognition and distance at the same time. In the case of forgetting (the past de-acknowledged), Letourneau (2004) says, “the liberating amnesia consists less in ignoring, repudiating or erasing what has been than in deactivating the bad (or the seeds of harm) so as to grant amnesty to what has been, liberate oneself from one’s enduring furies, and free the future from what could prevent it from blossoming in a renewal” (p.16). According to Letourneau, choice in relation to memory is unavoidably a matter of collective morality and political culture, and is carried out in keeping with the stakes and challenges of the present. He also discusses the risks and challenges of using the past. According to Letourneau, remembering is like renovation. It is not a betrayal of the past; it is an updating of the old in keeping with the challenges and constraints of the present. He emphasizes that memories are always put into their own context. They are reinvested with a meaning that will perpetuate the presence of yesterday in the creation of tomorrow.

My rationale to use narratives as the main instrument of data collection is situated in Jocelyn Létourneau’s argument that students’ narratives reflect a historical collective memory. The professional and organizational cultures of complex ‘modern’ societies are replete with narrative forms (Hunter, 1991; Mishler, 1997; Thomas, 1995). More generally, a narrative is a way of making sense of the world, at times equated with experience, time, history and life itself; more modestly, as a specific kind of discourse with conventionalized textual features (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Different scholars have used narratives as a means to study collective memory (Penuel & Wertsch, 1998; Wertsch and O’Connor, 1994, Goldberg, Porat & Schwarz, 2006; Wertsch, 2002; Létourneau, 2006). For example, Wertsch and O’Connor (1994) conducted a qualitative study in which they asked college students to write narratives about the origins of the United States. Wertsch (2002) used narratives to understand the process of collective

remembering in the Russian society. His empirical research provided opportunities to trace the evaluation of different narrative templates over time. His methodology is also useful to understand the process by which collective memory is consumed and negotiated by a society. Wertsch used questionnaires and essays written in the form of narratives by high school students and adults. His participants were recruited through the ‘snowball’ method. It was a comparative study between the Soviet educated and post-Soviet educated Russians and efforts were made to obtain participants from a range of class and educational backgrounds. Both Létourneau (2006) and Wertsch (2002) did qualitative studies and textual analysis. However, their sampling methods were different.

My aim is to understand how young people in Canada understand “the War on Terror” and make collective memories of it. Narratives work well to address the complexities and subtleties of collective memory and human experience. David Carr gives an account of why narratives normally satisfy and how, or in what sense, they actually explain human experiences with their complexities. Carr (2008) argues:

The satisfaction we normally feel with a narrative explanation should not be taken at face value, nor should it close off further inquiry. But there is no reason why we should not take it for what it is, a valuable and useful implement for understanding human action. (p. 30)

Narrative explanation is valuable and useful for me because reflecting critically on the narratives of young people in Canada helps me to understand how they structure the characters, main events, and sequence of the events of “the War on Terror”. Reissman (1993) views narrative as a means of gaining access to experiences. Since we do not live the experiences of another person, he tells us, “ we are actually getting a representation of those experiences through their telling of them” (p. 125). Proponents and advocates of narrative inquiry have sometimes argued that narratives provide analysts with particularly valuable insights into the organization of personal experience. As well as narratives seem to structure our understanding of events, or ourselves and

other social actors. Another reason to choose narratives as an instrument of data collection was that narratives, memory and identity are all implicated in narrative forms and content (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). The analysis of my participants' narratives provides me with valuable insights into the collective memories of their personal experiences about "the War on Terror". There are advantages as well as some disadvantages of using collective narratives. An advantage is that these narratives have less likely to be written for a person who is an outsider for the participants (less influential role of the researcher). These narratives are less shaped by who the writers think their audience is. The disadvantage is that I create my own meanings from their representations. As a result, inevitably bring my own experiences into their readings.

In the second phase of my research project, I use the follow-up interviews to collect additional information and to further expand my participants' narratives. However, in order for the interviewing to be purposeful, I ask about the same events and characters that they mentioned in their narratives, rather than posing questions that elicit only generalizations or abstract opinions (Weiss, 1994). The disadvantage of interviewing a young man or woman from the dominant culture in Canada is that responses are more likely to be influenced by multiple identities such as a person from visible minorities, an immigrant from Pakistan, and as a Muslim woman or one may say an outsider.

### **Paradigmatic Assumptions**

This study is based within the following paradigmatic assumptions:

1. For this study, narratives comprise the stories written by my participants. Narratives are interpretations and the "real" War on Terror is only knowable through interpretations.
2. Individuals choose selected events and experiences and attach their own meaning or value to experiences in life according to their worldviews.

3. Certain narratives about “the War on Terror” circulate around us, and there are certain commonalities and differences in these narratives.
4. There are multiple representations, multiple meanings, and multiple interpretations of each and every historical phenomenon.
5. There are multiple communities of interpretation that shape individual understandings.

### **Participants Recruitment and Research Sites**

I recruited my participants from large introductory first year undergraduate Arts courses offered in a large urban university in Ontario (age range 18-27). Two different courses were chosen in order to achieve possible variations in the participants, which offered comparisons between participants’ narratives. I contacted the professors who were teaching introductory courses in these two departments, and took their permission to collect the data from their classes. I gave them the letter of permission (included as Appendix E) to sign. There were three copies of the letter of permission. One copy was for the Ethics Board, a second for the professors teaching the course, and a third copy for my custody.

I went to their classrooms and introduced the nature and purpose of my research project. Then I distributed a questionnaire, the consent form, a demographic questionnaire, and an introductory letter per person. A total of 103 students decided to write the narrative of “the War on Terror”. The exercise took place in the classrooms with their professor present, but not, however, providing any input about the research project. I waited outside the classroom. At the end of the exercise, I collected 103 narratives, but excluded four narratives. Two narratives were not included because the participants were only seventeen years old and my ethics approval applied only to adults. The other two were excluded because the participants were above 30, as indicated by their personal information in the demographic questionnaires. My study focuses

only on young people (from 18-27 years old). Thus, this study is based on 99 narratives written by first year university students with a variety of backgrounds, and the follow-up interviews of those four participants who expressed their willingness to participate in the second phase of my study. All interviews were conducted on the same university campus.

### **Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection**

The sample strategy in this study is purposive (Patton, as cited in Maxwell, 2005, p. 88) and criterion based (Lecompte & Preissle, as cited in Maxwell, p. 88), with all participants being students of an urban university in Ontario. My selection decisions took into account the feasibility of access to the participants and data collection. The criteria for selection were chosen purposefully and provided with representations for the populace that would not occur by utilizing a random sampling strategy (Maxwell, p. 88; Creswell, 2007, p. 110). I was expecting that the selection of this sample will offer me a wide range of variation within the group. Guba and Lincoln (1989) referred to this as “maximum variation sampling “(p. 178). That’s why I choose my sample from first year introductory courses hoping that these classes generally represent the greatest possible variations in the context of religion, gender, ethnicity, culture, and national backgrounds.

### **Data Collection**

#### **The First Phase of Data Collection: Narrative Writing**

I utilized three different instruments to collect my data but my participants’ written responses were my main instrument of data collection. The other two instruments were the demographic questionnaires, and the follow-up interviews. I collected my data in two different phases. In the first phase, data is collected in the form of “written responses” or the narratives of

“the War on Terror”, from 103 students who were enrolled in two different courses. In the first class, the number of students enrolled was 130, out of which 45 students were present in the class on the day of data collection. I asked my participants to recall their memories, any information, feelings, and lived experiences related to “the War on Terror” and write them down in their narratives. I also asked them to write about the sources of information that they used to understand “the War on Terror”. I also mentioned in my introduction that if there are any/some unanswered questions about the study, students would be able to contact me via email or telephone. I informed them that after a month of this first phase of data collection, I would give the informed consent no. 2 (included as Appendix F) to those students who expressed their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview, by filling section B of the demographic questionnaire. Twelve students choose not to participate in the study. I gave my participants a letter of information (included as Appendix A). The letter introduced me, specified the purpose of my study. The letter of information also invited students to sign the informed consent form 1 (included as Appendix B). I also gave them a demographic questionnaire (included as Appendix C) and a set of sub-questions (included as Appendix D). The whole exercise was completed in an hour, and I collected a total of 33 written responses from the first class.

In the second class, the number of students enrolled was 200, out of which 79 students were present in the class. Nine students choose not to participate in the study. The whole exercise took place in their classrooms, with their instructor present. However, neither before the class nor during the exercise the participants were provided any input nor were informed about the exercise in advance. Since the goal of this whole exercise was to gain rich and original narratives of all participants. I told the participants that the data collected would only be used for academic research.

Only one Muslim participant showed interest in participating in the follow-up interview. While 15 non-Muslim participants agreed to participate in the follow up interviews. These participants filled section B of the demographic questionnaire to show their willingness to participate. However, in the second phase of data collection, only three non-Muslim participants and one Muslim participant actually participated in the follow-up interviews. In the end, I analyzed a total of 99 responses. I gave my participants the following sub-questions to stimulate their memories and to generate narratives about “the War on Terror”:

1. Please write a short essay on: What has been the course of “the War on Terror” from its beginning until today, the way you see it, you remember it and you experience it?
2. How has “the War on Terror” affected you?
3. From where did you get your information about “the War on Terror”? Such as:

(Please tick mark the source(s) you use)

- a. Internet: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. TV: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Radio: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Peers: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Any other source (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which sources are the most important one for your understanding of “the War on Terror”? Briefly explain how you used them and why.

Question number one is a narrative prompt question, while the second, third, and fourth are specifically designed to reveal how they construct the narratives. In narrative analytic terms it

can be said that students were required to construct a narrative and then explicitly write down their experiences about “the War on Terror”. However, most students responded by writing short narratives (mean length 122 words) many times collapsing together the first answer with the second, third and fourth which were supposedly argumentative answers. This kind of writing lent itself quite straightforwardly to the narrative analysis described later.

### **The Second Phase of Data Collection: The Follow-up Interviews**

After my initial analysis of the responses, I sent emails to those fifteen participants who showed their willingness to participate in the follow-up interviews. Five of them agreed to participate in the second phase of my study. One of them did not appear on the day. Nonetheless, I conducted the follow up interviews of four participants. Out of the four participants only one was a Muslim, and a first generation male immigrant from Palestine. The second participant was a male student whose parents were immigrants from Sri-Lanka, the third participant was an English-speaking male, and my fourth participant was an English speaking female student whose grandfather was Turkish.

In order to conduct the interviews, I met individually with each of the four participants. Inter-subjectivity and collaboration were key considerations during the data collection (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 30). Two interviews were conducted after a month of the completion of the first phase of data collection. The other two interviews were conducted in the next month. My main intention in these interviews was to obtain deeper insight into the data collected from the narratives. The interviews were also intended to provide another window to my participants’ thinking as they attempted to share their experiences and perspectives about “the War on Terror” in a one-on-one position with me.

Each of the interviews lasted about an hour. The interviews were audio-taped, clipped and coded with the participants’ permission (Crichton & Childs, 2005). Copies of the transcripts

were returned to only those participants who asked to view their transcribed interviews. The interviews took place on the campus of the same university in which the first phase of data collection (narrative writing) was completed. The data collected from these follow-up interviews helped me to expand, clarify and/or analyze in depth my participants' engagement with "the War on Terror". Interview questions were broad and open-ended to encourage my participants to share their experiences easily. Morgan (1997) believes it is an advantage to conduct individual interviews because it provides a way to gain more in-depth accounts of the participant's experiences. The descriptions of events in their lives are not thwarted as each individual has an hour or more to talk. Participants may be more open about what they say when alone with the researcher. The questions were developed in a way that directly and indirectly addressed the research questions being asked in the research project. I conducted interviews in the same semi-structured format, with special attention given to ensuring homogeneous interview style and almost the same questions. Then I transcribed the interviews and made sure that they are verbatim. All participants were assigned a number to protect their identities, and the interview recordings and their transcription are saved on my computer and my research supervisor's computer for the length of time required by the university.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Studies of the 'war on terrorism' discourse have employed different units of analysis, such as membership categories (Leudar et al., 2004), strategic speech acts (Lazar & Lazar, 2004), grammar (Butt et al., 2004), discourse deixis and space (Chilton, 2004), informational accuracy and flow (Altheide, 2006; Kellner, 2005, 2007), and metaphors (Lakoff, 2004).

My analysis is informed by a combination of socially oriented critical discourse and textual analysis traditions. With Critical Discourse Analysis, I share an interest in examining texts in an

effort to link the micro-level use of language with macro-level social concerns (Fairclough, 1992). As a result of this combination my analysis focuses on both how and what things are said. Instead of simply looking at events and characters in the narrative of “the War on Terror”, the analytic lens focused on the stories told about them (Riessman, 1993), the way rhetorical styles were used to represent banal nationalism (Billig, 1985), and the way the use of language was dialectically positioned in relation to larger socio-political concerns (Fairclough, 1992) about “the War on Terror”. In the last chapter of my thesis I employed textual analysis to understand how my participants construct collective memories of the war. The analysis itself may best be termed as ‘theoretically informed induction’. That is, I approached the data with a theoretical framework in mind, and then attempted to pull out the larger patterns I saw in the texts.

In order to get to know my participants as people, I asked each participant to fill out a demographic questionnaire providing me with information about his or her religion, ethnic background, location of their high school, age, and gender. This questionnaire also provided me with information about the language(s) spoken at their homes. The questionnaire was an effective instrument of data collection that helps me to develop a better analytical focus. In the first stage of data analysis I focused on the content of the narratives written by my participants and used textual analysis. In the next step I focused on the rhetorical style.

In this part the theoretical framework for the data analysis is a multi-disciplinary critical discourse analysis approach that helped me to relate discursive and socio-political aspects of the narratives of my participants. Among the scholars whose works have profoundly contributed to the development of CDA are van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2005, 2006), Wodak (2000), and Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1999). CDA helped me to understand those discourse strategies that typically influence collective memories and

imaginings of my participants. Van Dijk (2006) mentions:

One of these strategies is generalization, in which case a concrete specific example that has made an impact on people's mental models, is generalized to more general knowledge or attitudes, or even fundamental ideologies. The most striking recent example is the manipulation of U.S and world opinion about terrorism after 9/11, in which very emotional and strongly opinionated mental models held by citizens about this event were generalized to more general, shared fears, attitudes and ideologies about terrorism and related issues. (p. 370)

Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. I was interested in CDA for data analysis because it helped me to ask questions about the way specific discourse structures were deployed in the narratives of my participants. Czarniawska (2004) added another element to the analysis: a deconstruction of the stories, an unmaking of them by such analytic strategies as exposing dichotomies, examining silences, and attending to disruption and contradiction. I used CDA to deconstruct narratives of my participants to expose dichotomies, and to examine silences in the response of my participants. According to van Dijk (1998) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts. In a similar vein, Fairclough (1993) defines CDA as:

Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how "such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (p. 135)

CDA allowed me to create a research text that illuminates the experiences of not only young

Canadian people in the context of “the War on Terror”, but also how the dominant discourses shape their relationships with each other and the Canadian society itself. As the core of CDA is a detailed description, explanation and critique of the ways dominant discourse influence such socially shared knowledge, attitudes and ideologies (van Dijk, 1998, p. 258). Of crucial importance, for the purpose of my research project was that according to van Dijk (1998), “mental representations are often articulated along Us versus Them dimensions, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms” (p. 22). Analyzing and making explicit this contrastive dimension of Us versus Them is central to most of my research. van Dijk believes that one who desires to make transparent such an ideological dichotomy in discourse needs to analyze discourse in the following way (1998, pp. 61-63):

1. Examining the context of the discourse: historical, political or social background of a conflict and its main participants; and
2. Analyzing groups, power relations and conflicts involved.

My initial analytical phase involved segregating ninety-nine narratives into the narratives of Muslim and non-Muslim participants on the basis of knowledge obtained from their demographic questionnaires. The next step involved a journey through the narratives of my participants as a reader without any prior themes or theory in my mind. As a result of this reading, I analyzed how my participants represented “the War on Terror”, i.e., what did they say about the nature of the war, when was it started in their opinion, what the main characters and events of the war are, and who it affects and how. Frequent presence of events or arguments is taken as an indication of what aspect of a situation the participants consider to be most salient.

In the next step, I read these narratives again to see how my participants adopt different

political positions about the main characters, events, and the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. Whether these positions are the same, oppositional or are overlapping each other, and what the emplotments are that characterize the narratives of “the War on Terror”. I also look at what type of knowledge their political positions allow, and what they do not. In this phase of analysis, I used theories from the fields of representations and narrative inquiry to situate my analysis.

In my third reading, I focused on the rhetorical style of my participants because narratives cannot be taken simply and interpreted solely for what has been said and told. Rather, they have to be *analyzed*, and the analysis of narratives has to work with what we have, the actual and the delivery/style of the wording (Bamberg, 2006). The analysis at this stage adhered to the rigor of detailed linguistic analysis by examining rhetorical styles of my participants in their narratives and transcripts of their interviews. At the same time it attempted to describe and interpret what is identified in the textual analysis with references to the characters and events of “the War on Terror”. The data is the repository of information about how young people in Canada understand “the War on Terror”. The cultural information and the discourse of a particular community are inferred by examining the frequent use of deixis in the text. Frequent use of a particular rhetorical style reveals a covert cultural and ideological message since “recurrent ways of talking . . . provide familiar and conventional representations of people and events, by filtering and crystallizing ideas, and by providing pre-fabricated means by which ideas can be easily conveyed and grasped” (Stubbs, 1996, p. 158). I analyzed the rhetorical style of my participants to understand how they position themselves and the characters of the war in the semiotic field. The use of deixis in a banal manner was my focus in this step of analysis. I analyzed how my participants use the deixis of small words like “we/us” or “they/them”. I

explored the implications of these deixis by drawing on theoretical concepts from the field of nationalism studies, and especially by considering the role of language in legitimizing certain type of knowledge while maintaining certain differences.

In my last phase of data analysis, I focused on the sources of information used by my participants to analyze how technologies of memory enter into these narratives of “the War on Terror”. I explored the sources or technologies of memory used by my participants to collect the information about the war, and what role does their personal context or background play in the selection of and access to these sources. This textual analysis helped me to understand how my participants make collective memory of the war. In the last phase of analysis, I relied heavily on theoretical concepts from the field of collective memory studies.

In sum, my data analysis involved readings for the following set of questions:

1. How do my participants understand “the War on Terror”?
  - a. What is the nature of “the War on Terror” according to the participants of this study?
  - b. What is the purpose of “the War on Terror” according to the participants of this study?
  - c. What are the links between “the War on Terror” and the U.S. occupation of Iraq?
  - d. What are the links between “the War on Terror” and the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan?
  - e. What are the effects of this war on the lives of the participants of this study?
2. How do the participants of this study emplot the narrative of “the War on Terror”?
  - a. What do they identify as the start of “the War on Terror”?
  - b. What events do they identify?
  - c. What are the dominant characters in these narratives?
  - d. Are there any differences or similarities in these narratives in relation to the events and

characters of the narrative of “the War on Terror”?

3. How do my participants use a deixis of little words in their narratives?
4. How do my participants construct collective memories of “the War on Terror”?
  - a. How do technologies of memory enter into these narratives?

I analyzed how the narrator took up various positions around these questions, by looking at the content of the narrative and their rhetorical style. I then focused on two things: First, the content of the narrative and second, how language has been used to legitimize certain knowledge. As my participants wrote their narratives, they remembered the instances and events in their lives related to the topic, as they shared their thoughts, they went back and forth in time. They did not necessarily tell stories, but excerpts from their stories. This aspect is important to the fit of this method, as it is realistic to expect that this is how people relate their experiences. It is my task as a researcher to relate the events to each other in a way that created a holistic view, and it is in this process of analysis that I become immersed in the narratives. Cultural settings, physical surroundings, and other people in the participant’s life are incorporated into the narrative.

In the end, I want to mention that I continuously kept the following warning in my mind given by Atkinson & Delamont (2006) about the analysis of narratives:

While the ‘voices’ of otherwise muted groups may be charged with political significance, we cannot proceed as if they were guaranteed authenticity simply by virtue of narrators’ social positions. The testimony of the powerless and the testimony of the powerful equally deserve close analytic attention. Moral commitment is not a substitute for social-scientific analysis. (p. 170)

I was continuously conscious about this issue during the process of data analysis and paid equal analytic attention to the voices of all participants. I repeatedly tried to take myself out of what my participants are saying and to focus only on their representations.

## **Evidence of Quality**

The aim of my research project is not to uncover the ultimate truth of “the War on Terror” but to discover how young people in Canada have come to understand it. How my participants represent this war through their narratives. How I represent their understanding (expressed through interpretations) may differ (Mishler, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 1993). I do not view the risk that my interpretations may differ as a threat to the validity of the study because valuing the interpretive openness allows for competing explanations (Czarniawska, 2004). The most important strategy I adopt is to follow the procedure and to present the participants’ voices as much as possible in front of the readers. The readers can judge if there is any discrepancy in the data and my interpretations of it. Discrepant data is identified and evaluated so as to determine whether they are more plausible than the conclusions with which they are discrepant (Maxwell, 2005, p. 112). Without ignoring discrepant data that does not fit with conclusions, consulting with others and meeting criteria for coherence is used to ensure quality of evidence. Ultimately, the most important aspect for me is to not ignore discrepant data that does not fit with conclusions. Explanations related to the research questions are coherent in three ways: (a) intelligible in human terms, (b) appropriate subject matter, (c) causally related. There is a consensus in the literature on storytelling research, that it should not be judged by the same criteria that are applied to more traditional and broadly accepted qualitative and quantitative research methods (see for instance, Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993). My research project provides an understanding of the narrative of the war from the perspective of young people in Canada and seeks to elaborate collective memories of a complex and human-centred event “the War on Terror”. These narratives themselves are interpretations, and my analysis of the narratives is an interpretation of these interpretations.

Another area of concern for a traditional scientific study's validity involves the concept of reactivity (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 108-109). Reactivity occurs in any interview situation where the situation and the interviewer influence the responses of the person being interviewed (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 164). Dealing with reactivity involves considering the effects of how the person being interviewed is influenced, and what effects this has on the interpretations made from the interview. For this study, sources of reactivity are valued as part of the collaborative relationship between the researcher and the participant (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 50). I do not strive to eliminate reactivity from the interviews rather I tried to practice a consistent interview style with each of my participants. These interviews were a means for me to become involved in the production of a detailed narrative of the war. Considering the interview as a small piece or sample of a larger social reality (or person's life) is an appropriate way to keep perspective on the value of interviewing real people (Czarniawska, 2004). My study values collaboration in a way that emphasizes the inability and undesirability of being a completely objective and innocent researcher. I value the inter-subjectivity of my project, and my intensive semi-structured interviews are conducted in a way that helps me to collect rich data that is highly variable and deep enough to obtain meaningful insight to the components of the story (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 50). In this research, reliability is achieved through persuasiveness and coherence of the data. For persuasiveness, I supported my theoretical claims with evidence from my participants' accounts and by considering alternative interpretations of the data. For coherence, I continuously modified my initial assumptions about my participants' beliefs and views in the light of the structure of a particular narrative and recurrent themes that unify the text.

### **The Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations**

Steps were taken to ensure the protection of the participants and the university as related

to confidentiality and informed consent. A request to the University's Research Ethics Board (REB) for the approval to conduct this research was submitted and approved before any step of research was conducted. The REB approval number given for this research study is (#06-08-47). All participants read and signed an informed consent document (see Appendix E). Participants' confidentiality is protected according to the requirement of the REB. Other than general demographic information, I did not collect any specific identifying information from my participants. In the case of those who showed their interest in participating in the follow-up interview, I replaced their real names with numbers. Numbers are used in any reports or publications resulting from this research to ensure anonymity of the participants. There was no obligation to fill the demographic questionnaire. If a participant had any reservations, he/she could write a narrative without completing the demographic questionnaire. I explained to my participants that I am only interested in the larger patterns that would emerge in their narrative of the war. I know that recalling memories can be emotionally painful, as it may cause emotional strain for some of my participants, so I also mentioned a few of the many valuable benefits that can come with sharing memories and life stories (Atkinson, 2007, p. 235)

1. A clearer perspective on personal experiences and feelings is gained, which brings greater meaning to one's life.
2. Greater self-knowledge and a stronger self-image and self-esteem are gained.

An important factor that leads to the quality of my study was the reflective thought of the researcher (Burns & Grove, 1997). I assure trustworthiness of the gathered data by using a consistent method of data collection.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In dealing with narratives, I was confronted with certain limitations. Conle (2000)

described the open and often ambiguous state of the researcher using narratives as:

open-ended, but the outcome is not arbitrarily decided by me. Neither, though, is there one truth that I simply have to find and tell about. There is no past that, if discovered, completely determines the results of the inquiry. (p. 192)

I recognize these challenges, while some factors pose limitations in this study:

1. All participants involved in this study were taking higher education courses. They did not represent each and every section of young people in Canada.
2. The study was conducted at just one urban university in Ontario.
3. The study is based on purposefully selected participants. The focus of the narratives is to document their stories rather than establishing verification of events or generalization. As Kramp (2004) suggested, “Each story has a point of view that will differ, depending on who is telling the story, who is being told, as well as when and where the story is told. Consequently, verisimilitude-the appearance or likelihood that something is or could be true or real-is a more appropriate criterion for narrative knowing than verification or proof of truth” (p. 108).
4. Another concern may relate to the fact that the study depends on the honesty of my participants. The participants in my study would have had no reason to distort reality, and I do not believe that any of them did. I am not concerned about possible distortion of my participants’ memories affecting their narratives, or my interpretations. I made the assumption that what my participants told me or wrote in their narratives about their experiences was a sincere representation of the facts of their lives, as they themselves perceived them. I believe that there was no reason for my participants to deliberately exaggerate because my research had nothing to do with creating good or bad impressions about their personal lives.
5. The issues related to generalization: The findings reflect one of the kinds of pattern that are

available in the society.

6. There is no way to represent Afghan people voices.
7. The context of the research is specifically related to Canadian society.
8. I do not look into how individual memory works or the psychology of individual memory.

## **CHAPTER 3. THE NARRATIVE OF THE WAR ON TERROR**

In this chapter, I report how young people in Canada understand and represent “the War on Terror” in their narratives. My analysis is based on data collected from ninety-nine narratives written by first year university students and the follow-up interviews of four participants. The participants for this study were studying in an urban university in Ontario, and had highly diversified religious, ethnic, cultural, and political backgrounds. They were taking a variety of courses in different departments. Students were asked without prior warning to write a narrative on their personal experiences in relation to “the War on Terror” since its beginning. I want to mention here that the participants’ identity was requested through a voluntary demographic questionnaire. All participants filled their demographic questionnaires in the beginning of the exercise. The participants were given an hour to elaborate in writing how they understand the War on terror. The whole exercise of writing the narratives took place in their classrooms. Their professors were present during the whole exercise. However, they did not provide the class with any input about the research. The four follow-up interviews were also conducted at the campus of the same university after two months of the first phase of data collection.

### **Description of the Participants**

As determined by the demographic questionnaires, out of ninety-nine participants nine are Muslims and only two of them are women. Out of a total of ninety non-Muslim participants sixty-eight are women and twenty-two are men participants. Out of these ninety non-Muslim participants sixty-two are Anglophone, and nine are Francophone. Only one is a First nation person from Ontario, and twenty-seven are either first- or second-generation immigrants from a variety of national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds such as Middle Eastern, South Asian, East

Asian, East European, West European, African, and North American background. None of the Muslim participants are Anglophone or Francophone. The age of my participants varies from eighteen to twenty-five years.

**Table 4.1. Demographic Details of the Participants**

Aboriginal Participants	Non-Muslim Participants	Muslim Participants	French Speaking Participants	English Speaking Participants	Second Generation Immigrant Participants	First-Generation Immigrant Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants
1 (First nation)	90	9	9	62	19	8	70	29

Of the 99 participants who answered the questions, given in both the demographic questionnaire and the small set of questions to generate the narrative of the war on Terror, only nine participants produce short answers of four to five sentences. Furthermore, of those who write short answers, a sizeable minority ( $n = 4$ ) made comments such as “I do not know” or “I feel distant from this war”. Of the 90 participants a sizeable minority ( $n = 9$ ) produce three to four paragraphs, while the rest produce at least a two page long answer.

**Table 4.2. Length of 99 Answers in Words Count**

NO OF PARTICIPANTS	WORDS COUNT
9	407-498
28	383-368
45	299-200
8	199-101
9	98-54

## Data Analysis

This study can be seen as both textual and critical discourse analysis. In this analysis, I work intensively with the texts provided by my participants. I read, re-read and try to understand and discern the meaning of the texts. I find that a total of ninety participants' answers revolved around a set of characters and events. These events and characters are bound together in a cause and effect relationship. According to White (1987), a narrative is a sequence of events linked by a causal connection. These answers present a narrative account of "the War on Terror", while nine answers are not bound together in a cause and effect relationship. I will provide only a descriptive analysis of these answers in this chapter as represented in the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants. My intention here is to describe at length the content of the narratives that forms the basis of my participants' collective memory.

### **The Narrative of "the War on Terror"**

As I have shown in the next section of this chapter, one of the major findings of this study is that for the majority ( $n = 90$ ) of my participants, 9/11 is the starting point of the narrative of "the War on Terror". They discuss a causal connection between this event and two other major events of the war: the United States of America's invasion of Iraq and the entry of the Canadian troops in Afghanistan.

In the first phase of analysis, participants' narratives are divided into two main categories: narratives written by self-identified Muslims and narratives written by non-Muslim university students as determined by the demographic questionnaires. The narrative of "the War on Terror" is a sequence of events linked by a causal connection among the characters and events such as who is fighting whom, when and how did it start, who started it, why, and what the major events of this war are. Or in other words, what do my participants identify as the starting point of

the war, who the main characters of this war are, what the links between the events of 9/11 and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq are, what the links between the US invasion and occupation of Iraq and “the War on Terror” are, and what is the role of Canada in this war? As I analyze the narratives, certain elements are brought together into a story that “unites and brings meaning to the data as contributors to the goal or purpose” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). The events and characters are selected on the basis of repeating patterns and the level of importance they had in my participants’ answers. They are then analyzed individually in order to better understand and interpret their presence in the narrative of the war as represented by my participants.

The selection of quotes presented in this study is based on how well students’ texts, despite their apparent diversity, help me to reveal an overall pattern, which reflects on how a narrator adopts a particular position on the war. In most of the cases, the quoted texts represent what I observed to be the repeated patterns of utterances. In some cases, the expressions may only be uttered on one or two occasions but those occasions are marked as having special symbolic or historical importance. My analysis also reports whether the selected texts represent repeated or one-time expressions. However, invariably these texts are selected with the goal of illustrating, how my participants emplot the narrative of “the War on Terror”. The emplotment is represented by certain main events and characters with patterned reasoning practices.

### **Emplotment in the Narratives of “the War on Terror”**

Emplotment is a term coined by Hayden White in 1978. The formation of this word is em- as prefix variant of en- + plot + -suffix -ment. em-plot-ment. It means the assembling of a series of historical events into a narrative with a plot. In *The Historical Text As Literary Artifact* White (2001) states:

Histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of *mere* chronicles; and stories in turn are made out of chronicles by an operation which I have elsewhere called emplotment. And by emplotment I mean simply the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific *kinds* of plot structures, in precisely the way that Frye has suggested is the case with fiction in general. (p. 223)

In simple words, emplotment means the storyline, the scheme, or a sequence of the main events in each narrative. However, the labels “plot” or “emplotment” are meant to convey much more than a mere linear sequencing of events. The purposes of emplotment are sense making and interpretation. These are two particularly important functions of narratives in educational settings. Mcvee, (2005) notes, “Emplotment is a dialectical process between the events being recalled and the theme or purpose of the story” (p. 167). My participants recall the events that have relevance to the course of “the War on Terror” and make a narrative out of them. The process of emplotment in the narratives of my participants involves arranging events in a certain order, and deciding which events to include or exclude. It also involves answering the questions: what happened? When and why? During this process of emplotment some participants stress upon some events and subordinate others. Each and every narrative in this study is like a quilt made up of many pieces or events fitted together by its emplotment. This emplotment creates different narrative arcs. I found four versions of narrative arcs in the responses of my participants. The construction of each narrative arc depends on how different events are intertwined and linked together. Each version represents different sequences of events and progression of the characters working through in an overall arc in the narratives of “the War on Terror”.

Each and every arc concludes with the moral (The noun meaning “moral exposition of a story” is attested from c.1500. Moralistic formed 1865. On-line Etymology Dictionary, © 2001 Douglas Harper). Narratives are always emplotted in a way that provide the moral, a sense of

direction, as part of a larger framework that gives coherence and meaning to the sequence of events. Narratives in any form have a moral aspect because human beings rarely experience events as neutral, and when they narrate their experience, they are compelled to take an evaluative stance vis-a-vis the non-ordinary circumstances that inspire their stories (Bruner, 1990). When my participants create narrative accounts of their own experience, they seek to convince their readers about the moral justifiability of their own positions and main actors' actions in relation to "the War on Terror". These 99 narratives have both positive and negative characters. These characters make mistakes, take actions and face the consequences of their actions. The participants who demonstrate strong narrative skills write stories that feature Bruner's "dual landscape". At the first level of the landscape, they report a sequence of causally linked events, and at the second level they explain and evaluate those events by describing the results of actors' actions, goals, and motives.

### **The Narrative Arcs**

My participants' narratives reflect a meaningful connection between different events of "the War on Terror". Emplotment depends on the extent to which the participants perceive events of the war as meaningfully connected. As a result of this connection among different events of the war, my participants construct different narrative arcs. The narrative arc is the framework for the sequence of events that make up the plot we see, and the story we imagine. A typical version of the narrative arc sequence is the following formulation: setup, complication, development, resolution, and denouement (Thompson, 1995, pp. 28-29). The simple and classic structure of the narrative arc is the following: starting point, challenge, development, and conclusion. As Ochs & Capps (2002) point out:

This structure isn't merely optional; it's essential. When people recount the events of their lives to others, they don't spout off disjointed details; they transform those events into narratives of personal experience with a clearly identifiable structure, every single time. (p. 154)

The majority of the participants of this study ( $n = 90$ ) sort out different events related to “the War on Terror” and transform them into a narrative arc with a clear beginning, development of the phenomenon, and an end. The narrative arc is an inherent part of the way my participants make sense of their experience related to the war on Terror. There are four different types of narrative arcs in the responses of my participants. All these ( $n = 90$ ) narratives of the war on terror have a starting point, central conflicts or development, and an ending point or a “conclusion”. A total of three out of the ninety participants do not start their narratives with the events of 9/11, while constructing narrative arcs. These participants choose a different starting point for their narrative of the war as compared to the other ( $n = 87$ ) participants as I have shown in the following section. The participants use this structure to recount all those events that are deemed relevant for the story to flow into an arc.

**The First Version of the Narrative Arc** sequence ( $n = 39$ ) represents the following formulation: 9/11 happened, and the war in Afghanistan began to crush those terrorists who were responsible for 9/11; After that the United States of America attacked Iraq to capture weapons of mass destruction; After seven years of fighting, “the War on Terror” is still going on and the net result of this war is only deaths and destruction. This version of narrative arc is represented in the following statements of three different participants. First take a look at the narrative of a 19 year old male and first generation immigrant from China:

Following [the] attacks on the World Trade Centre on the day of September 11, 2002 [sic], I can remember three things that affected the world: [The] American attack on Afghanistan, additional security measures, and [the] attack on Iraq. I think that the world

is controlled and manipulated by some powerful countries who are free to do anything in the name of the War on Terror. There is no limit of deaths and destruction and still the war is expanding. (Participant #74)

The starting point of this statement is “the day of September 11, 2002 [sic] attacks on the World Trade Centre”, the middle part is “[The] American attack on Afghanistan, additional security measures, and [the] attack on Iraq”, and the concluding part is “deaths and destruction” in the name of “the War on Terror”. Take a look at another statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

The course of the War on Terror, to me anyway, began on September 11, when the planes were hijacked and crashed. [The] U.S. invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq. It then turned into something that the U.S. seems to see as revenge and it is never ending hunt for the people responsible for the attack. It is still going on today without producing any results and killing thousands of innocent people, and I don't think that there is any end in the sight. When the U.S.A. invaded these countries, I don't think they [Americans] were thinking that they were helping the countries in the Middle East or the world to protect it from terrorism. I think they knew that they were helping themselves. It has changed the way many people act and think about this War on Terror, and not necessarily in a good way. (Participant #42)

The starting point of this statement is “The course of the war on terror, to me anyway, began on September 11”, the middle part is “[The] U.S. invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq”, and the concluding part is “killing thousands of innocent people” in the name of “the War on Terror”.

Another statement by an English speaking, 19 year old male student also shows the same structure:

I was in grade 7 when 9/11 happened and not for one second was I afraid of terrorists. It never seemed real to me. From the start, I understood that Osama Bin Laden [and] Al-Qaida had done it, not Saddam Hussain as Americans wanted us to believe. I also learned that it was almost decidedly due to [the] American support of Israel. In 2001 they went into Afghanistan and in 2003 they went into Iraq. They are killing people in Afghanistan

and Iraq and pretend [ing] that it has something to do with 9/11. Americans decided to defeat the terror with terror and thanks to the Bush Doctrine they are spending billions of dollars and doing everything except getting Bin Laden. (Participant #70)

These statements construct an arc that represents a sequence of events. This sequence of events make up the emplotment we see in these narratives. This arc is made up of three major segments: a starting point, central conflicts or development, and an ending point or a “conclusion”. The starting point is “The course of the war on terror began on September 11”. Then there is a discussion of central conflicts in relation to “the War on Terror” such as, “The American attack on Afghanistan, and [the] attack on Iraq/ In 2001 they went into Afghanistan and in 2003 they went into Iraq”. The last segment of this arc is the ending point or the conclusion. The conclusion of these narratives can be summarized in the words of participant # 74, “deaths and destruction”. The moral of these narratives is that the war is immoral because it produces only victims.

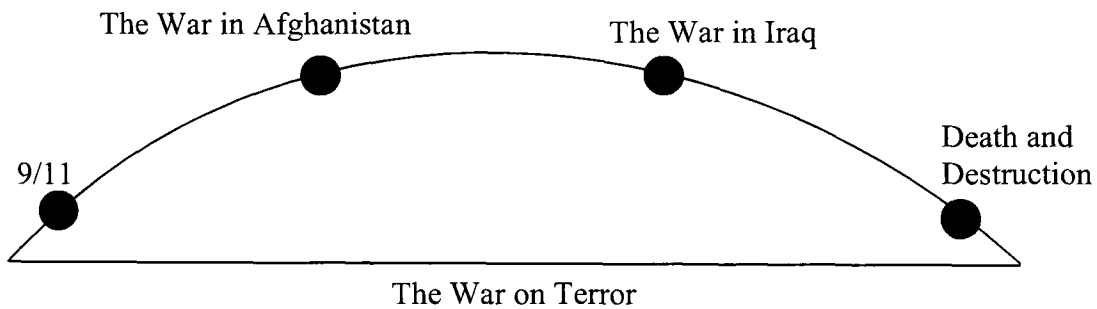


Figure 3.1. The first version of the narrative arc

**The Second Version of the Narrative Arc** sequence ( $n = 27$ ) represents the following formulation: 9/11 happened; “the War on Terror” was mobilized through the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan; and it is an unjust war that gave the U.S. an excuse to invade other countries. This version of narrative arc is represented in the following statement of an English speaking, 19 year old female student:

I remember being at school the day it happened. It was the beginning of my high school journey. I was sitting in my first period class when the intercom came on. On 9/11 the principal acknowledged us and informed us that there had been an attack on the twin towers in New York City, NY. I then remember George Bush stepping into action and declaring the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan. So he could a) be aware of the dictatorship in Iraq and put an end to it and b) find Osama Bin Laden and his terrorist group. Now I believe that the War on Terror, particularly in Iraq should not have occurred because I do not understand why so many people have to die in order for a country to be “free” of dictatorship. The people of Iraq should not have been bothered. It is their religion, their own nation where they are free to decide who their rulers are and how they want to run their country. It is not up to [the] United States to decide. I believe they should have gone after Osama Bin Laden and his group in Afghanistan and left Iraq alone. Yes, I agree that he is better dead than torturing millions of people, but I do not think that the American government has the right to invade other countries because their customs are different. (Participant #34)

The starting point of this narrative arc is “9/11”, the middle part is “George Bush stepping into action and declaring a War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan”, and the concluding part is “I do not think that the American government has the right to invade other countries” in the name of “the War on Terror”. Take a look at another statement of an English speaking, 18 year old male student:

My understanding of the War on Terror is conflicted as the term is distorted to accomplish certain objectives by politicians. If used in the sense of a response to the attacks of 9/11, it could not be justified as a just war. However, this war has been mobilized through the U.S. invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan. The War on Terror comes across as the political fear-mongering tool of the U.S. such as the threat of communism was used from the 50s to [the] 80s. (Participant #60)

The starting point of this statement is “a response to the attacks of 9/11”, the middle part is “this war has been mobilized through the U.S. invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan”, and the concluding part is “the political fear-mongering tool of the U.S.” used in the name of “the War on Terror”.

These statements construct another arc. The starting point of this arc is the same as we saw in the first version, “the War on Terror” started as a response to the attacks of 9/11”. Then there is a discussion of central conflicts in relation to this war but the sequence of events is not chronological as it was in the first version. In this second arc, participants mentioned the war in Iraq first as compared to the war in Afghanistan, “a war on terror in Iraq and Afghanistan/ this war has been mobilized through the U.S. invasion in Iraq and Afghanistan”. The war in Iraq occupies a prominent place in their discussion, “I believe that the war on terror, particularly in Iraq should not have occurred because I do not understand why so many people have to die in order for a country to be “free” of dictatorship”/ they are free to decide what their rulers are and how they want to run their country. It is not up to [the] United States to decide”. The last segment of this arc can be summarized in the words of participant # 60, “it could not be justified as a just war”. The moral of these narratives is that “the War on Terror” is not a justifiable war.

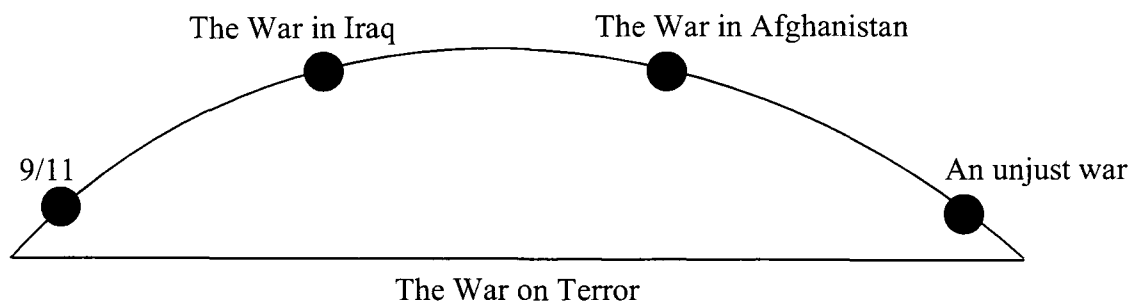


Figure 3.2. The second version of the narrative arc

**The Third Version of the Narrative Arc** sequence (n=21) represents the following formulation: “the War on Terror” started due to what happened on 9/11; the war in Iraq began; and how this war has itself turned into a big mistake. This version of narrative arc is represented in the following statement of an English speaking, 18 year old male student:

September 11, 2001 [is] a date that will live in infamy. It is the day that the War on

Terror was based on. I was probably too young to understand the full severity of the situation [then] but looking back now, I begin to see that this war is all demonic work, especially the [role of the] U.S. People were consumed by fear and anger and it was claimed that this war is waged to give people a sense of comfort and justice. Slowly, however, the nature of the War on Terror began to change. Whispers of Saddam Husain's weapons of mass destruction and the threat of Iraq began to creep in the minds of Americans. The war in Iraq began, which eventually became one of the biggest political blunders of all time. The war created in the name of the War on Terror has itself turned into a big mistake. Instead of this war being necessary, it has become useless, [and a] wastage of innocent lives and money, all in the name of terror. Now the terror has become a tool of destruction [and] creating [an] economic crisis. An economic crisis which may become more severe due to [the] poor decisions made by our governments. (Participant #79)

The starting point of this statement is "September 11, 2001", the middle part is "The war in Iraq", and the concluding part is "it has become useless, [and a] wastage of innocent lives" on the name of "the War on Terror". Take a look at another statement of an English speaking, 22 year old female student:

In grade ten, I was taking a social studies class, and my teacher was very enthusiastic about what had happened on that day of 9/11. We talked about what was going on in the world in the name of the War on Terror at that time, as well as what had gone back in the past. One day he came in with a photocopy of a newspaper article from that morning. It said that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and that [the] U.S. was going to invade Iraq; well, at that point I did not really know what to think. And my teacher asked us if we thought there were weapons of mass destruction. I just could not help thinking if I was in a corner with no one willing to help me (because who really wants to go up against the U.S. when there may be a reason to agree with them), and I had devastating weapons, wouldn't I try to cripple them before they had a chance to attack me?

Since then, it's been hard to blindly believe; you cannot ignore the fact that the War on Terror is a war against a non- tangible enemy. Who is a terrorist? What is a terrorist? What are the defining differences between a terrorist and a rebel against exploitation and injustice? I keep thinking about the case of Ireland. It was a bloody collision between two

groups separated by religion and a history of violence, or terrorism, and I wonder whether this War on Terrorism is the same thing or somewhat different. How does more killing in the name of war on terror can stop the pain that perpetuates these things? (Participant #48)

The starting point of this statement is “9/11”, the middle part is “[the] U.S. was going to invade Iraq”, and the concluding part is “more killing” in the name of “the War on Terror”.

Again the arc starts with the memories of the day of 9/11, “September 11, 2001 [is] a date that will live in infamy/ In grade ten, I was taking a social studies class, and my teacher was very enthusiastic about what had happened on the day of 9/11”. However, there are two parallel points in the initial part of this arc. The other parallel point is “the War on Terror” itself. As one of the participants mentioned above said, “It is the day that the war in terror was based on/ We talked about what was going on in the world on the name of the war on terror”. The middle part of this arc is again a discussion of central conflicts but not in chronological order. The war in Iraq is the middle point of this arc, “The war in Iraq began, which eventually became one of the biggest political blunders of all time/[the] U.S. was going to invade Iraq “. The last segment of this arc or the moral is that the war itself has become “a tool of destruction” because this war is “killing more people in the name of “the War on Terror”. The ending point of this arc raises many questions about the nature and results of this war.

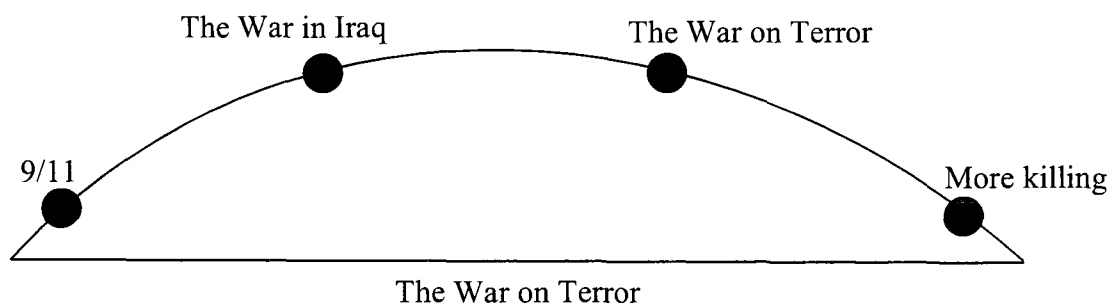


Figure 3.3. The Third version of the narrative arc

**The Fourth Version of the Narrative Arc** sequence ( $n = 3$ ) represents the following formulation: “the War on Terror” is not a new phenomenon; the events of 9/11 bring it to the forefront for the West; wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; and the war is a perpetual war. This version of narrative arc is represented in the following statement of an eighteen year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

The “War on Terror” is such a ubiquitous phrase in contemporary western societies. While it is an issue that has existed for decades, it has only truly come to the forefront of Western political debates in the aftermaths of September 11, 2001. Here in Canada, being so far removed from the physical wars being waged in Afghanistan and Iraq, I am still greatly affected by this War [on Terror], as it is a highly ideological battle too. As a person who pays close attention to current affairs, I find that I am constantly bombarded with images and news reports regarding this seemingly perpetual war. (Participant #59)

In this fourth version of the arc the starting point is, “an issue that has existed for decades, it has only truly come to the forefront of Western political debates in the aftermaths of September 11, 2001”. Then the middle part is about central conflicts in relation to “the War on Terror” such as, “the physical wars being waged in Afghanistan and Iraq”. The last segment of this arc is the ending point or the conclusion, that it is a “perpetual war”. The moral is that the war is a historical development because it has existed before 9/11. Terror has always been used to crush terror in human history. I have also examined other narrative components. These narrative components—main events and characters, and the similarities and differences in relation to these events and characters - are useful channels for focusing on a more accurate analysis of the narratives on the “War on Terror”.

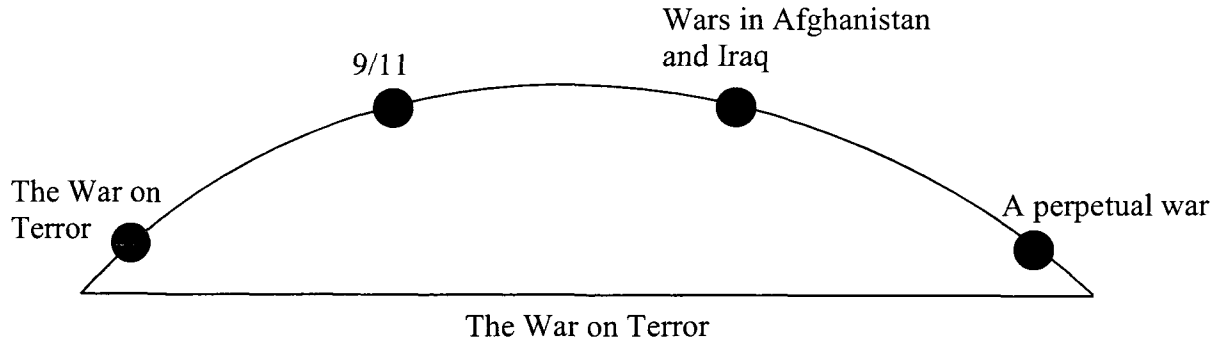


Figure 3.4. The Fourth version of the narrative arc

### Differences among the Narrative Arcs

There are two main differences in these four narrative arcs. The first difference appears in the sequence of events. The first, second, and third arc start with the same events of 9/11, however the rest of the sequence is different in them. Only the fourth arc has a different starting point. It starts with “the War on Terror” itself because according to these three participants, the beginning of the war has nothing to do with the events of 9/11. The “War on Terror” has been with human beings since humans learned to impose terror on each other. The events of 9/11 became a reason to start wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The second main difference appears in the concluding parts of these narratives. The power of conclusion actually makes them distinct from each other because the conclusion typically sets the moral of the story. According to the moral of first narrative arc, the net result of this “War on Terror” is deaths and destruction of resources. According to the second narrative arc, this war is an unjust war. According to the third narrative arc, the moral is that the net result of this war is more killing on the name of protecting the world from terror of killing. According to the fourth narrative arc, it is a perpetual war.

### **Main Events and the Characters of “the War on Terror”**

Out of 99 participants, ninety participants mention different events of the war while nine participants mention *no* events. In some instances, absence of even a single event may have reflected their un-willingness to express their thoughts rather than an inability to narrate in a coherent manner because most of them made additional comments such as “I feel very distant from this war” (participant #99) or “I do not think much about the war since it does not directly affect me” (participant #91). I infer from these statements that these eleven participants’ lack of interest in the war was the main cause of an absence of events or characters in their responses.

However, ninety participants represent “the War on Terror” with a basic plotline in which events and characters are bound together in a particular sequence. The most commonly mentioned events are the events of 9/11 ( $n = 90$ ), the war in Afghanistan ( $n = 46$ ), and the war in Iraq in ( $n = 33$ ) these ninety narratives. In what follows, I analyze the main events and characters of the war as represented by my participants in their responses. I also present similarities and differences among these narratives in relation to these events and characters.

#### **Events of 9/11**

Out of 99 participants, 90 participants began their narrative of the war with the events of 9/11. For example, an English speaking, 18 year old male student states:

The War on Terror started after 9/11 [and] made me realize that there are people out there who want to hurt innocent people and it is better for my protection to have our troops fighting over there rather than fighting here at home.

Another participant also began her narrative with the same event, although the line of argument about the war is different from the statement given above. This student is an English speaking female student with Polish background, and is 18 year old:

[On] the fated day of 9/11, I was in my class and the teachers were trying to suppress the news that one class heard on the radio. I was in grade six at that time and all I thought was that I hope my uncle is O.K. (He lives near New York City). It was all a blur and I did not really understand what was happening except we were looking for Osama and going to war. I became dismayed and then ignored the whole issue for a while as I was tired of it and did not fully realize what was happening. All I knew was that I did not like the violence and death. (Participant #26)

These participants began their narratives of “the War on Terror” from their own memories of 9/11. The line of argument about the justification or the real purpose of the war, and the concluding part of the narratives are different but the starting point of these narratives is the events of 9/11.

### **Similarities in the Perspectives of the Participants About 9/11**

There are two major similarities in the narratives of my participants regarding the events of 9/11. For most of the participants, the events of 9/11 were the starting point of “the War on Terror”. Take a look at the following statement taken from a narrative of a French speaking, 24 year old female student:

From my limited knowledge, the so called “War on Terror” began on September 11, 2001 as the world scrambled to understand the terrorists’ attacks against the U.S. (Participant #12)

This participant admits that she has limited knowledge about this war but states that the war began on 9/11 and that there is a causal link between this event and the “War on Terror”. Take a look at the second statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I personally do not follow the War on Terrorism. I know it began when the terrorists attacked the twin towers in New York on 9/11. (Participant #17)

This participant does not claim that he/she follows this war but states that the war began on 9/11 and there is a causal link between this event and the “War on Terror”. Take a look at the third

statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student. The participant claims that she knows how this war was started:

I do know that it all started with the September 11/01 attacks of terrorists on the Twin Towers in New York. (Participant # 92)

The above-mentioned text also reflects the same starting point of the narrative of “the War on Terror”; 9/11 is presented as the event that became the cause of this war. The accounts of this war in these 90 participants’ responses start either from or immediately after the events of 9/11. According to the aforementioned statements, the United States of America was attacked by the terrorists and as a result of these attacks the war began.

Another similarity in these narratives is the central roles given to the United States of America and the terrorists in the plot. The United States of America and the terrorists are the central characters in the war. The possibilities for others’ actions are determined or made possible by what these two characters did or are doing in the context of this war. The following statement by a French speaking, 24 year old female student makes this point more clear.

After the initial attack[s], the United States of America began a war against [the] terrorists. The next major step was the agreement of the international community (through the decision made by the UN Security Council) to bring the War on Terror to Afghanistan. (Participant #12)

According to this participant, the United States of America decided to start a war against the terrorists. There are two more characters in this statement, the international community and the UN Security Council. The United States of America’s decision determined the decisions and actions of these secondary characters in relation to “the War on Terror”. The participant does not mention, who is included in this international community.

Another similarity is that these ninety narratives are grounded in an indirect but

immediate experience of what happened in New York on 9/11. The participants mention that they had learned about the events of 9/11 indirectly and on the same day, at home or at school from their peers, relatives/teachers, or the media, and so forth. The following statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 24 year old female student:

I remember the day when the attack[s] of 9/11 happened. I was getting ready to go to the gym. My brother-in-law called us and said that we should turn on our TV. I was surprised by what was happening [in New York]. (Participant #35)

This participant's memories of the day of 9/11 are socially mediated as in the case of following statement taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 19 year old female student:

When I first heard about the events of 9/11, I was 12 [years old] and[was sitting] in the cafeteria. My principal made a school-wide announcement about what happened in New York City. (Participant #46)

The following statement is taken from the narrative of another English speaking, 19 year old female student. She also mentions that her first source of information about the event was an important 'other' - the teacher:

The day the 9/11 attacks happened, I was in a grade seventh history class when my teacher told us what happened... After that my main source of knowledge was the news on TV, as well as the radio. (Participant #92)

All of these participants had an indirect but immediate experience of the events through "others", or through different cultural tools or technologies of memory such as TV or radio. The similarities I have noted above involve the events of 9/11 as the starting point of the narrative arcs. While these similarities are striking, their existence should not be taken to suggest that all versions of these events are identical, as I have shown in the next chapter. It is interesting to note that all of these participants mention that they can still recall the memories of the events of 9/11, where they were on that day, what they were doing, and who informed them about the events. In

most of the narratives participants give most detail to the memories of that day as compared to any other events in relation to “the War on Terror”.

### **Differences between the Perspectives of the Participants About 9/11**

These ninety narratives begin with a more or less similar pattern, or in other words with the memories of the events of 9/11. However, the representations of the events and characters are strikingly different in a certain manner. The differences concern the manner in which a narrative is told which tends to legitimize some things and delegitimize other things within the same plotment. This difference is mainly reflected through the line of argument in the middle part of narrative arcs and power of the conclusion that actually shapes the narrative (Wertsch, 2002). I divide the narratives of my participants into three versions on the basis of their concluding remarks about the nature of the events of 9/11.

*The first version of differences about the events of 9/11* includes those participants who consider this event as a major marker or a unique event in human history (7/90 participants who mention the event of 9/11). For example, take a look at the following excerpt taken from the narrative of a 23 year old female student who is a first generation immigrant from Nigeria:

The event[s] of September 11, 2001 were a major marker in America and the World at large. It stands to reason that 19 men cannot change history, but they did. (Participant #18)

According to this participant, 9/11 was a major event in human history. Only a few persons did what no one could imagine. They changed history forever. In this statement only one character is represented with its individuality “America”, while other characters involved in or affected by these events are not named. The same stance can be seen in the following statement of a 21 year old male student, who is a first generation immigrant from Israel, but in more detail:

On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, a group of Islamic terrorists from both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, members of the militant group Al-Qaida hijacked four planes and crashed them into the twin towers in New York. One into the Pentagon and the other planes meant for Washington were crashed when passengers intervened and gave their lives. This unique tragedy altogether killed 3000 Americans. (Participant #30)

The text shows a description of characters involved in this event “a group of Islamic terrorists from both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan”. It is obvious who the perpetrator is and who is the victim is in this tragedy. This participant considers the events of 9/11 as a “unique tragedy”. As indicated by this statement there are two major characters in the narrative of “the War on Terror”, the United States of America and Al-Qaida whose members were the Islamic terrorists. A point further elaborated by the statement is the exceptionalism of the suffering and heroism that characterize the United States of America, as opposed to the killing and barbarianism that characterize Al-Qaida and its Islamic terrorists. Three thousand Americans were the victims of terrorism.

This participant adds the label “Muslims” to the terrorists by calling the hijackers “Muslim terrorists”. However, this in fact is the only participant who mentions the national background of the hijackers “terrorists from both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan”. Out of 99 only nine participants refer to Islamic terrorists. However, only four out of these nine use this labeling. On the contrary, the other five participants question this equation. For example, the following statement of an English speaking 22 year old female student represents the statements of these five participants:

None of us really knew what it meant—except what we were told by the media: it is an act of terrorism and Muslim terrorists who come from the Middle East, and to believe it was a horrific thing. In retrospect, indeed it was a very tragic event; but I am less naïve than I was seven years ago, and now I can see that the tragedy of 9/11 must be put into perspective. (Participant #49)

According to this participant, the media is mainly responsible for representing the event of 9/11 as an “act of terrorism” and Muslims as terrorists. The participant also represents 9/11 as “a very tragic event”, but argues for using “perspective” in considering the events of 9/11.

*The second version of differences about the events of 9/11* includes those participants who do not consider this event as a major marker or a unique event in history (19%). According to these participants, this event became important just because it targets and in one case destroys two prominent symbols of a superpower. Otherwise, terror is not a new phenomenon in human history. For example, an English speaking, 18 year old male narrates:

The first time I ever even thought about the terror was on the day of 9/11 at my school. I was outside for lunch when my peers let me know what happened. Naturally I was worried and nervous at that time at such a young age. Time has changed now and I feel that North Americans have taken it too far. There is terror EVERY WHERE [original emphasis], only when it happened in [the] U.S. then everyone freaks out. (Participant #56)

As presented in this narrative, the starting point of the narrative arc is the same as it was in the previous cases but the concluding point is different. Furthermore, the narrative mentioned above suggests a careful perspective on the part of the narrator. This careful perspective is reflected in the changed understanding and hence may be considered as somewhat different from the previous account of the events of 9/11, which appears not to be grounded primarily in analytical reflection.

A careful perspective is also reflected in the above-mentioned text, when the narrator talks about characters and their role in this war. There are two characters: the U.S. and North Americans. This participant and the participants included in the first version narrate the same sequence of events in relation to 9/11 with common major characters. However, they tell two entirely different stories about the role played by Americans and North Americans with the help

of a different ending point or concluding remarks: “only when it happened in [the] U.S. then everyone freaks out”. In the example mentioned above North Americans may imply only the United States of America and Canada, and this rhetorical style follows common usages in the Canadian context which do not include Mexico and other small countries of North America.

*The third version of differences about the events of 9/11* includes those participants who think that the events of 9/11 were used by the U.S. government in order to justify a war that was actually waged to get control over the world and its resources. Now take a look at the following statement of an English speaking, 21 year old female student, which reflects this third version:

The War on Terror began after 9/11. The events were used by the U.S. government, in order to justify a war actually fuelled by and completely based on wealth and oil. The war was fuelled by the media and used to control other people. The world was made able to ignore the un-ethical acts of Bush. (Participant #52)

The starting point of this narrative is the same as it was in the previous two versions but the power of the conclusion is again playing a decisive role in the construction of emplotment. According to this plotline, the events of 9/11 became the cause of “the War on Terror”. In fact the U.S. government used the events of 9/11 as an excuse to “justify a war actually fuelled by and completely based on wealth and oil” and used “the manufactured threats” to control other people. In this narrative four characters are present with their individual identity: The U.S. government, the former American president Mr. Bush, Americans and the media. Any other character is not represented in its individuality. The narrator uses a common noun such as “people”, “world” or a pronoun “we” to represent some other characters involved in this war.

The real difference between this narrative and the previous two versions is again the power of the conclusion that shapes historical narrative (Wertsch, 2002). In this case, William Cronon’s (1992) observation about the power of a conclusion to shape historical narrative is

helpful. These observations were made in the course of analyzing two accounts of professional historians of the Dust Bowl in the American South West in the 1930s. According to Cronon (as cited by Wertsch, 2002), one account takes the form of a “progressive” story of improvement and human victory over adversity, and the other takes a “tragic” form that reflects “romantic and anti-modernist reactions against progress. In the case of my participants the difference among these three versions of narratives shows the power of conclusion or ending point in shaping the historical narrative of “the War on Terror”. These narratives’ ending points shape the processes of using the same event and same characters into three different emplotments. These narrators are looking at the same event drawn from the same past but reaching such divergent conclusions.

### **Differences in Collective Memories of the Events of 9/11**

Beyond the differences in depth and historical insight the most obvious contrast between my participants’ responses is that majority of the non-Muslim Canadians’ ( $n = 80$  out of 90) collective memories of 9/11 start from the day of 9/11, while majority of the Muslim Canadians’ ( $n = 8$  out of 9) collective memories start after the day of 9/11. For example, take a look at the following statement of a 25 year old female, first-generation immigrant from Kuwait:

A couple of days after the 9/11 attacks, I went to the Dominion Supermarket in Mississauga (that is where we lived at the time) wow! People were staring at me like I was the daughter of Osama bin Laden. Their eyes showed pure hatred and they didn’t even know me ... It is really sad that other people blame all Muslims for 9/11, even though many Muslims hate Osama. (Participant #2)

The participant’s statement reflects the consequences of the events of 9/11 for Muslims at both an individual and collective level. She does not mention the exact day of 9/11 as an important day, but rather her memories began a couple of days after the events. This participant also talks about her personal experience of racism in the Canadian society as well as about the politics of

representing all Muslims as the perpetrators after 9/11. There are four characters in this narrative: Osama bin Laden, Muslims, people (representing Canadians in an implicit manner), and the narrator herself represented by “I”. Now take a look at the following statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I remember vaguely the day of September 11, 2001. I was young and fairly self-centred. When I went home for lunch from my school, I remember my mom [was] crying while watching TV in our living room. It upsets me to see her upset so I tried to ask her what was wrong. When she told me what happened, I was confused. As to why she was so disturb when we didn't know anyone in the planes or in the buildings. Since then life comes to a greater understanding that it was selfish of me and I feel very sorry for the families of those who were involved. (Participant # 23)

This non-Muslim participant's memories of the war start from “the day of September 11, 2001”. Although she considers that day as vaguely remembered, her statement reflects the detailed memories of 9/11. She can recall her memories of the day of 9/11 with its setting and her own personal feelings on that day. The deep memories of the day of 9/11 also reflect in the narrative of an English speaking, 19 year old female student:

I remember September 11th very well. I was twelve years old and in grade seven. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining and air was crisp. The morning was just like any other mornings at ... Public School. That was until one of my friends came back from lunch. My friend lived very close to the school and every day she would walk home for lunch. This twelve years old girl, my best friend, was the one who broke the news to all the students and to teachers. She changed our world. She described it in a calm and casual manner. How two planes had flown into the twin towers in New York. The teachers immediately fled to nearby radios and TV in hopes of finding out what was going on. We students didn't quite grasp what was going on. It happened way down in US. It cannot be that much important for us. So we just went about our day as usual. We didn't become nervous until we noticed that the adults were acting strangely. Throughout the rest of the day teachers went through their lessons very distractedly and just assigned us work to do. Then they would just sit at their desks or leave [the class] to make phone calls. Parents

were coming to pick up their kids. The school bus was almost half empty. When I got home the news was already on. My parents were sitting on the couch, which was strange for me because my dad should have been at work and my mom should have been sleeping for her night shift at the hospital. I still didn't fully understand what was going on. Then I saw with my own eyes, the terror. My parents held me close as they tried to explain to my siblings and me that people had done this. That it was not some horrible accident. Our lives had changed forever, not only our lives but our world too. (Participant #66)

I want to finish this section here because I discussed in detail the issue of collective memories in my chapter six.

### **Different Stances about Security Measures after 9/11**

A prominent outcome of the events of 9/11 was tight security measures on the airports in North America and Europe. A total of nineteen participants talk about this issue. There are two versions of my participants' stance about security measures at airports or at borders.

*The first version about security measures* represents those participants who are not in favor of these measures. A 20 year old male student, who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine, talks about the consequences of 9/11 for his life:

My personal experiences that support my claims are the various encounters I have had with every form of social security at airports after 9/11. I have been selected and separated, as I remember for "random security checks" at every airport terminal I have been to. (Participant #1)

This participant talks about his/her personal experiences at various airports after 9/11. This participant represents how he has been "selected and separated" on airports just because of his Muslim identity. In general all Muslim participants' narratives of "the War on Terror" start from what happened after the day of 9/11. They especially focus on, what sorts of consequences people face in North America as Muslims due to these security measures. Their experiences revolve around racial discrimination such as selection and segregation on the basis of their religion.

In fact all Muslim ( $n = 9$ ) participants and seven non-Muslim participants mention the links between security systems at airports and racial profiling of Muslims after the events of 9/11. The overall issue of security measures is reflected in total 12 narratives of non-Muslim participants but in two entirely different ways. A total of seven non-Muslim participants show concern about racial discrimination and exclusion faced by Muslims after 9/11. For example, an English speaking, 19 year old male student who is an Agnostic with slight influence towards Christianity, talks about this issue:

I noticed how Muslims were bracketed with ignorant views. In some cases people even who looked remotely Middle Eastern were being labelled as Muslims, and being openly targeted in ways that are completely racialized and biased.

This participant discusses how the Muslim body is already “read” in North America. As a result of this reading, particular views are bracketed around the Muslim body. Even a slight resemblance to the Muslim body may become a reason to be discriminated on racialized lines. These participants have certain reservations about these security measures. An 18 year old male student, whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka, explains these reservations in the following words:

It is interesting to see how ubiquitous are its effects. So many of our freedoms are being curtailed as a result of this ill-defined war. To me, it seems highly hypocritical to assert that we are preserving freedom by restricting them. Everything is monitored by a security camera out of the fear of the terrorists’ attack. We have reduced our society to one overseen by Orwellian “Big Brother”. Worse still is that, this has happened in a relative silence. There exist a few dissenters but the large majority has been disturbingly mute. (Participant #59)

This participant resembles the Canadian society to the one “overseen by Orwellian ‘Big Brother’”. According to this participant, the ideology behind these security measures is “hypocritical” because people are “preserving freedom by restricting them”, and there are only a few people who want to talk about this issue.

*The second version about security measures* represents those participants who are in favor of the security measures. Only five non-Muslim participants represent this issue as a necessary measure after 9/11. For example, a 21 year old female student, who is a first generation immigrant from Israel, argues:

The tighten security control at airports is inconvenient but given the sheer brutality of terrorist attacks many Canadians see them necessary. I remember a class trip to Paris being cancelled following the Madrid terrorist bombing. Since 9/11 the world has definitely changed. (Participant #30)

This participant favors airport security measures, although they are “inconvenient”. According to her, the events of 9/11 have “changed” the world in a way that these security measures have become “necessary”.

#### **Difference in the Rhetorical Style of the Participants About 9/11**

Another major difference between my participants’ stance about the events of 9/11 appears to be situated in how they use the framework of we/us versus they/them. For example, an Arabic speaking 23 year old male student, who is a first generation immigrant from Sudan, expresses his views:

It is basically new for white people, who only knew how to impose terror on us. This was for the first time on 9/11, 2002[sic] in New York City that they face it.

This participant represents why it was a shock of historical scale for white people. According to him, it was for the first time in modern history that white people became a victim instead of a perpetrator of terror. In an implicit manner, this participant refers to historical experiences of terror faced by the colonized world in the hands of white colonial nations during the whole era of the Colonial Rule in Africa. The participant also positions himself as a part of an “us” that represents the whole colonized world.

Another participant also adopts this framework but in a slightly different manner. This French speaking, 20 year old male student positions himself as a part of a “we” that includes the whole West:

I remember that all newspapers, TV, and all sorts of media were unanimously talking about those people from [an] uncivilized part of the world who did it and that we must control them. It seems that it was not an attack on a country but rather an attack on the whole west. We were terrified and angry. (Participant #75)

This participant is using the colonial framework of we (probably the West) versus them (people from “uncivilized” part of the world). It is not obvious who is included in this “we” but I infer that this “we” represents the “civilized part” of the world in an implicit manner. Those who are included in the “uncivilized part of the world” are also not named. According to the participant, an attack on a city of the United States of America was considered as “an attack on the whole west” and made the whole west “terrified and angry”. This participant also talks about the role of media in the creation of this whole situation. I will present a detailed analysis of this usage of we/them framework in my chapter five because I noticed a frequent use of this framework in the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants.

### **The War in Afghanistan**

The second most common event emerges in the narratives of my participants is the War in Afghanistan appearing in a total of forty-six narratives. For example, this event appears prominently in the following statement taken from a follow-up interview of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I guess originally we have become a third party of it. America had to respond in some ways after 9/11, but I do not know if that is the right way. How did intelligence authorities worked? About Afghanistan, it is really hard to say anything. They should not be there now. At the beginning it was sort of strange how they handled. I feel kind of

stupid while watching what is happening there. Oh yes—it is all about death, destruction and discrimination. Invasion of Iraq was wrong pretty much. There was no reason to go there. (Participant #51)

This participant represents “the War on Terror” with a sequence of events. In this sequence the war in Afghanistan occupies a significant place because according to her, “we” (Canadians) “have become a third party” due to the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. There are two characters in this statement: “America” and “Canada”, although the participant does not use the proper name “Canada”. I infer that the participant is distancing Canada from its southern neighbor by using “we” to represent an imagined community (Anderson, 1983) of the Canadian nation, and “they” to represent Americans.

### **Similarities in the Narratives about the War in Afghanistan**

There are two major similarities in the narratives of the participants regarding the events of the War in Afghanistan. First similarity appears in the employment of the narrative of “the War on Terror”. It follows a particular sequence of events. The War in Afghanistan appears as the major outcome of the events of 9/11 in this sequence of the plotline. For example, take a look at the following text taken from the narrative of a French speaking, 19 year old male student:

The 9/11 attacks shocked thousands of people in the United States. After the attack the U.S. declared a war on Afghanistan/Iraq. After that Canada send its army in Afghanistan to fight the War on Terror. (Participant #17)

In several respects, this text mirrors the other 45 narratives included in this category. It uses a standard set of events (9/11 attacks, war in Afghanistan, war in Iraq, the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan to fight in “the War on Terror”), and two main characters to construct a specific narrative about the war. As indicated by passages such as this one, the main characters involved in the War in Afghanistan are the United States of America, and Canada, which is another

similarity in terms of this event. It is interesting to see that for most of the participants other NATO members involved in the War in Afghanistan are almost invisible. To understand the nature of this similarity, consider the following statement of an English speaking, 23 year old female student:

The first thing I remember is 9/11, which I think began this War on Terror. Secondly, I remember George Bush declaring the war against [the] terrorists. Ever since I heard no positive things are being accomplished on the name of this war, only the American and the Canadian soldiers are dying in Afghanistan. (Participant #44)

In this text Americans and Canadians are playing the only role in “the War on Terror”. The president of America has the power to make decisions about taking part in this war. Those who are facing death in the war in Afghanistan are only Americans and Canadians. Another striking similarity in these narratives is an absence of the representation of Afghan people. Not even once Afghan characters appear in these narratives with individuality nor do the participants mention the huge amount of deaths and destruction faced by Afghanies.

### **Differences between the Narratives about the War in Afghanistan**

The similarities I note above have to do with the characters included or excluded and the position of this event (the war in Afghanistan) in the emplotment of these narratives. While these similarities are striking, their existence should not be taken to suggest that there are no differences in the emplotment or the line of argument in these narratives.

**The first difference regarding the War in Afghanistan** mainly appears in the form of arguments made by participants about the purpose and the consequences of the war in Afghanistan. I divide these forty-six narratives into three versions on the basis of the difference in the line of argument about the purpose of the War in Afghanistan and the Canadian involvement in it. Out of these 46 narratives that mention the war in Afghanistan, the first line of

argument appears in twenty-six narratives, second in thirteen narratives, and third in seven narratives. It is important to mention here for the purpose of accuracy that I only include those narratives in this section, which explicitly mention the war in Afghanistan.

*The first version of difference regarding the war in Afghanistan* appears in twenty-six narratives. According to this line of argument, “Canada has no business in Afghanistan”. There is a consensus in these narratives that Canada must pull out its troops from Afghanistan. For example, the following statement is taken from the interview of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

At this point I think they should really pull out from Afghanistan now. It’s really none of their business, whether there is any stability there or not. Well, at the beginning... um ... even at the beginning Canada should not act upon it. At this point, I am sure that Canada should not be involved in it any more. I think that Canada is not playing a kind of integral role there. It’s just a kind of teaming along. That is what we usually do. Eventually we are always after the U.S. and doing what they told us to do. So, we are not doing [the] right thing but at least we are not leading that wrongdoing. It is generally what Canada does, I mean following America.

This participant argues that Canada must pull out its forces from Afghanistan, no matter what happens there. There are two characters in this statement. America is the leading character, while Canada is represented as an ally of the United States of America, and playing a “kind of teaming along” role in Afghanistan with America. The participant uses a particular rhetorical style to distance Canada from America. She uses the framework of we/them, and at the same time represents the affiliation between “we” and “them” by stating “we are always after the U.S. and doing what they told us to do”. However, there is no confusion in this statement about the real issue of the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan “I am sure that Canada should not be involved in it any more”:

*The second version of difference regarding the war in Afghanistan* appears in thirteen narratives. According to this line of argument, it is “A justified war”, and Canadian soldiers should stay there. For example, of an English speaking, 19 year old female student argues:

About the Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, I feel that they should stay there otherwise the country could turn around and invade us rather than staying silent.

In this statement there are two characters, the Canadian soldiers and the country (Afghanistan) but their representation is quite different. The character of Canadian soldiers is named and they are playing an active role in this war. While the other character, ‘the country’, is not even named to explain against whom the Canadian soldiers are fighting. This participant uses the framework of us/the country that tells us nothing explicitly about who is included in ‘us’. Either, it means Canadians, Americans and Canadians, or all NATO countries. An imagined community of “us” works here with imagined boundaries.

*The third version of difference regarding the war in Afghanistan* appears in seven narratives. According to this line of argument, it is “A terrible War” which has been consuming resources and giving only death, destruction, and discrimination, while we are claiming something else. For example, an English speaking, 18 year old female student argues:

We know nothing about the political, cultural, and historical conflicts that leads to this war. And very few people feel the responsibility to inform us about it. This war is terrible. Innocent people are dying unnecessarily. We are not achieving anything in Afghanistan. The war costs too much, and we are claiming to be more peacekeeping.

The above-mentioned text reveals many reasons behind the participant’s argument that it is a “terrible” war. The first reason is that “we” are involved in a war without having any knowledge about the political background and historical roots of the conflict, and “very few people feel the responsibility to inform us about it”. Second, the output of this war is nothing but the death of

“innocent people” and the destruction of resources, and on the contrary we are claiming, “to be more peace keeping”. There are two main characters in this narrative, “we/us” and “innocent people”, and both are not named specifically. I infer that the narrator’s voice is emerging in the text on behalf of an imagined community of the Canadian nation represented as “we” or “us”, while the other characters are innocent people who are dying in this war but they do not have any identity as a person or as a nation.

**The second difference regarding the War in Afghanistan** in the narratives of my participants concerns their personal links with the war in Afghanistan. There are two major versions of the participants’ narratives in this regard: those with no links to the war ( $n = 35$ ); and those with personal links to this war ( $n = 11$ ).

*The first version of difference regarding the war in Afghanistan* represents those participants who do not speak of any type of personal links to this war. They do not record any relatives or friends in Afghanistan but it does not mean that they have the same line of argument about this war. On the basis of their line of argument, I divide this version of the participants’ narratives into two sub-versions.

The first sub-version ( $n = 26/35$ ) includes those participants who are against the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. For example, of an English speaking, 18 year old female student states:

Canadian soldiers have been taken on the brunt of the action in Afghanistan due to this useless war. The Canadian government, under Stephen Harper is also propagating that if you support the troops then you have to support their mission in Afghanistan (which is unclear in its definition). If you do not support the troops then you are seen as heart-less and un-Canadian. This is entirely unfair and is simply a tactic to coerce the Canadian public.

There is a deep sense of involvement in this text at both an emotional and political level. At the emotional level, the participant expresses the pain of Canadian soldiers who are being used as

fuel in the fire to a useless war. A war that does not even has a clear definition. While at the political level, resentment is obvious against Stephen Harper government's propaganda. According to the participant, this propaganda forces Canadians to take the notion of "Canadianness" according to the definitions of the present Canadian government. The participant says that the Canadian government's propaganda of, supporting Canadian forces and "their mission in Afghanistan" is the same thing, is nothing but "a tactic to coerce the Canadian public". There are four characters in this text, Stephen Harper, Canadian soldiers, the Canadian government, and the Canadian public. The participant claims that Canadian soldiers and the Canadian public are facing the consequences of the Canadian government's decision to involve Canada in a "useless war".

The second sub-version ( $n = 9/35$ ) includes those participants who do not show any concern for this war. In some instances, the failure to list even a single character involved in this war or to present an argument either in favor or against the war may have reflected unwillingness rather than an inability to respond. Those participants who do not provide any detail make additional comments such as "I am not interested in this war". It may suggest that they are unwilling to show any interest in this war. This unwillingness seems to have been the case in the following text taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I feel very distanced from the war in Afghanistan. Nobody I know has been personally involved [in this war]. I do not know anyone in the army. Also since it has taken place so far away, under different situations than I am in right now, I feel very distanced. (Participant #99)

In this text, the participant gives the reasons behind his/her unwillingness to take a personal interest in this war, such as no personal connection to anyone who is in the army, and the fact that the war is taking place in a land far away from Canada. This participant does not mention any characters and distances himself/herself from this war.

*The second version of difference regarding the war in Afghanistan* appears in eleven narratives ( $n = 11/46$ ). This version represents those participants, who have personal links to those Canadian soldiers who were either fighting in Afghanistan or planning to leave for Afghanistan. They have either a relative or a friend who is directly involved or going to be involved in the war in Afghanistan. For example, a 21 year old female student from a First nation in Ontario states:

Having dated someone in the military, who is constantly away, training for his departure to Afghanistan, this war has become more scary and begin to hit home. I currently have four friends overseas and one has come back severely wounded. I spent many days with him and mainly sit in astonishment. I support troops but would like to see a clear purpose of the war or it should be ended.

There is no ambivalence in the participant's stance about this war. The text shows a careful reflection about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. The participant supports the Canadian troops but does not support the Canadian involvement in this war unconditionally. The only characters in this narrative are Canadian soldiers and I think it is due to the personal relationship of the participant with some soldiers. However, even the "wounded" soldiers are not represented with their individuality in this statement. This participant represents the war in Afghanistan as a war with no clear purpose, and a war that affects the Canadian society in a direct way.

Consider another statement from a 20 year old male who is a Gujrati speaking first generation immigrant from India:

I do not believe that terror is what the war is all about. I have no family or any ties in the countries where the war is being fought, except one. A good friend of mine has just started his duty in AFGHANISTAN. Hopefully, he will remain safe in a very dangerous country. We (me and my friends) pray for him all the time. This war has also affected me in terms of spending [expenditures] on this war. Due to these expenditures the price of gas has gone up continuously since the war began. We have spent thousands of dollars more just because of this. (Participant # 67)

This participant also has a friend in the Canadian army, who “has just started his duty in AFGHANISTAN”. According to this participant, the war in Afghanistan has affected his life at two different levels: First, due to his friend’s deployment in Afghanistan, and second, “in terms of spending [expenditures] on this war”.

**The third difference regarding the War in Afghanistan** appears in relation to Canada’s role in the war in Afghanistan. I note that 100% of Muslim participants’ narratives have a common thread as compared to the variety of positions about this war in the narratives of non-Muslim participants. All Muslim participants are against this war and do not have any doubts about the negative role of both Canada and America in Afghanistan. For example, 21 year old male student who is a first generation immigrant from Pakistan, argues about the Canadian role in Afghanistan:

I am sure to say that Canada in Afghanistan is not there for peacekeeping purposes. I also want to stress that the negative images has brought upon the Muslims after 9/11. And now are we so sure that Osama bin Laden did this and he is in Pakistan, or do we believe what the media tells us.

This Muslim participant has no doubts that the Canadian role in the war in Afghanistan is not the role of a peacekeeping country. Though, it is interesting to see this line of argument because the Canadian government has never claimed that Canadian troops are in Afghanistan for peacekeeping. This participant also raises the issues of the representation of Muslims and media’s role in the context of this war.

There is a variety of argument in non-Muslim participants’ narratives about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. For example, take a look at the following answer of participant #59 taken from his follow-up interview. This student is a second-generation immigrant from Sri Lanka:

I am not sure that I truly understand what Canadians are doing there. I cannot draw a conclusion. Idealistically, I would say that I want Canadians to help because I believe in this cosmopolitan notion that those who have should help those who do not have. But it does not give us the right to force anything upon other people. Our notion of what is good can be different from what others think about it. There is no absolute truth. Ah ... so ... it is difficult and when I see the number of young Canadians—well—young or not—the number of Canadians dying in Afghanistan suffering for something that does not seem to be going anywhere—in any particular direction. The situation does not seem to be improving. So, I would say on the basis of whatever knowledge I have that they should come home now.

A careful reflection is involved in this statement because the mythology of Canada as a helping nation is mentioned, but what Canadian soldiers are doing in Afghanistan is quite confusing for him. He admits, “There is no absolute truth”. This participant states that the Canadian soldiers are dying for nothing and that “they should come home now”. The only characters in this narrative are “Canadians”, who are “dying” and “suffering” in the War in Afghanistan. He does not mention any one else who is suffering and dying in this war such as the Afghannies. On the contrary, a 21 year old, first generation female immigrant from Philippine presents another argument:

I feel that all countries should help to stop terrorism. I think that Canada being in Afghanistan is not enough or [the] U.S. being in Iraq is not enough. It is important for everyone to take part in it. (Participant #19)

This participant has no doubts about the utility of fighting a war against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather, she argues that “everyone” should participate in this war because whatever Canada is doing in Afghanistan, and America in Iraq “is not enough”.

Now take a look at the following line of argument presented by a French speaking, 20 year old male student:

Canadians are in Afghanistan for a variety of reasons. We are told that they are doing a valuable contribution there, but as I stated before unless we visit the country, we will never fully know for sure. Helping another country and most importantly the people is certainly a valuable thing. Canadians' participation in Afghanistan may have started as a response to Taliban activities. (Participant #13)

This participant gives two main reasons to justify the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan as a "valuable contribution there". The first reason is that they are, "helping another country", and the second reason is that it is, "a response to Taliban activities". However, he admits that this justification is based on what "we are told", and not on evidence collected by himself. Another French speaking, 19 year old male student also admits that his opinion about the war in Afghanistan is based on "the news", and that he does "not know much about what is happening there":

I do not know much about what is happening there. I only ever hear on the news that ... number of Canadians died today in Afghanistan raising the total Canadian deaths to ... Although the war does not affect me directly as my dad or grandpa are not participating in it, it does affect me indirectly with the price of certain things. I also know that there are Canadian Peace-Keepers across the sea. (Participant #17)

The myth of Canada as a peace - keeper nation reflects its power in this statement. The participant is not sure about "what is happening there" but concludes the statement with his belief that "there are Canadian peace-keepers across the sea". Another English-speaking, 20 year old male student's line of argument is more explicit as compared to these two participants' arguments mentioned above:

We cannot kill innocent people forever and it should be ended a long time ago and it is time to pull out the Canadian forces from Afghanistan. If we continue to fight this way, then the members of these groups will continue to fight back and innocent blood will be spilt. There is no need for this, and for this reason I do not believe that we should continue fighting in these countries. (Participant #41)

This participant argues, “it is time to pull out the Canadian forces from Afghanistan”. He gives two reasons for this argument. The first reason is, “We cannot kill innocent people forever”. The second reason is, “If we continue to fight this way, then the members of these groups will continue to fight back and innocent blood will be spilt”.

### **The War in Iraq**

The third most common event that emerged in the narratives of my participants is the War in Iraq appearing in thirty-three narratives. The war in Iraq is an important segment of the emplotment of the narrative of “the War on Terror” as you can see in the following statement taken from the interview of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I remember ...America attacked Iraq on the name of this war while Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. I guess, this war has been approached by [the] American government just like here it is in Canada. Everyone who belongs to [the] Middle East or is a Muslim is supposed to be a terrorist whether he is the one or not. I think that racism is a kind of spirit behind this war. (Participant #51)

This participant represents the War in Iraq as an outcome of racism against Muslims or the Middle East, stating, “Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11”, although Iraq was attacked in the name of “the War on Terror”. According to the participant, both America and Canada approached this war in the same way. There are four characters in this narrative “America”, “Canada”, “Muslims”, and everyone who belong to the Middle East”, while America or the American government is mainly responsible for attacking Iraq.

### **Similarities in the Narratives of the War in Iraq**

There is a striking similarity in all participants’ stance about this war in Iraq. This similarity has to do with the unfair nature of the American involvement this war, which is evident in the following statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

As a Canadian, I don't feel that "the War on Terror" has had a huge impact on me but America should not be in Iraq. (Participant #23)

This participant represents "the War on Terror" as a war that does not affect him/her much as a Canadian. However, this participant shows a high level of certainty in his/her argument about the American involvement in the war in Iraq. The only character in this statement is America, who should not be in Iraq. Another English speaking, 18 year old female student expresses her views in a different manner:

I was saddened when [the] U.S. went to war with Iraq and was glad and relieved when Canada did not join. (Participant #35)

This text shows that the American involvement in Iraq was a source of sadness for the participant although the reason behind this sadness is not explicitly explained in the statement. However, I infer from this statement that the participant represents the War in Iraq as a sad mistake. The main character here is America who attacked and occupied Iraq. Canada appears in a secondary role in this narrative because Canada is not involved in Iraq. The Canadian decision about not to join the war in Iraq has become a source of relief for the participant. It is due to the fact that Canada has nothing to do with whatever America is doing in Iraq in the name of "the War on Terror". Now take a look at the following statement taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 19 year old female student:

Although, I feel the 9/11 disaster was reprehensible and the war in Afghanistan is somewhat justified, (although I dislike war) there is no valid reason for the war in Iraq. (Participant #51)

This statement is a bit different from the previous two quotes. Without mentioning any characters involved in the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq the participant represents the war in Afghanistan as somewhat a justified war because "the 9/11 disaster was reprehensible". However, the participant has no doubts that there is "no valid reason for the war in Iraq" in the

name of “the War on Terror”. There is a consensus among all participants that the war in Iraq is unnecessary and has no links to “the War on Terror”.

Another similarity represented in the narratives of my participants is related to the real purpose of the War in Iraq. Both Muslim and non-Muslim participants ( $n = 33$ ) represent this war as an American move to control oil resources in the region in the name of “the War on Terror”. For example, take a look at the statement taken from the narrative of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

There is a commonly held conception that they went into Iraq for oil, because it is also well known that they have a lot of oil resources. (Participant #59)

According to the participant, the real purpose behind this war is to get control of oil resources in Iraq. There are two characters in this narrative but none of them are named. Iraqi people and Americans are represented with a deixis of “they”. There is a consensus among these participants that America used “the War on Terror” as an excuse to capture oil resources of Iraq. To further explore this similarity about the purpose of this war I analyze another statement, of a 20 year old male student who is a first generation immigrant from Palestine, taken from his follow-up interview. He expresses the same views as we have seen in the example mentioned above:

This event gave America a chance to invade and control land, oil resources, and lives of Muslims. First, they went into Afghanistan and in 2003 they went into Iraq. They have killed thousands of innocent Muslim civilians including women and children in Iraq. They captured Iraq’s oil resources and killed their own agent Saddam Husain. (Participant #1)

According to this participant, “the War on Terror” provides Americans a cover to hide the real purpose behind the war in Iraq. Americans “captured Iraq’s oil resources and killed their own agent Saddam Husain”. This participant represents Saddam Husain as an American agent but it is not obvious in this statement whether it was an outcome of the war or one of the purposes of the war in Iraq.

### **Differences between the Narratives about the War in Iraq**

Though it is clear that there is a consensus among these participants that Americans had no reason to involve Iraq in this War on Terror, except to control oil resources in Iraq. The overall picture is not black and white. The real difference between these narratives again appears in the power of conclusion that shapes the narratives of the War in Iraq into five different versions.

*The first version of differences about the war in Iraq* (11/33) represents those participants who think that this useless war has given the world only deaths and destruction so far. For example, an English speaking, 18 year old female student says:

The war in Iraq to me is a waste of time, and is only killing more and more innocent people.

The narrator represents the outcome of the war in Iraq as a total loss because according to him/her, this war is nothing but a waste of time and human lives. The most brutal consequence of this war is that innocent people are becoming the fuel of this war. The only characters in this statement are “innocent people”. However, it is not clear who these innocent people actually are, whether they represent Canadian soldiers, Afghanies, or both.

*The second version of differences about the war in Iraq* (9/33) represents those participants who think that this war has served only one man. The man who has created a regime of fear in the name of terrorism and that man is George W. Bush. For example, an English speaking, 25 year old female student concludes:

I think that the war has served only George W. Bush as he was elected [for] the second time because people were made extremely afraid so they turned to him as a strong leader. Did Iraq take part in any sort of terrorism? Then why it became a target in the war on terror? When it was proved that they had weapons of mass destruction? [The] U.S. looked stupid and overly aggressive.

In this text George W. Bush is the main character in the narrative of the war in Iraq, who waged this war to serve his personal interests. Iraq, American people and America are secondary characters. American people are represented through the pronoun “they”, who “turned to” George W. Bush as a leader again. The participant uses another “they”, who were accused of having weapons of mass destruction. I infer that it represents Iraqi people or Iraq itself. According to the narrator the only outcome of this war is that George W. Bush was re-elected in America. There is a tendency towards radical opposition to the role of the former President of America in this narrative. A process of dialogue is involved in the concluding part of this narrative of the war in Iraq. Specifically, it has involved asking questions about the leadership role of George Bush, and the American claims of the presence of the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The narrator is asking questions such as: “Did Iraq take part in any sort of terrorism, then why is it a target in the war on terror? When was it proved that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction”?

*The third version of differences about the war in Iraq* (4/33) represents those participants who consider the war in Iraq as a disgraceful war. For example, an English speaking, 19 year old male student states:

This was until the war in Iraq, this I saw [it] as a careless and completely disgraceful war far away from its original intent. It has become a war over cultural and political superiority, a war over past conflicts and grudges. It has become a war over who had the potential of becoming a threat if the opportunity is arise.

The narrator concludes that the War in Iraq has taken “the War on Terror” far from its original purpose or target. It has become a disgraceful war waged to establish and promote cultural and political superiority (of some superior nations) over the world. According to this participant, whatever happened in Iraq in the name of “the War on Terror” has turned this whole war into a “war over who had the potential of becoming a threat if the opportunity is arise”.

These thirty-three participants will provide an account of the war in Iraq that reflects quite a similar stance in many ways. For example, the main character responsible for this pointless war is either George W. Bush or the United States of America. America went in Iraq for oil and so on. However, there are two more differences in the narratives of my participants.

*The fourth version of differences about the war in Iraq* (7/33) represents the majority of the Muslim participants. These Muslim participants consider the war in Iraq as a revenge of the events of 9/11. For example, take a look at the following statement taken from a follow-up interview of a 20 year old male student who is a first generation immigrant from Palestine:

They captured Iraq on the name of weapons of mass destruction. They are there to take the revenge from Muslims because the victims of 9/11 were the citizens of a white nation. (Participant #1)

This Muslim participant states that the real intent behind the occupation of Iraq is to take revenge from Muslims, and represents the American involvement in Iraq on a racialized basis.

*The fifth version of differences about the war in Iraq* represents (2/33) those participants who view this war in a different manner, or in other words there is ambivalence in their stand. For example, consider the statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student taken from her narrative:

I personally believe that there were no weapons of mass destruction, and I agree with the Canadian government that we should not be in Iraq. I do think that it was a positive step to get rid of Saddam Hussein because he was doing nothing good for the people in Iraq [so] we are there for their good. (Participant #10)

This participant states that the declared reason to attack Iraq was not a fact and expresses his/her satisfaction over the Canadian government's decision of not to be involved in Iraq. In the first sentence the participant is using the pronoun "we" to represent herself as a part of an imagined

community of the Canadian nation. This community of Canadian nation has nothing to do with this unfair war in Iraq. However, in the next sentence she justifies the war in Iraq and states, “I do think that it was a positive step to get rid of Saddam Hussein because he was doing nothing good for the people in Iraq”. In the last sentence of this statement the participant includes herself into another imagined community of “we” that works in Iraq for “their good”. Two different imagined communities are present in this text with different boundaries and different roles in the war in Iraq. However, they are represented by the same pronoun “we”. On the contrary, this 25 year old female student, who is a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait, shows no ambivalence in her stand:

Why is it ok for Bush to declare war on Iraq just because he is a great BASTARD, who lied to get in Iraq for oil? Well, in my eyes that is terrorism too. (Participant #2)

This text shows the same stance about the war in Iraq as represented in the narratives of non-Muslim participants such as an unjustified nature of the war that has been waged to get control over Iraq’s resources like oil. According to this participant, George W. Bush lied to “get in Iraq”. The main character responsible for this pointless war is George W. Bush. However, a major point that distinguishes other narratives from the above mentioned text written by a Muslim participant is the use of expressions like “BASTARD” and “liar” to represent George W. Bush. When the individual narratives of my participants are put together, they create the narrative of collective memory. Individual narratives do not need to incorporate all elements of the narrative, but each articulates at least some of the elements. The resulting collective narrative is the hegemonic narrative of that participants buy into and is as follows:

*The attacks of 9/11 had been directed not only at a military site, the Pentagon, but at the Twin Towers, and at thousands of innocent civilians. It was a devastating loss for those people*

*who lost their family members, friends and loved ones. These attacks were planned and launched by Al-Qaida and its leader Osama-bin-laden who were supported by the Taliban in Afghanistan. These attacks shocked thousands of people in the United States and the West. The United States of America declared a war on Terror to capture Osama bin Laden and members of the al-Qaida organization who were directly responsible for 9/11, and to topple the Taliban regime of Afghanistan, which had harbored and created a safe haven for terrorists. The United States of America attacked Afghanistan in 2001, and then entered and occupied Iraq in 2003. Although the threat of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction was later found to be wrong. America still insists that the war in Iraq is a victory in “the War on Terror”. Canada did not send its troops to Iraq, which was a good decision. Canada sent its army to Afghanistan to fight the war on terror. However, nothing positive is coming out of this war. The only news media has to tell, is the number of Canadian that haves died that day in Afghanistan, raising the total Canadian deaths to ...number. In this narrative, the main actors of this War on Terror are the United States of America, the terrorists’ organization Al-Qaida, and Osama bin Laden, while Canada, NATO, UN, and the Taliban regime of Afghanistan are secondary characters.*

It is important to mention at this point that this storyline provides the readers a broad framework of the narrative of “the War on Terror”. The internal dynamics of the narrative of war is not that simple or linear. In the next chapter, I analyzed the political positions of my participants, to explore how they understand this war. My participants’ political positions about the nature and effects of this war construct complicated and mostly overlapped webs of meanings within this broad framework.

## CHAPTER 4. THE NATURE, PURPOSE AND EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON TERROR

All ninety-nine participants of this study were in their late childhood when the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon occurred on 9/11. Within less than a month, this generation saw the beginning of a war against those terrorists. These terrorists were declared responsible for the attacks on 9/11—“the War on Terror”. Overall, the sample of my study is one that has witnessed a gradual development and even the consequences of this war. For example, take a look at the following statement of an English speaking, 23 year old female student:

The War on Terror has played a large role in my growth as a student and as a Canadian citizen. I can remember exactly where I was, whom I was with, and what I was doing, when I heard for the first time [that] the World Trade Centre [has] collapsed on 9/11, which in my opinion was the initiating factor of the War on Terror. As a grade six student, I was playing in the school yard when kids who had gone home for lunch came back to school proclaiming that they had seen buildings in New York being blown up with planes on national TV. For such young students it was a hard concept to comprehend. (Participant #37)

This participant mentions the role played by “the War on Terror” in her growth. I showed in the previous chapter that the majority of participants start their narratives of the war with the memories related to the events of 9/11. This statement also starts with the memories of the day of 9/11. This common thread indicates the impact of these events on their lives.

As I will show in the following section, according to the participants, they live in a society whose collective memories have not only been dominated by the events of 9/11, but also by topics such as deaths, weapons of mass destruction, suffering, heroism, war, terrorism, and the Canadian involvement in “the War on Terror”. For example, take a look at the following

statement of an English speaking, 22 year old female student:

The War on Terror, for me, began when I came home from school on September 11 and saw my mom's dad together in front of the TV. My parents, divorced, rarely spend any time together at all, yet there they were inches apart. As the news unfolded and we learned the nature of the attacks (because that is what they were watching) and as the days progressed and we learned that the retaliation would be on the name of "the War on Terror". Since then so many names, places and weaponry developed into daily jargon as a part of everyday use such as weapons of mass destruction, Bin Laden, anthrax, Taliban, terrorism, and deaths. I never heard before any of these things and now everyone thought of himself/herself as an expert on the whole issue. They believe whatever media tells them. (Participant #45)

Moreover, my participants discussed in detail that from 9/11 until today, they are exposed to a variety of cultural representations of "the War on Terror". These representations are available through different technologies of memory such as media, the Internet, museums, and commemoration ceremonies. Letourneau (2006) mentions, "children are intelligent and wise, and their minds are very much open to information. They learn and absorb a lot of information, even though we may think they don't" (p. 81). My participants have grown up with this war and have learned and absorbed a lot of information about "the War on Terror". As one of my English speaking, 18 year old female participant states:

Being a Canadian and living in a society where information about any topic is virtually accessible at the click of a button, we are constantly exposed to the information about the War on Terror. Because this information is so common, I actually began to think about it frequently. What makes me more concerned about this about this war is that my boyfriend wants to join the Canadian forces to fight in this War on Terror. This in my opinion is due to the glorification of this war by things like TV ads, war based video games, and movies. I think the War on Terror needs to be ended because it is risking the lives and safety of innocent Canadian people, who are deeply influenced by this propaganda. (Participant #55)

This participant talks about the representations of the War on terror available through different

technologies of memory such as “TV adds, war based video games, and movies”, and mentions “information about any topic is virtually accessible at the click of a button”.

My participants adopt a variety of political positions about the nature, purpose, and effects of this war on their lives. As a result of these positions, some parts of these narratives are distinct from each other while others overlap with each other. Sometimes, within the same narrative, a gradual transition occurs in the political position of my participants. I analyze how these narrators take up various positions by looking at the internal structure of their narratives. In fact, the manner in which the narrative of “the War on Terror” is told tends to legitimize some things and delegitimize other things through a variety of political positions. Most of the positions discussed below are implied rather than explicitly stated and emerge from the interplay of the characters, events, and argumentation in the narratives.

Though, it is not necessary that different positions taken by the participants be represented directly in their narratives. However, when I analyze the stated (and supposed) political positions of my participants, I find that sixty-five narratives express critical evaluations of the war and its representations (of these sixty five narratives, 75% present a strictly critical and oppositional stand and 25% present a moderately critical stand about the war and the Canadian involvement in it). An example of these narratives is the following statement taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

The War on Terror is in my opinion a war not worth fighting in. To me, war in itself is not the answer to any problem under any circumstance. I believe due to the war there has been an increase in racism and stereotype, pity violence and purposeless deaths. (Participant #28)

This participant represents those 25% participants who possess a moderately critical stand about the war. While the following example represents 75% participants who possess a strictly critical and oppositional stand towards the war. This English speaking 19 year old male student is a first

generation immigrant from Sarajevo (Bosnia) states:

I believe religion plays a big role when it comes to the hegemonic U.S “WAR ON TERROR”. Even though I am personally Catholic, I am from Bosnia, which is the only white Muslim state in the world. Because of this they feel a commitment to their brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and Iraq who have been facing the war since decades now, but if you have any common sense and you believe yourself as an educated scholar, you can see the things as really they are. (Participant # 31)

Out of a total of 99, seventeen narratives express a clearly favorable (in a few cases critical) stand. An example of these narratives is the following statement taken from the narrative of a 23 year old female student who was born in Nigeria:

War on Terror has become a phenomenon that was adopted to deal with especially Muslim fundamentalists. They are the perpetrators of this war and are real terrorists, terrorizing innocent countries. The War on Terror was launched for security. (Participant #18)

While seventeen narratives show a mixed, or ambivalent standpoint towards the nature, the purpose, and the effects of “the War on Terror” and the Canadian involvement in it.

I think I was a bit too young to comprehend what was happening, but as I grew older and made friends who were in the military, I wanted to learn more and expand my knowledge about this war. Though I am not fully against the war, I am not fully in favor of it. Some may say I am on the fence. (Participant # 76)

The immediately noticeable pattern in the overall picture is the dominance of the strictly critical stand over the mixed or ambivalent attitude towards the war.

### **The Nature of The War on Terror**

The participants’ positions toward the nature of “the War on Terror” are not unilateral. The basic plotline of all narratives represents the same beginning, a particular sequence of events, and almost the same major and secondary characters. The difference arises when the majority of participants argue about the nature and the roles of the characters involved in this

war, and in particular the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. The majority of participants question the meanings attached to different representations of this war, while some accept them as it is. I find that there are four versions of the narratives on the basis of my participants' conceptualizations of the nature of "the War on Terror".

### **A War waged by Powerful Nations for Resources**

The first position appearing in 65 narratives is that "the War on Terror" was waged by powerful nations to promote their interests. For example, an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from India states:

This whole "war on terror" is all propaganda of those who are ruling the world and the media, and there is no reason to buy into it. (Participant #4)

This participant represents this war as nothing but the propaganda of "those who are ruling the world", and states that, "there is no reason to buy into it". The participant also mentions the combined efforts of mass media and powerful nations behind this war to explain the nature of this war. Another participant, who is an English speaking 19 year old male student and a first generation immigrant from Sarajevo (Bosnia), adopts the same position:

This entire "war on terror" is nothing more than the propaganda of [the] U.S. to further their economic and political agenda. (Participant #31)

This participant represents this war in the same manner as I have shown in the previous quote. However, as compared to that statement, he names the major character of this war as the "U.S.". According to this participant, the real intention of the U.S. behind this war is to promote its political and economic interests in the world. Another participant further elaborates on this argument. She is an English speaking, 21 year old female student:

The War on Terror has made the population afraid and irrational. People are so 'terrified' that they are living in a constant state of fear and turmoil. The War on Terror is based on

money and the hegemony of powerful nations, and [is] not for the safety and well being of people. Ignorance was a catalyst in the spread and momentum of the war. Racism and confusion mixed with fear mixed by the Americans war machines [are] more terrifying than ever before. Guns, money, and stupidity are also combined together in this dangerous mix. (Participant #52)

This participant represents this war as a war, “based on money and the hegemony of powerful nations”. According to her the basic matrix of this war is comprised of fear, hegemony of powerful nations, ignorance, racisms, confusion, money, guns, and stupidity.

### **A War to Crush Terrorism**

The second position appearing in 17 narratives is that “the War on Terror” is waged to crush terrorists. This position is represented in the following statement of a 21 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Israel:

Since these tragic events [9/11], the U.S. has been on offense against Al-Qaida by invading the Taliban run Afghanistan, by liberating millions of people and by continuing the offense there. Most of the countries of the Western world, including Canada are in Afghanistan. They have been there, on the ground, to make sure that democratically elected the Karzai government cannot be over thrown by the Taliban. (Participant #30)

This participant represents three reasons behind “the War on Terror”: First, to fight against Al-Qaida; Second, to liberate “millions of people”; and third, “to make sure that the democratically elected Karzai government cannot be over thrown by the Taliban”. According to this participant, the United States of America, Canada, and other countries of the Western world invaded Afghanistan for the aforementioned reasons. Another participant, who is a 23 year old female student and a first generation immigrant from Nigeria, argues:

The War on Terror is here to stay. Governments are now at the heels of terrorists, and are doing everything within their power to curb or eradicate terrorism and make the world a peaceful place to live again. The Internet was a better source for me because it explains

more about what War on Terror is and what especially [the] government of the United States is doing by launching these wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It gives me a better insight and detailed information that is very useful for its readers and observant[s] of the process so far. Today, there have been some limitations in terrorism and people are beginning to feel at ease a little more than they were feeling after 9/11, and in the western world in general. (Participant #18)

This participant represents the nature of “the War on Terror” as a war used by the governments “to curb or eradicate terrorism and make the world a peaceful place to live again”. It is not obvious from the statement, who are these “governments” that are “now at the heels of terrorists”. However, the main character is “[the] government of the United States” who launched “these wars in Iraq and Afghanistan”. The participant represents the so far results of this war in these words, “there have been some limitations in terrorism and people are beginning to feel at ease a little more than they were feeling after 9/11”.

### **A Vague War**

The third position appearing in 14 narratives is that “the War on Terror” is vague in its nature. For example, an 18 year old male Muslim student, whose parents migrated from India states:

The concept of the War on Terror is so vague. Terror has always existed in human history. Terrorism exists in all communities around the world. When September 11 happened all this “war on terror” started appearing all over the television and other forms of media.

This participant considers the whole concept behind this war as a vague one, because terror is not a new phenomenon in human history. It has “always existed in human history”. It is important to mention here that “vague” is not used by my participants in the meaning of having no sense of whatever is happening on the name of “the War on Terror”. Rather, these participants are quite critical about the vague conceptual background and the nature of this war. Consider the

following statement taken from the follow-up interview of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri-Lanka:

But beyond the philosophy behind the war, In short, the War on Terror is a vague ubiquitous issue that looms over us like a thick fog. It is a smoke screen displayed primarily by the American administration and perpetuated by all of western society. It is a war that arguably, has now become part of the western identity in general. (Participant #59)

This participant represents this war as “a vague ubiquitous issue that looms over us like a thick fog”, and used by the western society and in particular the United States of America as a “smoke screen”. In the previous quote the participant stated explicitly, what is behind the smoke screen of this war on the name of terror as compared to this participant. A 19 year old female student who is a first generation immigrant from Trinidad argues:

I find the war vague and I feel misinformed as a Canadian. I believe [that] we are not being informed of [the] exact realities by our media and [the] government. Why our soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan. What are they doing? When are they coming home?

This participant finds this war vague because the Canadian government and the media are not providing the exact information about the real links between the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan and “the War on Terror”. As a result of this misinformation, the participant raises many questions in this text regarding the Canadian role in Afghanistan. Another participant tries to answer, why this war seems vague in its nature. This participant is an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri-Lanka:

This war is so different from other wars because it is so vague with undefined enemies. It is not like the Second World War, when we were fighting the Nazis. As soon as you took Hitler and his party... out, you were done but this war is conceivably going on and on because there is an enemy that is specifically undefined and there is no immediately identifiable group. It is just a concept. It is like you are fighting against a concept. So you know it is hard to say this war makes sense. (Participant #59)

This participant represents this war as a vague war because at a practical level the enemy is undefined, or in other words there isn't any particular group or persons whose defeat will end the war, as was the case in the Second World War. Terrorism is a concept or an ideology. It is a senseless war so far because "It is like you are fighting against a concept". These participants' discussion gives way to one more question: How can we understand this War on Terror for what it is, instead of superimposing a pattern or understanding that may not be appropriate?

### **A justified War in the Beginning but not Now**

The fourth position appears in 3 narratives. This position is represented only in non-Muslim participants' narratives. For example, take a look at the following statement of a 21 year old female student from a First nation in Ontario:

I had at first viewed the war on terror as a justified retaliation of September 11, but now it seems as just a pointless fight in the search for oil and money. (Participant #76)

There is a gradual transition in the position of this participant. This participant acknowledges this shift because in the beginning, it seemed natural to search and punish those who were responsible for the events of 9/11. However, after many years of "a pointless fight", she realized that this war is all about a search for "oil and money". This shift of position is more evident in the following text taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 19 year old male student:

When the War on Terror first began, I saw it as [a] justifiable [war], as the nation had been attacked and the location of the organization had been found and that the purpose was to seek justice for those who had lost their lives. This was until the war in Iraq, which I saw as a careless and completely disgraceful war, far away from its original intent. It has become a war over cultural and political superiority, a war over past conflicts and grudges. It has become a war over who had the potential of becoming a threat if the opportunity [arose]. I saw [that] the War on Terror is losing its focus and turning an already wretched nation in the dark with a flashlight, gun, and itchy trigger fligger. (Participant #33)

This participant expresses in detail, how and why a gradual transition occurs in his thinking about this war. According to him, this war was “justifiable” in the beginning because “the purpose was to seek justice for those who had lost their lives”. A war that was started on the name of seeking justice for a few thousands, who lost their lives on 9/11, has turned out to be “a war over who had the potential of becoming a threat if the opportunity [arose]”. This war is not justifiable anymore because it has become “a careless and completely disgraceful war far away from its original intent”.

### **The Purpose of “the War on Terror”**

Out of 99 participants a total of 9 participants have no clear-cut opinion about the purpose of “the War on Terror”. They do not provide any clue of the real purpose of this War on Terror. For example, take a look at the following text taken from the narrative of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I am one of millions, who really has no true understanding of this war and its real purposes. This is sad and outright terrible to see how can we be bombarded with television messages and internet videos every single day, yet have barely any basis on which to form any opinion on the war, the people involved in it, or its real implications. (Participant #25)

This participant admits that she cannot understand the real purposes, or the real implications of this war, even though a variety of the representations of this war are available through different technologies of memory such as “television messages and internet videos every single day”.

This confusion is evident in many responses. But one of the participants explains the reason behind this confusion about the war. This participant is an English speaking 19 year old female student:

I do not really understand the actual purpose of this “war on terror”. What do these words really mean? This issue has been proliferated in the media and that is all my generation

has really been exposed to, their stories about this war. We know nothing of the political, cultural, and historical conflicts that leads to this war. And very few people feel the responsibility to inform us about it. (Participant #58)

This participant is not willing to form an opinion about the actual purpose of this war without an investigation of the political, cultural and historical background of this war, and complains that there are very few people who are interested in providing the context, and both sides of the picture to the people of Canada. This participant also talks about the different representations of this war, but according to her “their stories” do not provide a solid base to understand the actual purpose” of this war. As compared to these 9 participants, 90 participants expressed either an explicit or an implicit view regarding the purpose of this war.

### **The Promotion of the American Imperialism**

This line of argument emerges in 22 narratives. In these narratives the main character of the war is the United States of America and the main purpose of this war is to preserve and promote the interests of the American Empire. For example, take a look at the following example from a narrative of an English speaking 19 year old female student:

By trying to put forth forced pseudo-democratic principles (Americanized of-course) on others is not the [right] way to ensure the safety and security of their citizens. The War on Terror seems more [like] the “war of revenge” in its original intent (to find Bin Laden and those who were responsible for the planning and exertion of the September 11 attacks). It has become a mission to force cultural and political ideology on other nations that will fall by the way side after the Empire will recede. (Participant #33)

This participant represents the purpose of this war as a mission to force American “cultural and political ideology” on other nations and states that at the end, this mission would fail “after the Empire will retreat”. American Empire, Bin Laden and “those who were responsible for the planning and exertion of the September 11 attacks” are the main characters in this narrative.

According to this participant, “revenge” seems to be the real intent behind this war. In this connection, consider the following text taken from the interview of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri-Lanka:

There is the concept of military industrial development behind today’s wars. Yeh, I think, the war industrial complex in the United States is the main cause of wars in the world now. Their economy revolves around [their] military industry. So it is beneficial for the promotion of American Imperialism to have wars in the world. They are earning trillions of dollars in this game and there are people in the upper level of [the] government that are gaining their benefits from [this] continued conflict. There is a lack of resources, specifically oil, so they went into Iraq. There is an abundance of oil in Iraq. That is what they are trying to do in Afghanistan and Iraq and they have backfired. They tried to put in place puppets there and you can’t see this in isolation. They did not go in Afghanistan and Iraq just because of 9/11, it just provided them a convenient excuse to wage this war.

This text reveals a more active and analytical stance towards the real purpose of this War on Terror. According to this participant, “it is beneficial for the promotion of American Imperialism to have wars in the world”. Imperialism needs money for its survival and promotion, and Americans are earning “trillions of dollars” from their war industrial complex. America is the only character in this narrative and this war serves only American interests. American economy revolves around the war industrial complex and the growth and development of this industry depend on wars. Their war industry needs oil, “so they went into Iraq”. According to the participant, “They did not go in Afghanistan and Iraq just because of 9/11. It just provided them a convenient excuse to wage this war”. Within the same line of argument, consider the following text taken from the follow-up interview of a 20 year old student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

I know that human history is full of 9/11 type events. Human beings are fighting with each other for land, resources and power. The rules of war are always decided by the

most powerful. And you know that after defeating [the] Soviet Union in Afghanistan, America needed someone to promote its Imperialism in the world.

This text has several characteristics of the storyline presented in the previous statement. It does not mention any other character involved in this war except America. What is most interesting for my purposes, however, is this participant's comment, "after defeating [the] Soviet Union in Afghanistan, America needed someone to promote its Imperialism in the world". This comment reflects the fact that the participant views the purpose of this war in its historical context and as a political tool used by the United States of America to "promote its Imperialism". This line of argument is summarized in the following text taken, from the interview of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

I think—it is easy to act after it is done and then get the support of the world. It was a kind of their fault. In a way ... so ... um ... just everyone believed [that] they are smart. It is really like idealistic to say but [the] War on Terror is just a kind of excuse to continue the imperialism. I mean all that war machinery is there to promote imperialism. I think ... um ... it is [a] kind of go back behind America. It is a sort of tag along. It is not beneficial for them to be on the side of [the] U.S. Again, they should try not to go too far behind them. It is better because the real purpose of this war is to promote [the] American Imperialism in the world. Anyways, it is still wrong, yeh! I know it is really not a relevant issue [the War on Terror] for Canada. So yeh! of course but I mean it is not in the same way for Canada as for the U.S.

This participant represents this war as "a kind of excuse to continue... and promote American imperialism", and concludes that it is neither in favor of Canada "to be on the side of the U.S.", nor it is "a relevant issue for Canada". This participant is distancing Canada from its neighbor and considers this war as a "kind of their fault". This participant is willing to reject the version of Canada as a masculine and militaristic nation.

## The Politics of Fear to Control the World

This line of argument emerges in 51 narratives. There is no doubt among these 51 participants that the real purpose of this war is to control the world by creating fear in the hearts of people. For example, take a look at the following statement of an English speaking 20 year old male student:

Then [George. W] Bush declared [the] War on Terror to crush Bin Laden and [the] Taliban and then we went into Afghanistan. However in the last seven years what we get is dead bodies of our soldiers and death of thousands of innocent people in Afghanistan and Iraq. In all these years we have spent a huge amount of resources and as a result of American policies the world is facing an economic crisis. They want to expand this war in some other countries to kill more people. This war has not affected me personally but in the end it will because this war is all about control and politics of fear. (Participant #75)

This participant states that the former American president George W. Bush declared this war to “crush Bin Laden and Taliban”. Canada is a part of this war but getting nothing out of this useless war except dead bodies of its soldiers and wastage of its resources. This participant represents “the War on Terror” as a war, which is “is all about control and politics of fear”. Only one character George W. Bush is represented with individual identity in this statement. Under this heading, consider the following text taken from the narrative of a 20 year old student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Our differences will be used for the benefits of [the] U.S.A. lobby, which is harbouring fear of Muslims and not saying to the public their actual motives such as more power and money from oil and complete control of the world and complete control of what people would love, believe and hate. (Participant #1)

According to this participant, the “actual motives” behind “the War on Terror” is to control the world by “harboring fear of Muslims”. The only character in this statement is “the U.S.A. lobby” and he mentions that the U.S.A. lobby is using “differences” among human beings for their own

benefits. As we have seen in both examples mentioned in this section, the participants mainly represent the U.S.A. as the major player in this war. These statements open a series of questions in relation to the real purpose of this war: Can powerful nations see past their rage over past humiliations? Whether the heroic nations' call for war is the cry for justice, lust for enemy's blood or an urge for global control? How does more killing in the name of War on Terror stop the pain that perpetuates these things?

### **To Crush Terrorism and Promote Democracy**

This line of argument emerges in 16 narratives. The most interesting characteristic of these sixteen narratives is that the narrators speak on behalf of an imagined community of nations. According to this participant, the purpose of this war is to crush those terrorists who are responsible for the attacks of 9/11, and to promote democracy in the non-civilized parts of the world. For example, an English speaking, 21 year old male states:

The reason behind the War on Terror, in my opinion, has only started on a large scale since the September 11, 2001 attacks. Not long after, the U.S. and NATO sent their troops to Afghanistan to get rid of the Taliban who supported al-Qaida, the organization who destroyed the twin towers. So they went in and started a war with them and since then they have been there, wasting our taxpayers' money on trying to bring democracy to a place that really does not want it. Whatever our government will establish there it will fall apart as soon as NATO and the other troops will leave.

According to this statement, the purpose of this war is to get rid of terrorists' organization Al-Qaida "who destroyed the twin towers", and their supporters the Taliban in Afghanistan. Another noble cause is to bring democracy to a place that really does not appreciate this gift of the West. The main characters in this narrative are the U.S. and NATO. There is a frequent use of "they/their/our" in this statement. There is a nationalizing lens here that differentiates the Canadian "our" from "they/their" that reflects NATO or the U.S. This rhetoric denies that

America has any imperialistic aims in this War on Terror rather they are distributing the gift of democracy in “a place that really does not want it”. A French speaking 18 year old male student states:

I support [the] Canadian efforts in Afghanistan but I do not support [the] American operations in Iraq. I think that we are doing our best to control Muslim terrorists in Afghanistan, and we should work to promote democracy there. (Participant #20)

According to this participant the War in Terror is waged in Afghanistan to “control Muslim terrorists in Afghanistan, and... to promote democracy there”. An interesting part of this representation of the war is that the participant views the links between “the War on Terror” and the war in Iraq in a different manner as compared to its links with war in Afghanistan. This difference of perspective about wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is evident in almost one third of the total narratives. In the next section, I have analyzed this difference in detail.

### **Links between “the War on Terror” and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq**

The event of the war in Iraq appears in 33 narratives. The links between “the War on Terror” and the U.S. invasion/occupation of Iraq are frequently discussed in these 33 narratives of my participants. However, there are certain similarities and differences between the narratives of my participants’ due to their positions about the war in Iraq and its links to “the War on Terror”. In the following section I have analyzed their positions on the nature of these links.

#### **A Wrong Decision**

Out of these 33 participants who talk about the war in Iraq, 31 participants state that it was a wrong decision. For example, a 25 year old female student who is a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait narrates:

The next major step was taking the war into Iraq. I do not believe that we will ever be

able to truly know the motivations and the full extent of information that was available to us as decision-makers at the time of their decision to invade Iraq. That being said the fact that they could not garner any support from the international community, yet chose to engage in Iraq anyway, was a blatant disregard for international law[s], and so was morally and legally wrong.

This participant finds no links between the original intent of “the War on Terror” and the war in Iraq. According to this participant, the invasion of Iraq “was morally and legally wrong” and a “blatant disregard for international law”. In this statement the boundaries between Ottawa and Washington D.C. are blurred, as the participant includes herself in the “decision makers”. Although Canada has never been a part of the decision making body, who made the decision to invade Iraq nor even participated in any affair related to the war in Iraq. Unlike this statement the main characters in the war in Iraq have been named in the following statement of an English speaking, 18 year old female student:

There is no valid reason for the war in Iraq. The justification of this war is flimsy as there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. [The] Saddam Husain government did not threaten to attack any one. The U.S. has actively tried to propagate their life style and morals onto other people who did not want them. (Participant #51)

This statement is quite similar to the previous one because neither the participant finds any links between the original intent of “the War on Terror” and the war in Iraq nor any valid reason for the U.S. occupation of Iraq except to impose American “life style and morals” onto those people who did not accept it. This pattern continues in Muslim participants’ position on the links between the war and the U.S. occupation of Iraq. For example, take a look at the statement of a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

I think that there is an urgent need to understand its [the U.S.] actual motives behind attacking Iraq on the name of the War on Terror. There was no other reason to invade Iraq except to gain more power, control over oil resources, and complete control of the

world. Invasion of Iraq has its links with American imperialism that stands on this desire to control. (Participant #1)

According to this Muslim participant the real reasons behind the attack and occupation of Iraq have nothing to do with “the War on Terror”. The actual justification for the invasion/occupation of Iraq by Americans is that they invaded Iraq to control “oil resources”, “the world”, and to gain “more power”. This participant relates the war in Iraq to “American Imperialism” that “stands on this desire to control”.

### **A Justified Decision**

Out of these 33 participants who talk about the war in Iraq, only two participants justify the American decision to enter in Iraq. For example, an English speaking 18 year old female student states:

For those who say that the United States should pull out now, I disagree with them. We cannot go into a country, start something [and then leave] without finishing it. If we have to leave now [then] I think [that] Iraq and Afghanistan would be worse off than they were before we entered.

The participant justifies the American invasion/occupation of Iraq. This statement is quite interesting because an imagined community of “we” is working here, comprising of both America and Canada. Canada is not in Iraq but the participant assumes himself/herself as a part of this imagined community who cannot leave the country [Iraq] now because “Iraq and Afghanistan would be worse off than they were before we entered”. This participant is not in agreement with those who say that “the United States should pull out now”.

In the interview, a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine represents the link between “the War on Terror” and American invasion/occupation of Iraq within the same framework of we/they, but with an opposite line of argument:

They have killed thousands of innocent Muslim civilians including women and children in Iraq and Afghanistan. They captured and killed their own agent Saddam Husain. They captured Iraq and Afghanistan. The event of 9/11 was horrible because 3000 victims were the citizens of a white nation. From 9/11 till today more than 30,000 Muslims have been killed in Iraq on the name of this War on Terror. But we are not victims. We are perpetrators. (Participant #1)

The participant is using the framework of we/them to represent the characters involved in this war. He is continuously using “they” to represent those, who “have killed thousands of innocent Muslim civilians”, “captured and killed their own agent Saddam Husain”, and “captured Iraq and Afghanistan”. A “we” of imagined community (Anderson, 1983) is working here, which represents all Muslims as a homogenous entity, while “they” is used for another imagined community comprising of all those nations who are working in an alliance with the United States of America in this war. The participant does not mention any name including in this community of “they”. He also represents this war on racialized lines by declaring that “the event of 9/11 was horrible because 3000 victims were the citizens of a white nation”, while the deaths of 30,000 Muslims do not make them victims. Muslims are still “perpetrators”.

### **Links between “the War on Terror” and the Canadian Involvement in Afghanistan**

The events of the war in Afghanistan appear in forty-six narratives. There are three lines of argument regarding the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan and its links to “the War on Terror”. The first line of argument appears in twenty-six, second in thirteen, and third in seven narratives out of these forty-six narratives. It is important to mention here for the purpose of accuracy that these forty-six narratives are those in which the participants clearly talk about the war in Afghanistan, and the Canadian involvement in it.

### **A War belongs to the U.S.**

The first line of argument is that the war in Afghanistan has nothing to do with Canada because Canada stands for peace. This war belongs to Canada's neighbor the U.S.A. There is a consensus in these twenty-six narratives that Canada has no business in it and that Canada must pull out its troops from Afghanistan. For example, a Chinese speaking, 18 year old female student argues:

This is an unjustified war that belongs to the U.S. Canada has no business sending troops of their own [to] overseas to fight in a war that was started by another nation. Canada is a country that stands for peace.

The participant emphasizes Canada's role as a peace loving and independent country. According to the participant, Canada has no concern with "a war that was started by another nation". There are two characters in this text: Canada and the United States of America with separate identities. There is a clear resentment in this statement against the American hegemonic neighborhood. A French speaking 18 year old female student represents the Canadian role in Afghanistan as an ally of the U.S.:

My views on this War on Terror are that we were not involved until Harper was elected [sic]. This war does not concern us directly and the Americans were dealing with it, as it was their war. Harper is a good friend of Bush and he adopted a republican like politics and involved us in this pointless war. I believe that we should not make wars, particularly when it is not directly related to us. It concerns the Americans, not us.

This participant blames Harper for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan and distances the Canadian nation from the American nation. This participant is the only one in the whole sample of my participants, who accuses Harper of something that started before his period of governance. According to her, "This war does not concern us" and Harper (the Canadian Prime Minister) involved us "in this pointless war" just because he is a friend of Bush (former

American President). The participant puts the whole burden on the shoulders of the current Canadian leadership who is responsible for this mess, instead of the Canadian state.

Let's take a look at another statement. This participant talks in more details about the links of this war to the Canadian society in his follow-up interview. This participant is a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Well, I think that people in Canada have been affected in so many ways. [The] Canadian troops are fighting in Afghanistan and more than [a] hundred soldiers have lost their lives in this war so far. There are many people who support Canada's role in this war ... you must have seen this movement on A-channel about support our troops in Afghanistan. They motivate you to wear red shirts on each Friday to support [the] Canadian troops in Afghanistan. But supporting [the] Canadian troops does not mean that everyone supports [the] Canadian presence in Afghanistan... There is a concern in Canada about why Canadian sources and lives are wasted in this unjustified war that creates irrecoverable losses larger than the initial purpose of insuring the safety of people. (Participant #1)

This participant also represents the war in Afghanistan as an "unjustified war" because this war "creates irrecoverable losses larger than the initial purpose of insuring the safety of people", and is wasting the "Canadian sources and lives". However, at the same time he also mentions that all Canadians do not share the same opinion about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. This participant also talks about the role of media in the construction of a supportive environment about the Canadian role in the war in Afghanistan. This environment is clearly visible in the position of the following thirteen out of forty-six participants who represent the war in Afghanistan as a justified war in their narratives.

### **A War for a Greater Good**

The second line of argument is clear and the number of participants, who justify this war and the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, is thirteen out of forty six. According to these

participants, this war has been waged to fight terrorists and that the Canadian soldiers should stay there. For example, a French speaking 18 year old male student argues:

I know [that] there are a lot of innocent people dying during the course of this war but I like to believe that they are doing it for a greater good. I only hear about this war on television news and in newspapers. I think that we should stay there and we must work together to crush terrorism in the world.

This participant represents the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan as a justified action and argues that “a lot of innocent people [are] dying during the course of this war”, but “they are doing it for a greater good”. It is not explicitly stated in this statement who is included in this “they” or “we”: only Canadian soldiers, both American and Canadian soldiers, or all NATO forces. Who should stay there to kill more innocent people for a “greater good”? The same line of argument is evident in the statement of an English speaking 24 year old male student:

I believe that this [war] was justified based on the information available at the time and based on the cooperation agreement of the international community ... The war is still on and I have no inclination as to when it might end. I believe [that] we should remain in Afghanistan but I remain uncertain about Iraq. That being said, I do believe that it would be a mistake to pull out too quickly.

This participant justifies this war on the basis of an agreement of the “international community” to take the war into Afghanistan and “the information available at that time”. The deixis of “we” is used here to represent an imagined community without mentioning any names included in this international community. The participant shows a clear stand about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, “I do believe that it would be a mistake to pull out too quickly”. I find out that none of the Muslim participants share this line of argument or claim that it is a justified war in any sense.

## A Racialized War

The third line of argument appears in seven narratives. These participants signify the racialized nature of the war in Afghanistan and the Canadian position in it. For example, take a look at the following statement of a participant taken from the follow-up interview of a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Ah-Canada—Canada is also there ... I mean in Afghanistan to fight terrorism. Well—Canada is actually a sleeping partner in [the] American imperial project. Whatever [the] Americans do. They accept it. Rather, they own it. I have always faced the same problems, even if I am on American Airports or I am on Canadian airports. They are equally suspicious of me because of my religion, my name and my faith. Canadian soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan and if you would talk to any white Canadian about what they are doing in Afghanistan, they will always tell you that we are there for peacekeeping. They are promoting peace with guns, tanks and bullets. These white nations think that whatever they have ... is the best ... their democracy, their culture, their society, while I am just a terrorist, a fundamentalist, or a barbarian—um—why? Just because I am a Muslim. (Participant #1)

This participant represents Canada as an ally of the United States of America or as a “sleeping partner in [the] American imperial project”, because they “accept it. Rather they own” American policies and attitudes. This participant situates his argument in the personal experiences that he had on American and Canadian airports, and how racisms work behind these same kinds of experiences in two different countries. According to this participant, the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan is the result of their partnership with the Americans in their Imperial project. In an implicit manner, this participant represents this war as a conflict between white nations (Canada and the U.S.) and Muslims. Even within Canadian society, he represents a division on the basis of the color line, “if you would talk to any white Canadian about what they are doing in Afghanistan, they will always tell you that we are there for peacekeeping”. Then he further elaborates his argument, “they are promoting peace with guns, tanks and bullets”.

Out of nine Muslim participants, only three participants talk about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan directly and all of them adopt the same line of argument as the one mentioned above. They believe that Canada's commitment to the U.S. in this war is giving Canada only the deaths of their soldiers. Their narratives also reveal a racialized nature of this War on Terror. According to the statement mentioned above, it is a war between white nations and Muslims, in which Canada is an ally of the white nations. Let's see how a non-Muslim participant comments on the role of racisms behind this war. This participant is an English speaking 19 year old male:

Then Canada decided to follow America in Afghanistan. They are claiming to help people in Afghanistan with weapons in their hands. I think that they are fighting terrorism with the help of terror... It is wrong to attribute anything done by individuals to the whole group like stereotypes. But it is still wrong and based on racism. You must not assume anything about anyone until you really know.

It is quite evident from this statement that according to this participant, racism is the driving force behind the war in Afghanistan. This participant does not pretend that the white man's burden is only on the shoulders of Americans rather Canada is equally responsible for categorizing the world on racial lines with the help of this war. The deixis of "they" is used in this statement to represent both Americans and Canadians as equal members of this imagined community who is "claiming to help people in Afghanistan with weapons in their hands".

In sum, the positions taken by the majority of the participants, whether Muslim or non-Muslim about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, can be represented by the following statement of a Chinese speaking 21 year old female student:

I believe that, now, 7 years later, it seems silly for us to still have a war on Afghanistan. Canadian soldiers are not obligated to assist in this war. And frankly, it has been dragged on for so long that I find many do not even care anymore. I find, and I know that this will

sound biased, but the reason that this is such a huge deal is because it was an initial attack on America, and America thinks they are always the best. (Participant #85)

According to this statement, “the War on Terror” is such “a huge deal” not because humans face something terrible, but because it was an attack on Americans who think that “they are always the best” and Canada is following them as a “silly” assistant.

### **The Effects of “the War on Terror”**

The War on Terror has affected the Canadian society in many ways, and these effects are reflected in the narratives of my participants. As a French speaking 23 year old female student mentions:

I can see the War on Terror is having a great impact on Canadians. The issue of taking troops out of this war is a continuous part of political debates. It is evident that the War on Terror is affecting many people emotionally, physically, and mentally, so this should be taken care of. (Participant #77)

This participant talks about the effects of this war on Canadian society, and mentions that it affects people at emotional, physical, and mental levels. In the following section, I will present different examples from the responses of my participants to analyze these effects. To stimulate my participants’ memories and to generate narratives about this war, I gave them some sub-questions. One of the question was “How has “the War on Terror” affected you”?

Their answers reflect five different versions in the context of the effects of “the War on Terror”. The first version represents those participants who do not mention any type of effects at all. The second version represents those participants who do not care because this war does not affect them personally. The third version represents those participants who feel affected as Canadian citizens although they have no personal connection to this war. The fourth version represents those participants who have witnessed or personally experienced Islamophobia, as a

result of this war. The fifth version represents those participants who feel affected because they have friends/relatives in Afghanistan.

### **Silence on the Effects of War**

The first version represents those participants who do not mention any effects of this war on their lives, or in other words they do not answer the question about the effects of this war on them. There are thirty- nine participants in this category. For example, take a look at the following statement of an English speaking 18 year old female student:

I do not know a lot about the War on Terror and I do not really have any strong feelings about it either. I think it was poorly planned. I remember the day when America invaded Iraq. I was at my neighbour's house watching TV, and the stations were all covering it. TV is probably the most important [source of information] for me, as I do not normally research on the war on Terror.

This participant talks about her lack of interest in this war but it does not mean that he/she has no knowledge of this war. All thirty-nine participants in this category are absolutely silent about any type of effects of this war on their lives at all. Take a look at another example from the narrative of an English speaking 18 year old male student:

On September 11<sup>th</sup> I was getting ready to celebrate my birthday. Unfortunately it did not go as planned. I was in my elementary school when the principal announced that there was a terrorist act. They did not give us details but they lead us in prayer for the victims. I felt detached from the event, as I could not fully grasp the severity of what had happened. My birthday was completely forgotten about as the terrorist attacks consumed the mind of my family members. All in all it was a pretty bad birthday. (Participant #93)

This participant also does not mention any type of effects of the war on his life. The only importance of the day of 9/11 was that his birthday was ruined, because “the terrorist attacks consumed the mind” of everyone around him.

## Denial of the Effects

The second version represents those participants who clearly mention that “the War on Terror” does not affect their lives. Out of 99 participants a total of twenty- four participants feel that this war does not make any difference in their lives at any level. For example, take a look at the following statement of an English speaking 20 year old female:

The War on Terror, thus far, has not had any impact on my life. I was not affected at all by 9/11, and do not personally know anyone who is fighting. Because I am not affected by it, I find that I don’t follow it as much as I should. I couldn’t tell you how many Canadian soldiers have been killed to date, or how much longer it [the war] is expected to last.

This participant states that this war “has not had any impact on my life”. That’s why she does not take any interest in any types of issues related to this war such as, “how many Canadian soldiers have been killed to date, or how much longer it [the war] is expected to last”. Let’s consider another example in this regard. This participant is an English speaking, 19 year old female:

The War on Terror might be a part of some peoples’ experiences in their everyday lives. But for me it doesn’t seem to affect my life in the course of everyday. (Participant #95)

This participant admits that “the War on Terror” has affected the lives of some people but mentions no effects on her own personal life. An English speaking 18 year old male included in this version says:

I do think that it’s important to look to personal experiences over issue like that. Unfortunately (and if guess fortunately) I don’t believe that I am directly affected by this war. (Participant #87)

This participant expresses the same views as we have seen in the previous two examples. He does not feel that this war on Terror has affected his life.

### Critical Consciousness of the Effects

The third version represents those participants who mention that “the War on Terror” affects their lives, although they neither have any relative/friends in Afghanistan, nor they have experienced anything directly related to this war. The number of participants included in this category is twenty. However, they mention different types of effects and adopt different lines of argument in their narratives about the effects of this war.

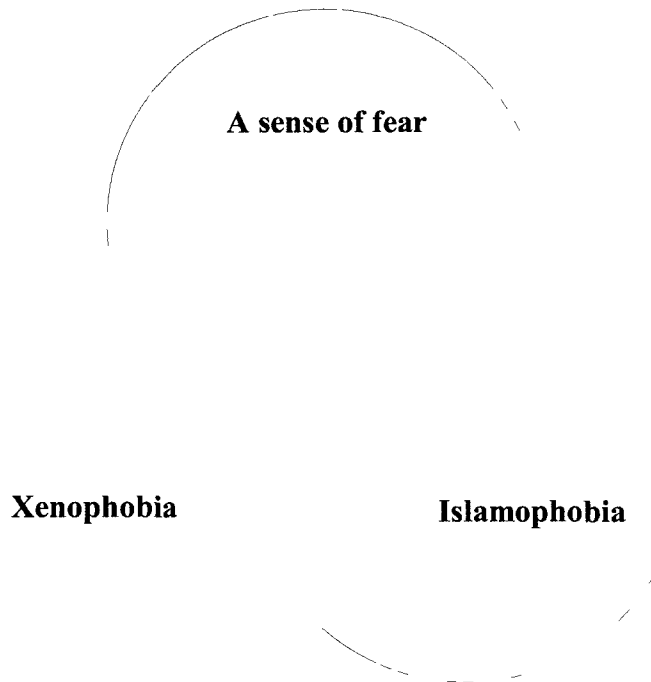


Figure 4.1. Critical Consciousness of the Effects

#### A Sense of Fear

These participants state that this war has created a sense of fear and insecurity for them. For example, take a look at the following statement of an English speaking 23 year old female:

Due to this war people are fearful about each other. Media has played a violent role in the promotion of this situation. It is due to their detailed propaganda that we are continuously reminded of the terror that is lurking around.

The participant mentions that “people are fearful about each other”, and this sense of fear has

been created by this war. She also mentions media as an actor responsible for continuously reminding people that the terror “is lurking around”. A French speaking 19 year old male mentions how this war has affected his life:

The War on Terror has only affected me in a way that evokes curiosity, questioning, and a deep feeling of fear. It has not affected me personally in anyway after I learned (on the day of 9/11) that my dad is still alive (who was on a flight over American soil when the events of 9/11 happened). (Participant #65)

This participant states that this war has affected his life indirectly because it has created many questions and “a deep feeling of fear”. At a personal level, the participant feels no effects. Let’s take a look at another effect of this War on terror mentioned by my participants.

### **Xenophobia**

These participants extend the argument mentioned in the above text by claiming that the effects of this war in their lives include both fear and xenophobia present in western societies, particularly in North America. An English speaking (Danish origin) 19 year old male student writes about these effects:

I believe [that] the War on Terror is a media driven war, created by the West to instill fear in the viewers and to create xenophobia amongst western societies and more specifically in North America. I have crossed through customs in several U.S. airports and the level of security enforced was ridiculous, redundant, and does more harm than good.

This participant also considers media as a major character behind this war. According to this participant, this war has been used by “the West to instill fear and to create xenophobia amongst western societies and more specifically in North America”. Another effect of “the War on Terror” is the level of high security on airports which seems “ridiculous and redundant” to the participant. The participant mentions that the war has affected western societies as a whole, particularly North American societies. An English speaking, 19 year old female student states:

The “War on Terror” has instilled a great deal of false fear and xenophobia in our society. A person has a far greater chance of being struck and killed by a drunk driver than being killed as a victim of a terrorist attacks. However, the media has provided the society with this great fear and incomplete stories about the situation that is unnecessary. I have never been personally affected by the “War on Terror”; however overall it affects our society daily, as we are involved in the war in Afghanistan. (Participant #64)

This participant also represents the media as a major actor who is mainly responsible for providing the society, “great fear and incomplete stories about the situation”. This participant says that she has never been personally affected but admits that the whole society is affected because “we are involved in the war in Afghanistan” and this War on Terror has created “a great deal of false fear and xenophobia in our society”.

### **Islamophobia**

This group includes those participants who further extend the argument mentioned in the above text by explaining this xenophobia. An English speaking 18 year old male writes about the effects of the war:

The War on Terror has affected everyone. One more thing, I want to say that I do believe that there has been a black-lash in terms of the westerners towards Islam and Muslim immigrants.

This participant claims that “the War on Terror” has affected everyone, but in particular, has affected Muslim immigrants in the West. Although the term “Islamophobia” is not present in this statement, the participant is talking about it in an implicit manner and how it resulted in the form of “a black-lash towards Islam and Muslim immigrants” in the West. An English speaking 19 year old male student discusses these effects in details:

The War on Terror has affected me more so in conversation, thought, and perception. I noticed how Muslims are bracketed with ignorant views. In some cases people who even look remotely Middle Eastern are being labelled as Muslims, and being openly targeted

in ways that are completely racialized and biased. Lately I have seen the videos and panels of conversations over if Obama is a Muslim or not. I have seen [the] feelings of Americans on YOUTUBE talking about how that makes him unworthy and makes them uneasy and scared. I see the prejudice and it rather sickens me to see. I am fortunate not to be directly impacted by this war but I feel sympathy and empathy for those who are affected by this war.

This participant mentions that he is fortunate not to be directly affected by this war but acknowledges the indirect effects of this war received through “conversation, thought, and perception”. Moreover, the participant discusses in details how this war affects Muslims in particular. According to this participant, Muslims are “targeted in ways that are completely racialized and biased”. He has given an example of this “Islamophobia” from the campaign of the American president Barak Obama. According to the participant, this Islamophobia has affected the American society at such a deep level that even a Muslim name can create uneasiness and fear in the American society.

All the participants that I have mentioned so far are self identified non-Muslim participants according the demographic questionnaires filled by them. It makes sense at this stage to take a look at the position taken by Muslim participants who are supposed to be affected by this War on Terror at a personal level and in a variety of ways according to the text mentioned above.

### **Personal Experiences of Islamophobia**

This fourth version represents those participants who mention that “the War on Terror” directly affects their lives at a personal level. The number of participants who have witnessed or personally experienced Islamophobia as an effect of this war is nine (100% of the Muslim participants as mentioned in their demographic questionnaire). For example, consider the

following statement of a 25 year old female student who is a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait states:

The War on Terror has been one of the worst experiences for me as a Muslim-Canadian... When I try to see who I am and where I truly come from. All I remember is Canada. My family came to Canada in 1993 after the Gulf War, which was a suffering itself. It is the worst feeling to be in a war. So basically, I have experienced war in both ways. One way is actually being there in person and the second one is experiencing it far away (9/11). I have to say, the one that scared me for life is the 9/11. Even though during the Gulf War Iraqi soldiers beat us. But the War on Terrorism has hurt me ever more, not physically but mentally and emotionally.

This participant compares the effects of two entirely different wars on her life to highlight how intense the effects of the War on terror are on his/her life as a Muslim. According to this participant the difference between the two wars is that the Gulf War left its prints on her/his body while “the War on Terror” is leaving its prints on her soul. As a result, this war has become one of the worst experiences of her life, because mental and emotional wounds are more painful than the physical ones.

### **A Sense of Marginalization**

The most important effect of this Islamophobia, as mention by all Muslim participants and many non-Muslim participants, is a deep sense of marginalization. For example, a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine discusses in detail in his interview, how “the War on Terror” has created Islamophobia and as a result, a sense of marginalization has been build up in Canadian Muslims:

Well, as I said earlier, this War on Terror has affected me, and all those people who are Muslims or even those who look like Muslims have faced the consequences. For them all Muslims are at least potential terrorists. I have been selected and separated, as I remember, for random security checks at every airport terminal I have been to. This War

on Terror has affected Muslims in particular. Muslims are no more equal citizens of the Canadian society. I have always been separated and searched intensely even on Canadian airports. Even they searched my personal data in my laptop the last time, when I was coming back to Canada. I am living in Canada but I know that I am not an equal member of this society. This War on Terror has turned me into an alien.

This Muslim participant talks about his experiences related to this war and how this war has not only affected all Muslims but even those who look like Muslims. This text reveals many practices related to Islamophobia, such as: representation of all Muslims as potential terrorists, segregation and categorization of Muslims on the basis of their religion at airports, and suspicion of Muslims in general. According to the participant, all these practices have marginalized Muslims in the Canadian society and turned them into aliens.

I also note that construction of a marginalized space for Muslims in the Canadian society is not only represented by Muslim participants ( $n = 9$ ), but 25 non-Muslim participants also mention that “the War on Terror” has affected Muslims in a sad way. For example, an English speaking 22 year old female student says:

I realized that we, as North Americans, create the ‘enemy’. Our hatred must be directed at someone—whether it be the Nazis, the Communists, and now, Middle-Eastern are the target and the sad fact is that there are so many people who are ill-informed, and believe whatever lies or pieces of propaganda, media and the government will feed them.

This participant talks about the tide of hatred directed towards Middle-Eastern and considers it “the sad fact”, or in other words, Islamophobia directed towards Muslims in the context of “the War on Terror”. This participant represents media and the government as the main agencies responsible for feeding people “lies or pieces of propaganda”. Another English speaking, 24 year old female student says:

As the news of those attacks dominated the television for days, I remember feeling annoyed that I could not watch the regular programs. Having lived in a Muslim country

and having many Muslim friends I have seen and felt the fear they were experiencing as they are now in a very uncomfortable light. I am not sure if “the War on Terror” has affected my life directly. I don’t know anyone who fought in Afghanistan in this War on Terror. The only change I feel is greater security measures at the airports when flying. But I have seen the marginalization of Muslims and a lot of stereotyping about them and the Islamic religion.

### **Representations of Muslims as Terrorists**

Muslim participants identify many practices as a part and parcel of Islamophobia that creates a marginalized space for Muslims in the Imagined Community of Canada. These practices have serious implications for their inclusion/exclusion from this community. One of the practices mention by the participants of this study is the representation of Muslims as Terrorists, which appears in 20 out of 99 narratives. As a 25 year old female student, who is a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait, narrates her experiences, it becomes evident that the politics of representation revolves around religious differences:

I am certain that the negative images of Muslims have developed overtime after 9/11 and this image most importantly is “Islam” versus “Peace”.

This Muslim participant talks about the representation of Islam and Muslims that has been developed particularly after 9/11 and how this representation is working to divide the world into two essential categories, “Islam/Peace”, as opposite forces. Another Muslim participant discusses how this politics of representation affects his life as a member of the Canadian society. This participant is a 22 year old male student who is a refugee from Somalia:

I, as a Muslim am pushed to take a defensive posture for something that I or my family has nothing to do [with]. I think that media is mainly responsible because I remember when a terrorist plot was discovered by [the] Toronto police. We were living in Toronto at that time. I was shocked to see that when there is a terrorist who claims to be a Muslim, then it is the song of Muslim terrorist on the media. (Participant #7)

This participant reveals a common practice of representing Muslims as terrorists in the North American society, and how this practice is creating certain meanings around Muslim body. These meanings are so powerful and exclusionary in their nature that they ultimately categorize Muslims as dangerous and terrorists. This issue is also represented in the following statement of an English speaking 19 year old female student:

I find it utterly ridiculous that all I have learned over the past seven years is that supposedly anyone with [a] headdress is a terrorist and dangerous. (Participant #25)

This participant states how this representation of Muslims affects her perception about Muslims. How this politics of representation revolves around the Muslim body that even a piece of cloth is enough to fabricate certain meanings around the Muslim body. Another English speaking 18 year old female student talks about the practices of representing Muslims as terrorists in her interview:

What did I first understand, when I was really young, was that Middle Eastern people are responsible for all this terrorism. But today it sounds really awful. When I heard the word terrorist, specific people come into my mind. It is a kind of ridiculous. I guess it is all like a witch burning trial—Terrorists (whisper). So that's how I see it now, it is really impossible to judge anything because of all sorts of crazy stuff. To declare Muslims as terrorist is pretty ridiculous. Yes there are some terrorists but you really have to understand them before you judge and punish. (Participant #51)

This text reveals in detail how the politics of representing Muslims/ Middle Eastern as terrorists work. The participant admits that as a result of this representation of Muslims as terrorists, he used to think, “Middle Eastern people are responsible for all this terrorism”. The comparison of this practice in the twenty first century to the practice of “a witch burning trial” highlights the nature of this politics of representation. An 18 year old male student who is a first generation immigrant from Abu-Dhabi writes:

I remember the War on Terror started after 9/11. I remember being in school back then, and hearing about it on the radio. When I first heard it, I was in 6th grade and did not realize the magnitude of what happened. One thing I definitely remember is that for the first time, after 9/11 my mom, since she wears the hijab, was getting dirty looks from people. I think that this War on Terror is just meant to prove that Muslims are terrorists and responsible for everything wrong in this world. (Participant # 6)

This Muslim participant represents the same effects of the war as mentioned in the previous quotes. These effects include how Muslim bodies became the target of hatred as a result of this war, and how this war has targeted Muslims and labeled them as “terrorists”. Let’s take a look at the memories of another Muslim participant regarding the effects of this war. This participant is a 22 year old male student born in Somalia:

I won’t mind it if each and every criminal or terrorist is being declared as a Christian or a Jew or an Atheist terrorist or criminal. It makes me feel like I am not a Canadian. I am someone who has come from somewhere else and don’t deserve to be included in this society. I remember a couple of years ago my mother was admitted to Ottawa General Hospital. The nurse was a really nice and cheerful lady. Christmas was after a couple of days. She was talking about Christmas when my mother said we do not celebrate Christmas. We are Muslims. I noticed a sudden change on the nurse’s face. After a few moments she asked in a cynical tone, why did Muslims attack the World Trade Centre on 9/11? My mother had nothing to say so I said we did not do it, it was a group of people who belonged to different countries. (Participant # 7)

This participant explains how this labeling of Muslims as terrorists, or in other words the politics of representation is excluding Muslims from the Canadian society by creating an environment that they “don’t deserve to be included in this society”. According to these participants, Muslims have fallen into the cycle of victimization, and as a result, are forced to live in a marginalized space of the imagined community of the Canadian nation.

These participants discuss four important aspects of the representation of Muslims. First, the mode of these representations, such as: negative images of Muslims, the concept of Islam

versus peace, and the song of Muslim terrorist. Second, the media is playing an important role in this war by providing biased information. Third, the consequences of these representations for Muslims such as a defensive posture adopted by Muslims or labels of terrorists are creation of a marginalized space for Muslims. Fourth, these practices are excluding Muslims from the imagined community of the Canadian nation.

### **Racisms**

Another most prominent effect of “the War on Terror” is racisms faced by Muslims in its different forms. All of the Muslim participants ( $n = 9$ ) and eighteen non-Muslim participants mention the fact that the role of racisms is quite evident in making the situation messy and is compounded by the moral relativism that produces simplistic “us against them” positions. Racism is also a key factor in the creation of a marginalized space for Muslims in the imagined community of the Canadian nation, particularly in the context of “the War on Terror”. For example, take a look at the following text taken from the narrative of a 25 year old female student who is a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait:

My experiences have been really awful with especially white seniors. Wow they are racist. I went on an elevator, I lived on the 15th floor, and I guess the old lady that was already on the elevator lived a couple floors down. But she wanted to go to the 1st floor and instead the elevator took her up to my floor. Once I came in the elevator she whispered, “FUCKING TERRORIST brought me up all the way to the 15th floor”. It really hurts me because I thought I was a Canadian with the same rights and freedom that she had. But do not get me wrong there are a lot of nice people out there. But experiences like this kill me and make me feel like an alien in the only country that I truly knew and gave me the citizenship.

It is obvious from this statement that exclusion stems not only from religion and the discourses of race, who have scripted the terms of engagement in the war on terror, but also from more

implicit but no less troubling phenomena such as labeling and meaning making. The participant states how racisms are working in the Canadian society and as a result, forcing Muslims to feel like aliens in the Canadian society. For example, take a look at another statement of a 22 year old male student born in Somalia:

The War on Terror is the result of the events of 9/11. I don't know much about this whole terrorism affair but the unfortunate thing is that it is a very common practice in white people whenever they would have an argument with a visible Muslim. Their last argument is always why don't you go back you came from. My father faced it in his store. My Arab neighbours who want to avoid dogs had recently faced the same situation, when our other neighbour Linda told her if you cannot bear my dog then why don't you go back to your own country. It is interesting that Linda's father came from Germany to Canada. Every white person belongs to Canada, while every Muslim should go back—that is what the War on Terror is. (Participant # 7)

This participant's narrative represents another display of racisms in the Canadian society against Muslims. According to this participant, "it is a very common practice in white people" to say, "why don't you go back you came from". They use this argument to show that Muslims do not belong to this society. This statement reflects how racisms work in the Canadian society and include certain people in the imagined community of the Canadian nation while excluding certain people at the same time "Every white person belongs to Canada, while every Muslim should go back". There is an acute realization of this mode of racisms in the following statement of a 19 year old female student whose parents migrated from Pakistan:

The War on Terror was started after 9/11. I remember that day. I was in my school when I heard two teachers talking about it during the break. Then I forgot about it. I don't remember exactly after how many days of 9/11. My mother, me and my younger brother were in a play park. Two white old ladies were sitting on the bench. My mother was wearing a headscarf. I was trying to leave my bicycle behind their bench when I heard them talking about the events of 9/11 again. They were pointing towards my mom and saying these bastard Muslims did that to us. Why don't they go back to where they came

from? I was confused and irritated because I could not understand at that time what did my mother do and where they wanted to send us. (Participant # 8)

This participant also mentions the same practice of “go back where you came from”. This racialization is not new in the Canadian society but it has become more evident after the events of 9/11. A 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine elaborates this process of racialization:

One of the most important affect is racialization. The world is divided into two categories in the world: white nations and Muslims. This racialization involves labelling of Muslims as terrorists and non-civilized nations while white nations as democratic and civilized nations. (Participant #1)

This participant represents racialization as the most important effect of Islamophobia that has divided the world into two homogenous parts, “white nations and Muslims”. This racialization is based on categorization and this categorization has grim consequences for Muslims. The issue of racisms against Muslims has also been raised by non-Muslim participants. For example, take a look at the following statement of a non-Muslim participant. This participant is an English speaking 19 year old female student:

I think this war has affected certain people more than others. My grandfather is actually Turkish and anyone who looks different from white people and has a Muslim name has been affected. People all over Canada have been discriminated if they are not white and are from a Muslim country like my grandfather is, especially in places like airports and other public places. My grandfather has faced many problems in Halifax. Whenever... he is on the airport, the security is all over him. It does not make real difference even if people are living here for a very long period. You must treat people like people.

This text highlights how racisms have been a part and parcel of the baggage received by Muslims as an effect of this war. The participant relates the experiences of her grandfather “especially in places like airports and other public places” to the racialized nature of this war and how a paradigm of Muslims versus Whites works behind this Islamophobia.

### **The Categorization of Muslims through Surveillance**

According to my participants, there is a clear interplay between racisms and the process of surveillance because both are creating categorization and exclusion of Muslims from the mainstream society. The issue of surveillance in the name of security measures at airports appears in 13 narratives. According to 90% ( $n = 8$ ) of the Muslim participants, the process of surveillance has diverse implications for Muslims, such as categorization, essentialization, and racialization on the basis of body, name, and accent. For example, take a look at the following statement of a 23 year old male and Arabic speaking student who was born in Sudan:

This war has affected me directly due to my skin, religion and the Muslim name. I am a potential terrorist, whenever I travel through an airplane. Me and my family is always segregated from the line for extensive search. (Participant #9)

This Muslim participant explains how the process of surveillance dares to think through the reception of his body, name, and religion; “that is, how he is gazed at, received, and hence treated” (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 149). The processes of racialization and surveillance are used as a set of power technologies in the complex post-9/11 situation to gaze at, control and exclude the Muslim “Other” from the imagination of the nation. The categorization, on the basis of an essentialized discourse about Muslims, is mentioned by 90% of the Muslim participants and 12% of the non-Muslim participants. For example, a non-Muslim participant discusses in his interview, how the process of surveillance and racisms are linked together. This participant is an English speaking 18 year old female student:

Well, I think that this war has created fear, suspicion, and insecurity in the name of security measures. I told you about that Brazilian man (an incident happened in England, when the participant was visiting his family there after 9/11) and how we deal with the man in the name of security. I have friends who are from [the] Middle East and [they have] faced humiliation in Canadian airports just because of their religion in the name of

security. The situation is worse in American airports. Yeh, I know terrorists are around but it does not mean that every Muslim should be treated like this. It is nothing but racisms. (Participant #51)

This participant talks about the effects of security measures or surveillance on Muslims in particular. These effects include “fear, suspicion, and insecurity” for them whenever they are at airports or crossing borders. This text reveals that the driving force behind surveillance is racism because Muslims have been targeted on the basis of their religion. The participant mentions that she has Muslim friends who are facing humiliation in the Canadian airports just because of their religion. A Muslim participant represents the effects of this war in these words. This participant is an 18 year old male student, whose parents migrated from Egypt:

The War on Terror, in my opinion, has been one of the most controversial things to ever take place after 9/11. I believe that this war has sent out so many mixed messages that it is hard for people to know what to believe anymore. As a Muslim myself, I feel that there is a necessity to stop targeting Muslims on the name of this War on Terror around the world. I do not believe in the ways the United States has gone about doing it. Is it necessarily the best manner to do this? I have yet to see anything positive emerging from this war. (Participant # 5)

This Muslim participant considers this war as the most “controversial” thing because it sent different “messages” to different people, and it affects different people differently. There are two characters in this narrative of the War on terror. The United States of America, who is responsible for this war and Muslims who are the real targets of this war.

As a result, all Muslim participants included in this study are asking questions about their status as a citizen in this country. For example, take a look at the following statement of a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine. This statement is taken from his follow-up interview#1:

This war has affected me at [a] personal level. I have turned into a potential terrorist due

to this War on Terror. I am always tense while at airports, and even in Canadian airports, I have faced the same racial discrimination just because of my religious background. This war has affected me at both social and psychological levels. I feel that I am an outsider in the Canadian society because of the way the media, white people, and airport security guys treat me.

This participant explains in detail how this war and Islamophobia have affected him at a personal level. This statement reflects how Muslims feel at both “social and psychological levels”, when they face racial discrimination. According to the participant, this war has turned him into “a potential terrorists”. The same participant further extends his experiences:

Even in Canadian airports, I haven't escaped this discriminatory treatment, despite the fact that I am a Canadian. My bags have always been checked item by item, most recently my laptop has been checked and the security person pries on my personal pictures and video clips. *There is no other explanation for this rude interference in my personal items but the fact that I am what I am, a likely terrorist and as long as the War on Terror continues, the longer the suspicion of my people as being terrorists will turn into a belief.*

According to this participant, the effects of “the War on Terror” include the labels of terrorists, mental stress on airports, racial discrimination, and a sense of exclusion from Canadian society.

The participant mentions three characters who are mainly responsible for the creation of Islamophobia: “the media, white people, and airport security guys”, who are responsible for treating Muslims as “aliens” in the Canadian society. Another Muslim participant who is a 25-year old female student and a first-generation immigrant from Kuwait concludes her narrative of the war in these words:

There are not any fair leaders in the world and believe me it's going to get a lot worse, especially for us Muslims. (Participant # 2)

## Indirect Effects

The fifth version represents those participants who mention that “the War on Terror” affects their lives indirectly because either a relative or a friend is deployed or going to be deployed in Afghanistan. The total number of these participants is seven ( $n = 7$ ). For example, take a look at the following statement given by an English speaking 21 year old female student:

Personally, the war has not had a huge impact on my life. The one way in which it has affected my life is that I have two friends in the military. They are fighting in Afghanistan as we speak. I worry about them and fear for their lives every day on their tour.

This participant admits that “the War on Terror” has not affected her life directly. The one and only effect of this war on her life is mainly due to her two friends who are in the Canadian army and are currently deployed in Afghanistan. It is a very limited and temporary affect and otherwise, the participant finds no huge impact of this war on her life. Another English speaking 21 year old female student states:

On a more personal level, I have very good friends in the Army currently and in Afghanistan. Every day is more racking when you hear of more deaths in Afghanistan. You want to make sure quickly that it ‘s not you friend, and yet even when it is not you still feel saddened for those who read the article only to find that it is their brother, friend, or child. As a result of technology, I am able to keep in contact with my friends in Afghanistan. However, sometimes days go by with no updates and all of my friends and family set nervous hoping nothing bad has happened. It is a horrible feeling for something that seems useless. I personally am against this War on Terror. I think that it is a horrible waste of lives and money. I wonder how many more lives are needed to end this unjustly war. When the insanity of this war will be over?

In sum, the overall effects of this war can be represented in the following text taken from the interview of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

Oh yeh, of course, I think particularly stereotyping is just kind of out of control as a major affect of this war. I think that it is a sort of practice against the Middle Eastern people or Muslims. It does not really matters where do they belong. If they look like a kind of Middle Eastern or Muslims they are the targets of stereotyping. Well, but again not everyone does that, it is just a small group. I guess this war has also affected those people in general who have any relation to any one participating in the war. Though, I do not have any personal attachment to this war. I live in kind of a bubble. I do not know anyone directly in the world who is there in Afghanistan. Though I have many friends that have been effected by or even stereotyped and that comes from ... um ... whites.

This participant discusses the general effects of the war for different sections of the Canadian society. According to this participant, this war affects different people differently. He mentions the effects of this war from those who live in a kind of bubble (no effect) to the effects of this war on Muslims who have been affected personally by it on racialized lines.

This chapter presents the voices of my participants in more depth as compared to the previous chapter. In sum, I have presented a variety of positions taken by my participants about the nature, purpose and effects of the War on terror on their lives. These positions construct a web of meanings around the nature, the purpose, and the Canadian involvement in this war. For example, my participants' position about the nature of this war is divided into four versions on the basis of their lines of argument. While there are three versions of narratives reflecting three different positions about the purpose of this war. The majority of my participants represent the American invasion/occupation of Iraq as a wrong decision. There are three lines of argument regarding the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. A large number of participants represent "the War on Terror" as a war that belongs to the U.S. and argue that Canada must pull its troops out from Afghanistan.

An important finding, presented in this chapter, is the effects of "the War on Terror" on the lives of young people in Canada. My participants talk about three major effects of this war on

their lives: a sense of fear, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. However, this chapter specifically examines the responses of young Muslim Canadians in relation to the effects of this war on their lives. The most important part of these findings is that the Muslim participants have experienced this War on Terror at a very personal level as compared to non-Muslim participants. According to my Muslim participants, “the War on Terror” has affected them in a variety of ways. Their responses reveal that the majority of these young Muslim-Canadians believe that Muslims have been misrepresented by the media. Furthermore, they feel that the media strongly affects the way people view Islam, although not all Muslim participants suggest that the media is specifically against Islam. One Muslim participant explained his concern about the media. This participant is an Arabic speaking 23 year old male student born in Sudan:

I usually get my information from the Internet, because at least this space is not controlled by white people, and I can always find different versions of the same story on different sites. Canadian TV and newspapers were so biased after 9/11, full of negative images about Muslims. (Participant #9)

According to this participant, the media is “biased”, and does not air different versions of the stories on “the War on Terror” rather media represents negative images of Muslims. Muslim participants’ responses about the effects of the War on terror on their lives emerge from their concern regarding their identity (i.e., how the young-Canadian Muslims see themselves within the Canadian society). Several effects of this war have helped shape young Canadian Muslims’ identity: First, this war creates a sense of marginalization in the Canadian society for Muslims; Second, the representations of Muslims as terrorists after 9/11; Third, different forms of racism faced by Muslims; and fourth, the categorization of Muslims through surveillance. One of the Muslim participants describes how she sees her position within the Canadian society. This participant is a 19 year old female student whose parents migrated from Pakistan:

My father came to Canada in 1989. Me and my two brothers were born in Toronto. Actually I started to wear a hijab three years ago because the first question I started to face after 9/11 was oh, you are a Muslim then why don't you wear a hijab? Before 9/11 I knew that I was a Muslim but I did not feel that it is important. This war on Terror, which is basically a war to get control of Muslim world's resources, has turned me into someone who is not the same as other Canadians are. (Participant #8)

After 9/11, this Muslim female student felt as though she is not included in the overall Canadian society, because "the War on Terror" "has turned me into someone who is not the same as other Canadians are". Another Muslim participant extends the feelings of this female participant in the following statement. This participant is a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

It is like I am an alien just because of a few people who belonged to different Muslim countries. (Participant #1)

As I have shown earlier, some Muslim participants share their own stories of racisms that they face after the attacks of September 11th, 2001. While not all Muslim participants personally respond affirmatively. Many of the participants talk about someone who had experienced some sort of racial discrimination or categorization on the basis of their religion. As a 21 year old male student who is a first generation immigrant from Pakistan states:

I personally have not experienced personal discrimination towards myself but I am certain that the negative images of Muslims have developed overtime after 9/11 and this image most importantly is "Islam" versus PEACE. (Participant #3)

A 19 year old female student whose parents migrated from Pakistan states:

I did not face any problems in the Canadian airports but I have heard so many stories from my parents and relatives about discrimination due to their religion, and name. (Participant #8)

In sum, I found that "the War on Terror" is a contested phenomenon due to two main reasons. First, there is no consensus among my participants about the nature and purpose of this war. In

other words majority of my participants are not buying into the official Canadian government's narrative of the war. Second, this war has affected different people differently. The range of effects varies from no effects to direct personal effects on lives. In particular, Muslim participants talk about many important issues such as "Islamophobia", "representation of Muslims" in an essentialized manner, and "racisms" as obvious outcomes of "the War on Terror".

These findings are important for both teachers and researchers. For teachers, it is important to realize that these concepts are socially constructed in many ways, but these concepts have very important meaning in everyday lives of their students. Teachers need to play a dynamic role in deconstructing these concepts because they are directly relevant for all students, regardless of how they identify them. Challenging these issues not only helps to break down the norms that confine Muslims to rigid stereotypes and essentialized categories, but also encourages students to develop critical thinking skills to question presumptions and biases they encounter throughout their lives. While the effects of "the War on Terror" are very real, and very devastating, features of the modern world, it is my contention that the work of education is to facilitate, as Maxine Greene eloquently articulates, a reaching outward, beyond what is known, 'toward what might be, should be, is not yet' (Greene, 1988, p. 21).

For researchers, these findings can provide directions for research in the fields of racisms, representations, and Islamophobia. Research that examines and addresses the inequities, injuries, and imbalances produced as effects of "the War on Terror". These findings also have implications for post-colonial theory because the body of work known as postcolonial theory has acknowledged that neocolonialism is more insidious and more powerful to detect and resist than older forms of overt colonialism. The War on Terror is a current manifestation of colonialism in

many ways and post-colonial theorists can use these findings to deliberately de-center dominant narratives so that the perspectives of those who have been marginalized and racialized as a result of this war become starting points for knowledge construction.

In the next chapter, I read critically the semiotic field in which my participants move by analyzing their rhetorical style. I mainly focus on the small pointing words used by my participants to represent the narrator, the reader, and characters of “the War on Terror”.

## CHAPTER 5. A “WE” OF IMAGINED COMMUNITY

In the previous chapters I analyze the contents of ninety-nine narratives and four follow-up interviews. This analysis reveals the narrative of “the War on Terror” represented by my participants. I explore not only diverse understandings of the war but also the contradictions and complexities that are a part of these understandings. The narrators use the semiotic field in a particular manner to position themselves, their readers, the main actors involved in the war. In this chapter I focus on small pointing words. These small pointing words have been described under the rubric of *deixis* by language theorists. Deixis (adjective form, deictic) is a psycholinguistic term for those aspects of meaning associated with self-world orientation. Galbraith (1995) says, “Like zero in mathematics and the dark space in a theatre, deixis orients us within a situation without calling attention to itself” (p. 22). Out of a total of 99 narratives of “the War on Terror” and four follow-up interviews of the participants, fifty narratives and the interviews of this study include many dark spaces in the form of deixis. These deixis orient its viewers or reader to imagine something that has no physical presence, yet is always lurking in the background.

I am not interested in the content of collective memory of my participants in this chapter. Instead, I focus on the ways this deixis of little words is used to legitimize knowledge in a manner that constructs multiple imagined communities. With the help of the deixis of little words my participants, most commonly “we/us” or “they/them”, imagine something or someone that has no physical presence. The most important aspect of this regular use of ‘We/us’ or ‘they/them’ is that it signifies some banal or taken for granted assumptions that are nationalist in nature. Billig (1995) mentions that when this rhetorical style is used with regularity, ‘we’ are unmindfully reminded who ‘we’ are and where ‘we’ are. ‘We’ are identified without even being

mentioned. In this way, a continuous construction of an “imagined community” is going on (Anderson, 1983). The problem lies in this construction is that for many people, it is a form of life, which habitually closes the front door, and seals the borders (Billig, 1995).

Let me give you an example to explain my point. The common phrase “We Canadians love hockey” means “I am a Canadian, I love hockey, as do all other Canadians”. Here the “we” identifies the boundaries of “Canadianness” in a taken for granted manner. This means only those people who love hockey (Ice Hockey: Another taken for granted assumption in the Canadian society that excludes field hockey unmindfully) are included in the imagined community of Canadian nation. The borders of this community are sealed for those who are not interested in “ice” hockey or familiar with “field” hockey (a popular form of hockey in Asia, Europe, and Australia). The ellipsis of (ice) hockey also points to an imagined community. Billig (1995) points out that this ellipsis is another form of deixis. He also considers Benedict Anderson’s view of the nation as ‘imagined community’, a useful starting point for examining the role played by these linguistic deixis.

These imagined communities appear in various guises in the narratives of my participants. The main aim of this chapter is to explore these multiple communities constructed with the help of deixis. This chapter examines the following questions: (a) What is the nature of the imagined community promoted by the participants of this study; and (b) how do the Muslim participants construct this community, and (c) how do these constructions silence certain voices.

### **The Nature of Imagined Communities Constructed by the Deixis**

My participants construct multiple imagined communities by using the deixis of little words such as “we”, “us” or “them”. There are many examples of such situations in the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants, in which the narrator and the actors,

involved in “the War on Terror”, are neither physically co-present with one another nor currently located in the same deictic field as that which is being narrated. In these cases, the participant is able to shift his/her perspective into an imagined space by representing his/her deictic centre into a discursively constructed ‘We/ Us’ or ‘them/they’. Karl Bühler called this ability (1999 [1934]) deictic shifting. The movement between cognitive stances entailed in the deictic shift is common in our everyday interactions and easily recognizable as an integral part of our natural narrative schemas. Warner (2009) describes this movement:

When we tell stories about others or even about ourselves, we regularly shift our perspective from that related to our subjective deictic centre of *here* and *now* to the *theres* or *thens* of other people or of our former selves. (p. 14)

This deictic shifting is evident in almost half of the narratives ( $n = 50$ ) and four follow-up interviews of the participants of my study. While in the other forty-nine narratives, there is no deictic shift into an imagined space in the text. The narrators use the first person pronoun “I” to express their point of view or individual experiences regarding “the War on Terror”. A conversation, in which it is normally obvious who is talking and who is being addressed ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’, or ‘us’ are not problematic. The deictic words, as it were, point to something concrete: the here and now, in which the speakers are standing (Billig, 1995). In this chapter I am interested in what Billig calls the deixis of ‘we/us’ or ‘them/they’ which are not merely the narrator and the readers, rather it may include an imagined audience within an imagined space. I analyze the narratives of only those fifty participants who use two different categories of deixis: ‘We/us/ours’ or ‘them/they/theirs’ routinely in their narratives. In some cases this usage of ‘We/us/ours’ or ‘them/they/theirs’ represents both the narrator and its reader. However, in most of the cases these deixis are used to evoke an identity and relationships between the speaker and an imagined community: ‘We/us/ours’ or ‘them/they/theirs’ are constructing multiple imagined

communities whose boundaries are not always explicit. These six deictic terms represent the process of dichotomization but with different meanings attached to them, and thus signify multiple imagined communities. Sometimes ‘we/us/ours’ is unstated in the text but are presented implicitly around ‘them/they/theirs. For example, if a participant writes “The War on Terror started when they bombed the World Trade Centre”. The statement implies a “we/us” that is unstated but works against a “they”, who bombed “us”. There is a kind of ellipsis in this case. Billig (1995) points out, “There is a further form of deixis which, in many respects, is even more inhabiting, and which, because it involves no metaphorical pointing, hardly even seems deictic” (p. 107). In the above example the sentence rhetorically sets the scene for another character without any metaphorical pointing and that character slips into the sentence unannounced: We. This “we” represents those who were bombed by “them”. Billig explains this kind of ellipsis with the example of “The Prime Minister” and how the definite article accomplishes the exact role played by deixis since which prime minister of which country is not identified, thus marking the nation as taken-for-granted context. In most of the narratives and all interviews, these deixis are stated explicitly and positioned in relation to each other.

This deixis of little words is used in different ways to narrate the perceptions and worldviews in the context of “the War on Terror”. Single words like “we” or “they” construct multiple, overlapping and competing imagined communities. My participants construct more than one imagined communities in the semiotic field of their responses. In fact, rather than imagining a single monolithic imagined community built on Euro-American or pure Canadian identity, these narratives instead represent multiple, overlapping and competing notions of identities and communities. This construction depends on the particular ways by which this deixis works in their responses.

Before an in-depth analysis of the ways by which this deixis works, I want to explain here that words like “we/us” or “they/them” are also used in the other forty-nine narratives not included in the following analysis. These forty-nine narratives are not a part of this analysis because the words are used as simple pronouns in them. These pronouns represent a physical presence of someone or something with clear physical boundaries. For example, “we” as the family, or the whole class, “our” living room or teacher, or “they” as Canadian soldiers or the parents of the narrator. To explain my point further, I will give you an example from one of those forty-nine narratives. This participant does not use plural pronouns as deixis to create an imagined space or community. This statement is taken from the narrative of a Chinese speaking, 21 year old female student:

We all went home a bit earlier that day, and I informed my grandma about what had happened. My usual routine after school was to relax, and watch some TV, and have a snack, but on every channel there was a report on 9/11, and we had over 100 channels too! (Participant #85)

In this text the narrator uses the simple word “we” to represents two different groups. First “we” represents her peers in the schools, who “went home a bit earlier that day (9/11)”, and the second “we” represents her family who “had over 100 channels”. The word “we” represents here a group with physical presence and clear boundaries.

*Table 6.1. No of different Deixis used in 50 Narratives*

WE	US	OUR	THEY	THEM	THEIR
50	26	35	39	25	30

I analyze fifty narratives in the following section and divide them into five different versions. This categorization works on the basis of how the deixis of ‘We/us/ours’ or ‘them/they/theirs’ are used by my participants to construct multiple, overlapping and competing

imagined communities. The following figure represents five different but overlapping versions of Imagined communities.

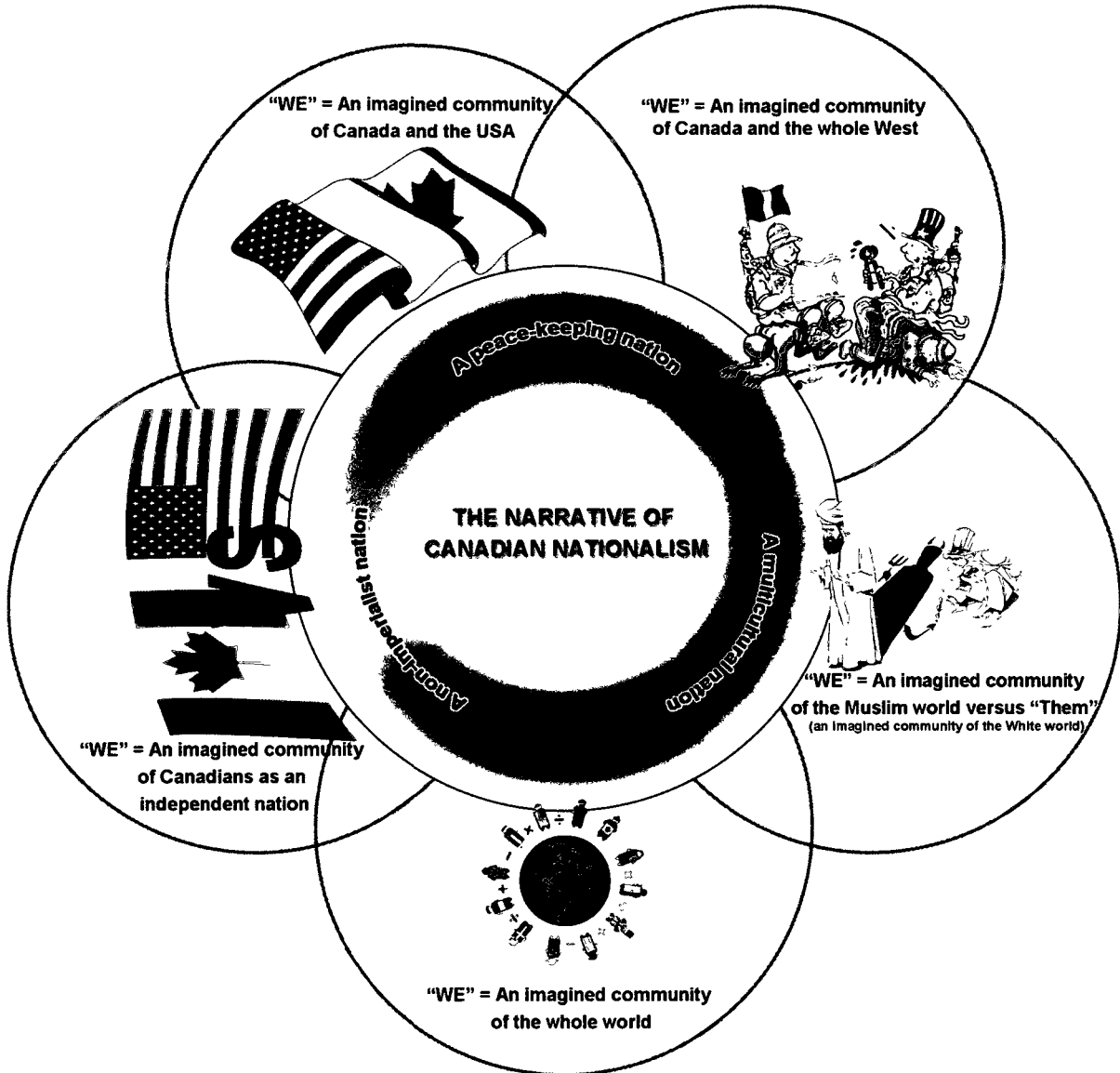


Figure: 5.1. Five Versions of Imagined Communities

### **The First Version of Imagined Communities**

The first version represents those participants who use “we” in a way that tends to follow certain aspects of Anderson’s (1983) formulation, including his assertion that nationhood implies a sense of ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’. Twenty-five participants out of fifty boast this sense of horizontal comradeship, and their narratives hold such aspirations. These participants are using “we” in a way that constructs a localized concept of Canadian nation. Anderson (1983) argues, “Modern times have seen a particular shift towards more localized conceptions of nationhood as a reaction to the experience of empire” (p. 57). For example, this statement is taken from the narrative of a Chinese speaking 18 year old female student:

I think we should have the right to decide not to participate. Just because the U.S. happens to be our neighbour, does not mean we owe them anything, especially not human lives. (Participant #83)

In this statement “we” represents a localized concept of Canadian nation as a reaction to American hegemonic neighborhood. On the one hand this rhetoric suggests that Canada as an independent nation should have its own decision making power and on the other hand it readily distances the Canadian nation from the Americans. This deixis of “we” highlights the border of an imagined community of the Canadian nation as a sovereign unit with existing divisions from American nation. According to this text, American presence as a powerful neighbor makes a “we” who have the “right to decide”. I also note that apart from the use of deixis of a nationalist “we”, the narrator also distances the Canadian nation from the American nation with the help of another deixis “them”. This rhetoric refers to Canada in an explicit manner, as “we”, who do not owe “them” anything. Another participant also uses the deixis of homeland (Billig, 1995) that invokes the nationalist “we” and places all Canadians within “our” homeland. This statement is taken from the narrative of a French speaking 23 year old male student

I still remember the day 9/11, 2001 when this nonsense started and we became a victim of terror. I am not interested in any kinds of wars. Rather I hate wars. I think that it does not make any difference in our lives. This war belongs to [the] U.S. (Participant #97)

A deictic shift takes place in the positioning here. According to this participant, September 11 makes a “we” who are victims of terror. The speaker then rejects the connection of this war to his/her own life and that of an “our”. Thus it creates a We/Us/Our who are the victims of 9/11, but they are in the end not really affected by this war. This We/Our is then positioned as different from the United States. It is not evident from the statement that it is a Canadian nationalist We/Our but it could well be. I infer that it is a national “we” because it is differentiated from another national one the United States of America. This rhetoric refers to Canada in an implicit manner, as the place where “our lives” are not affected by a war that “belongs to U.S.”. This style can also be seen in the statement of another participant, who states that “we” were distracted and whatever these Americans are doing does not fit to be in “our” society. This statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 21 year old female student:

The world was made able to ignore the un-ethical acts of Bush because we were distracted by the manufactured threats in our society. People became so afraid of outside threats. We were [sic] failed to acknowledge what Americans were doing overseas. (Participant #52)

This “we” appears to refer to an imagined community comprises of “the world”, but with a sense of, the United States versus the world in which the speaker is on the side of “the world”. In this statement Americans seem to be the only actor represented with their full individuality and solely responsible for everything that is happening in the name of this war. There is an implicit “them” of un-ethical Americans in this text that works against an ethical community of “we” who “failed to acknowledge what Americans were doing overseas”. An imagined community of “we” is constructed by the participant continuously that was “distracted by the manufactured threats in our society”. Here again the presence of an imagined community can be traced against the

presence of an implicit and unstated “they”, who manufactured threats in “our” society.

All these examples evoke an implicit sense of resentment or being coerced: “does not mean we owe them anything”; “this nonsense started and we became a victim of terror”; “we failed to acknowledge what Americans were doing overseas”. This rhetoric uses an inclusive “we” continuously, but sometimes the inclusion stops at Canadian borders and sometimes it includes the “world”. However, in some cases instead of a sense of resentment, there is a sense of justification for Canadian and American roles in “the War on Terror”. For example, this statement is taken from the interview of an English speaking 19 year old female student:

Canada has no reason to be involved in Afghanistan. I think that Canada is just there for friendship. America is one of the most powerful countries now and they are our neighbours. We cannot exactly refuse them. Umm, well I think ... we can but people would think that it is not a good idea. (Participant # 66)

This participant asserts that there is “no reason” for Canada “to be involved in Afghanistan” but then there is a deictic shift in the statement. The participant justifies why “we cannot exactly refuse “them”. According to the participant, it is due to “our” friendship and the power dynamics involved in the Americans and an imagined nationalist community of “we’s” relationships, but then apparently she creates two different imagined communities of “we” and “people”. I infer that “we” and people are juxtaposed. People may be a part of the “we”, but it is not the whole “we”, rather it may represent some people who may not consider it as a good idea. The proper noun of Canada has been replaced by the deixis of “we” that constructs an imagined community of Canadian nation. While “America” has been replaced by the deixis of “they/them” that construct another imagined community who is “our” powerful neighbor. Another participant views this issue with a different angle. This statement is taken from the interview of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

In terms of [the] Canadian involvement in this war, we went into Afghanistan with the United States. Although our foreign policy is not dictated by the United States but we are tempted to follow them because we are in such close relations with the United States and we really sort of picked up the torch given by the United States and went into Afghanistan. (Participant # 59)

This statement has been taken from a follow-up interview and the participant is not defensive about the Canadian role in Afghanistan. The deixis of “we/our” is used here to construct an imagined community of nation who is not “dictated by the United States but is “tempted to follow them” as the hero’s friend. Razack (2004) portrays the hero’s friend, “The hero’s friend is not a warrior. To keep his place in the family, he has had to make several adjustments in an era of what is often called muscular peacekeeping” (p. 36). This representation is so strong that it seems as if the participant himself was a part of that community who “picked up the torch given by the United States and went into Afghanistan”. This deixis of “we” is more complicated than just Canada versus the U.S. The complicated role played by the deixis is more evident in the following statement. This statement is taken from the interview of an English speaking 19 year old female student:

I thought that we were there for peacekeeping but now I think that a lot has been happening there like soldier are being killed. So many other people are dying. Accidents are happening. Something is going on there more than peacekeeping. People should be allowed to govern themselves. It is not our job to tell them how to run their country. (Participant # 66)

The question being asked was: What do you think about Canadian involvement in Afghanistan? The participant represents herself as a part of an imagined community here while talking about Canada’s role in Afghanistan. She uses the deixis of “we” on behalf of an imagined community who is supposed to be there for peacekeeping. As I will show in one of the following sections of this chapter, the majority of my participants represent the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan as a peacekeeping mission. Although the Canadian government never claims that its presence in

Afghanistan has anything to do with peacekeeping. Canada as a peacekeeper nation is a dominant myth in the Canadian society. This myth does not allow my participants to imagine Canada as masculine and militaristic nation.

According to Barthes (1972), the world supplies to myth an historical reality but a conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history. The function of myth is to empty reality: it is, literally, a ceaseless flowing out, a haemorrhage, or perhaps an evaporation, or in short a perceptible absence. This function of myth makes it problematic because, as I will show in my further analysis, my participants have turned reality inside out, while claiming that the role of Canada in Afghanistan is as a peacekeeping nation. According to Barthes (1972), myth distorts; myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflexion. The very principle of myth is that it transforms history into nature. As a result, most of these young people accept the myth of Canada as a peacekeeping country, as the natural truth without thinking critically. Razack (2004) explains why we cannot think critically about national mythologies, "Thinking critically about national mythologies will feel deeply destabilizing. It will feel as though we have lost our sense of self" (p. 163). The majority of the participants take the myth of Canada as a peacekeeper nation for granted and represent it as the natural truth behind the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan.

The participant mentioned above is struggling with the internal dynamics of the myth of Canada as a peacekeeper nation. She believes in this myth as the natural truth but other parts of the truth such as "soldier are being killed" or "other people are dying" force her to think that "a lot has been happening there" in the name of this war. Apparently there is a strong anti-imperialist stance in the above statement when the participant states, "It is not our job to tell them how to run their country", but at the same time it has a particular kind of Imperialist tone

that represents Canada as a peacekeeper nation. The everyday context of peacekeeping, Razack (2004) argues, “is a colonial one, where Europeans think of themselves as bringing order and civilization to a darker race” (p. 102). In this statement the colonial context of peacekeeping expresses itself as Canadian nationalism. The influential role of the mythology of peace-keeping nation in the Canadian national imaginary is explored by Jefferess (2009) in his recent article. Jefferess (2009) critically examines three examples of the way in which peacekeeping functions as a mythological sign within the Canadian national imaginary, connoting a distinctly Canadian political ethos and ethics: the 1994 documentary *Peacekeeper at War*; the image “Remembrance and Peacekeeping” on the ten-dollar bill; and Lloyd Axworthy’s 2003 political memoir *Navigating a New World*. The author argues that these representations of Canada’s peacekeeper mythology reflect a nostalgic hunger for national distinction. As such, historical policies and initiatives such as Canada’s contribution to the 1991 Persian Gulf War, its military intervention and abuses in Somalia in 1993, and the Canadian mission in Afghanistan’s Kandahar province are produced within the narrative of peacekeeping as either acts of responsible action (i.e., bringing peace to the Other) or aberrations in an otherwise continuous narrative of Canada’s benevolent action in the world. It is a particular kind of colonial ethics that allows “us” to intervene in other peoples’ land. “We” go “there” to promote democracy (a civilized form of governance) not “to tell them how to run their country” like Americans.

Another deixis of “their/them” is also used in this statement to represent an imagined community who “should be allowed to govern themselves”. In an ambiguous manner these deixis refer to Afghanistan and Afghanies. The participant does not use proper nouns to represent “we” or “them”, and takes the boundaries and rules of inclusion and exclusion into these imagined communities for granted.

### **The Second Version of Imagined Communities**

This version includes those participants whose statements represent a whole series of assumptions about their membership in an imagined community that comprises of the whole West. These assumptions flag discursively in the rhetorical style of these participants. For example, consider the following statement. It is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 19 year old male student:

It is almost been nine years later and I still remember the anger, we felt that how they could do this to our people.

In this inclusive “we” the inclusion does not stop at the Canadian borders but includes Americans into the category of “our people”. It positions the victims of 9/11 as a part of “our people”. There is no distinction between Canadian people and the American people’s struggle to overcome the anger through time. As Billig (1995) points out, such distinctions are also exploited in the context of larger inter-national dynamics such as “the War on Terror”. It was encapsulated in the famous support declaration of the French President following 9/11: “We are all Americans”. An ‘imagined political community’ (Anderson, 1983) works here that allow its members to envision a familial affinity with each other by creating a shared sense of anger and pain. In this statement “they” represents another imagined community and also “we” felt that how could “they” do this to “our” people. Billig (1995) describes:

And ‘we’ can accuse ‘them’ of threatening ‘our’ particularity or failing to act like proper, responsible nations like ‘we’ do. And ‘we’ can claim that ‘they’ in threatening ‘us’, threaten the idea of nationhood. In damning ‘them’, ‘we’ can claim to speak ‘for all of us.’ (p. 85)

Billig’s observation is reflected in the statement mentioned above. There is a further element in the statement of a 22 year old male student born in Somalia:

I remember that all newspapers, TV, and all sorts of media were unanimously talking about those people from uncivilized part of the world who did it and that we must control them. It seems that it was not an attack on a country but rather an attack on the whole west. We were terrified and angry. Then Bush declared War on Terror and we went into Afghanistan to crush Bin Laden and Taliban. (Participant #7)

This participant uses a deixis of “them” for “the people from uncivilized part of the world”, and constitutes a “we” that seems to be “the whole west”. In the last sentence it is unclear whether the “we” is a Canadian nationalist one or the “we” represents the whole west. This rhetoric represents an imagined community whose borders are highlighted through the framework of we/them. Beyond the collective memory of “an attack” lies a pattern. This pattern is reflected in the frequent use of the pronominal plural (Billig, 1995): “we” must control “them”; “we” went to crush. “Their” target was not merely New York or the Pentagon but an imagined community comprises of all western people and is represented by the deixis of “we” in this text. In this inclusive “we” inclusion stops at the boundaries of west, while “them” includes the uncivilized part of the world. In short, there appears to be a dominant Euro-American imagination that holds sway in this construction of an imagined community, in this narrative of a non-Muslim participant. However, it cannot be assumed that necessarily all non-Muslim participants embraced the Euro-American imagination of the Canadian nation.

### **The Third Version of Imagined Communities**

This version includes those participants who use “we” in a way that tends to propagate their desired vision of the nation. A nation in the framework, I am using here is not capable of seeing, acting, thinking or feeling. People, i.e., real human beings are and only they are capable of seeing and representing the nation in this way. For example, this statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 19 year old male student:

Our role has taken many more items than that. It has turned into a war on poverty, famine, and hunger than other things. We are attempting to help children particularly women and girls go to school and get empowered. We must remember no matter what the terror suspects really entail many girls are going to school, and less people in poverty is certainly a good thing. We must never impose western culture on another culture, however. We must never be ethnocentric in nature while operating in foreign countries, no matter what's being done. (Participant # 13)

This quote shows how a daily deixis of little words like “we” points out an ‘imagined community’ whose roles and responsibilities are multi-dimensional in this war. It is making a “we” that is different from those “people”, who are in need of “our” help. Afghanistan is referenced here in an implicit manner because an imagined community of “we” is working there to “help” children and women. This “we” is acting morally and avoiding imposing “western” values, rather it is allowing little girls to go to school and “get empowered”. Whether this is a Canadian nationalist “we”, the “we” of the west, or the “we” of Canada and the United States of America combined, it positions itself on the moral high ground. “We” are acting on behalf of a universal morality of right. “Our” role and the position of universal morality coincided (Billig, 1995). What it does not allow for is that some people, including many Afghanies, might see it as an Imperialist agenda of dominating others in the name of good. I note that the line of argument in the above text follows the same old Imperialist discourses (e.g., the British after all built railroads in India, suppressed the burning of widows, introduced modern systems of telegraph and telephone, etc.). The text in this quote tells its readers that the narrator positions himself as a representative of an imagined community. This community is constructed on the base of a deeply held belief in the need to and the right to dominate others for their own good, others who are incapable of performing any good for themselves. However, in the last two sentences there is a deictic shift in the stance of this participant. The rhetorical style shows resentment against the

imperialist attitude of imposing “western culture on another culture”. He emphasizes the need to be “non-ethnocentric”, or in other words a voice of tolerance of “other” cultures surfaced at the end of the text. It is a sort of philosophical nationalism. Billig (1995) points out:

This philosophical nationalism, unlike some other forms, does not speak with narrow ferocity. Instead, it draws its moral force to lead the nations from its own proclaimed reasonableness. The global ambitions are to be presented as the voice of tolerance (‘our’ tolerance). (p. 172)

This philosophical nationalism gives “us” an intellectual justification about “our” right to “operate in foreign countries”. Again this statement shows Canadian Imperialism that expresses itself as Canadian nationalism. Canadians do not believe in ethnocentrism and imposing western culture on “others”, while operating in their countries. However, this Imperialist approach led “us” into Afghanistan to colonize Afghanies. What “we” are doing there is the only meaningful thing that can be done there. It is not clear in this statement whether this deixis of “we/our” represents the whole west or only America and Canada as members of an imagined community. Each and every narrator in this category is not using this Imperialistic tone.

For example, the following statement uses “we” in an ambiguous manner. The statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 18 year old male student:

I think that we are there to protect all innocent people from terrorists. (Participant #22)

It is difficult to distinguish who is included in this imagined community of “we”. Does it mean only Canadians, Americans and Canadians together, or the NATO alliance. However, the narrator is seeing and representing the role of an imagined community in the same way as we have seen in the previous example, or in other words it seems like a Hollywood movie with a triangle of the hero, the villain, and a captive. In this way, the deixis of “we” expands from the local “we” to an imagined united “we”, and in doing so the participant rhetorically addresses

himself to a “united audience”, placing himself in the community of all heroic people. There is a simple framework of we/terrorists in this statement and one would be hard-pressed in this case to find any of the main events or main actors of this war to organize the text. Consider another statement in this regard. This statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 18 year old male student:

I think that we are doing our best to control Muslim terrorists in Afghanistan, and we should work to promote democracy there. (Participant #20)

Again the deixis of “we” is working here that constructs an imagined community, although it is not clear in this statement, who is included in this community. This text shows a narrative of paternalistic domination of the ‘other’ who acts dishonestly. As Billig (1995) observes:

In conditions of the ‘siege mentality’, it is always the ‘other’ who breaks faith, acts dishonestly and starts aggressive spirals: ‘our’ actions are justified by circumstances, but ‘theirs’ are said to reflect a deficiency of character, indeed, the very deficiencies which ‘we’ deny in ‘ourselves’. (p. 82)

The deixis of “we” is used here in an ambiguous manner, thus it is difficult to infer who is included in this community of “we” that is doing its “best to control Muslim terrorists in Afghanistan” and working “to promote democracy there”, and whether this imagined community is in fact national in dimension or imperial. This rhetoric is entirely focused on “we”, which is constituted in relation to Muslim terrorists in Afghanistan. This “we” is doing two things “there”. One, it is controlling terrorists and second, it is promoting democracy. I infer that the deixis of “we” constructs an imagined community that comprises not of a nation but an entire group of heroic nations into which Canada is fitted as one among many. In this construction, the fight against terrorism and democracy are imagined as civilizing beacons a light to non-civilized and ungrateful peoples living in their own dark ages of terrorism. The narrator seems to be

recounting the experiences from a position perceptually located within the imagined community of “we”. There is, however, a further point, which can be made. As Billig (1995) says:

We is an important feature of the syntax of hegemony, for it can provide a handy rhetorical device for presenting sectional interests as if they were universal ones. ‘We’, the sectional interest, invoke an ‘all of us’, for whom ‘we’ claim to speak. (p. 166)

The voice of hegemony cannot survive without a wider audience that includes an ‘all of us’.

However, something is absent in these narratives. This absence is absolute in the presence of multiple imagined communities. It is the absence of Afghan voices that remain unauthentic and mute in these narratives. In the statement mentioned above, the participant shows no concern for the Afghan populace. Whether the Afghanies are interested in whatever the “we” of imagined community is doing there or not. What price are they paying for this civilizing mission? There are a total of four narratives out of fifty in which an ambiguous “we” is used to represent an imagined community whose borders are blurry.

### **The Fourth Version: Imagined Communities Constructed by the Muslim**

#### **Participants**

This version is represented in only the Muslim participants’ narratives. I note that only four out of nine Muslim participants used this deixis of “we” with a complicated web of meaning and as a result, constructed four different types of imagined communities. However, there is a common thread among these four narratives: all these examples employ a “we” that is positioned antagonistically either to the U.S. or to white nations in general. Take a look at the first example. This example is taken from the narrative of an Arabic speaking 23 year old male student who was born in Sudan:

White nations think that we are not human beings who are facing death and destruction for decades in Africa just because of them. (Participant #9)

This participant uses the conventional framework of we/them on racialized lines. A paradigm of white nations versus Africa works in this statement. Here “we” represents an imagined community that comprises all of Africa, while “them” represents all white nations. The collective memory being mobilized in this statement is one in which Africans faced decades of death and destruction because of European dominance. The following example presents another image.

This statement is taken from the narrative of a 19 year old female student who is second-generation immigrant from Pakistan:

This War on Terror has turned us into aliens. I think that this War on Terror is just a tool in the hands of America by which they want to make all Muslims as they all are criminals. (Participant #8)

This participant also uses the framework of us/they, but within the paradigm of Muslims versus America. An imagined community of “us” that encompasses all Muslims into a monolithic and homogenous entity, while a deixis of “they” that represents American nation as an imagined community, is used to portray “the War on Terror” as a war between these two imagined communities. *The third example is quite different from the previous two examples. This example is taken from the narrative of a 21 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Pakistan:*

And now are we so sure that Osama bin Laden did this and he is in Pakistan, or do we believe what the media tells us? Could the bombing be federally inter-related to the U.S. itself? It is interesting to know what I find out because we as the civil people will never know what actually is behind the veil as major corporations own the media/ news themselves. (Participant #3)

This Muslim participant views this war with an entirely different angle. In the first two sentences “we” is used to invoke an identity between the narrator and its reader but in the last sentence there is a deictic shift and the deixis of “we” works to represent the civil people, or in other

words an imagined community of ordinary people, while “them” works to represent those major corporations that own the media. The War on Terror is actually a war in which the two important parties are media and the civil society. According to this participant, this whole issue of “the War on Terror” raises many questions but “we”, as civilian people, would never be able to find out the realities behind this war. The boundaries of the imagined community of “we” are vast in this statement. It seems that by referring to “bombing be federally inter-related to the U.S.”, this participant expresses a common view in Pakistan that 9/11 attacks were planned by the American CIA. Now take a look at the answer of the participant #1 from the follow-up interview. This participant is a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Canadian soldiers are fighting in Afghanistan and if you would talk to any white Canadian about what they are doing in Afghanistan, they will always tell you that we are there for peacekeeping. They are promoting peace with guns, tanks and bullets.

This Muslim participant is continuously using the deixis of “they” to represent the imagined community of Canadian nation on racialized lines. It is interesting to see how this participant is constructing a racialized identity of this imagined community by including only white Canadians in it. It is obvious from this statement that the deixis of “they” constructs here an imagined community of only white Canadians who are “promoting peace with guns, tanks and bullets”. The participant distances himself from this imagined community of white Canadians who has always segregated him at Canadian airports on racialized lines. The participant excludes all non-white Canadian from this imagined community of “they” who “will always tell you that we are there for peacekeeping”.

These four Muslim participants represent “the War on Terror” in racialized terms, and use this deixis of we/them in a way that constructs multiple imagined communities. They talk within the paradigm of white nations/Muslims. For these Muslim participants it is not a Canadian

war, it is a white war against Muslims. Their reflections also tell us about one of the enduring impacts of “the War on Terror” and the many ways in which racist treatment continues to touch people’s lives and subjectivities. The other five Muslim participants are clearly not of the same mind. They are using “I” instead of “we” and talking about the effects of the war at a personal level. As compared to Muslim participants, the use of deixis is more evident and frequent in non-Muslim participants’ responses.

### **The Fifth Version of Imagined Communities**

This version is represented in only four participants’ narratives, and only one of them is Muslim. These participants also use deixis of “we”, but the boundaries of an imagined community constructed through this deixis of “we” are blurry and very loose. The whole human society is included in this “we”. None of these participants indicate who is included in or excluded from this community. An English speaking 18 year old female student states:

We need to put the past in the past and move forward with our lives. Yes, it is a sad and mean thing that occurred, but I believe that this whole war on terror needs to be resolved soon so that nothing worse will occur. (Participant #89)

This participant is not interested in ‘who did it’ or ‘what is happening now’. For her what happened in the past is a part of yesterday now. It is not clear who the “we” is here but the rhetorical style highlights a community made up of the narrator and her readers because in the next sentence the narrator switches over to first person singular pronoun “I”. Indeed, the narrator wanders over a range of issues and opinions around the war in this text, but to the extent when she refers to events or actors at all, they are at the abstract level.

In the end of this discussion I want to show how the deixis of “we” constructs different but overlapping imagined communities in a rather long quote. This quote is taken from the

follow-up interview of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

On Western news media everything is about the effects of this terrorism on the U.S. and the West because in politics they call it the concept of ‘othering’, and that has definitely played a significant role in this conflict. There is us and there is a terrorist. In Western capitalist democracy there is a theory of Fukuyama and that came out in the 20th century—the notion that liberal democracy is the end of the history. So there is still this kind of misguided notion that only our way is the right one and their way is the wrong one. I recently wrote a paper for international relations. Bottom line is that we all are human beings. This idea of we/them is naïve and idealistic. We need to acknowledge and understand this fact. If you go back to fundamental philosophy, the concept that I am a member of this nation or that group is a social one. It is taught to us from very beginning when we are very young, from our schools, from the national anthem. You know, national flags are hanging everywhere. Well—um—I am not against national pride, but this national pride should not be on the cost of the exclusion of others. Again, Canadians take a pride in them, in their ability to tolerate everyone I hate the word “Tolerance”. It really bothers me. They claim that we are accepting other cultures but to what extent are we really accepting. There is still a degree of conformity that is expected. I think that we need to start urging now that we are all a part of a human society and that we have natural needs, common needs. You know everyone needs safety, shelter, food and basic security and there was an attempt to do that by a declaration of human rights in the UNO back in 1946. But still there is this dichotomy of “us” and “them”. (Participant # 59)

This non-Muslim participant analyzes the role played by the complex network of deixis in human society in general and in this War on Terror in particular. He thinks that the real theme behind “the War on Terror” is “the concept of othering and that has definitely played a significant role in this conflict” and this mechanism of “Othering” constructs the framework within which particular ideological and practical strategies started to develop as a result of “this conflict”. Rizvi (2005) points out, “such constructions involve the creation of new interpretive categories, in other circumstances old discourses persist, often through the use of new ideological forms—new code words that obscure the exercise of power, prejudice, and

discrimination” (p. 171). According to this participant these new code words are “us” and “terrorist”. The participant then talks about a continuation of colonial practices in the context Fukuyama’s theory, and how these practices rely upon the idea of we/them. He said, “In Western capitalist democracy there is a theory of Fukuyama and that came out in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—the notion that liberal democracy is the end of the history. So there is still this kind of misguided notion that only our way is the right one and their way is the wrong one. I recently wrote a paper for international relations. Bottom line is that we all are human beings. This idea of we/them is naïve and idealistic”. Razack (2004) mentions a continuation of these constructions in today’s postcolonial world: “We are drawn into the show-down between good and evil ... We are being hailed as civilized being who inhabit ordered democracies, citizens who are called upon to look after, instruct or defend ourselves against, the uncivilized Other” (p. 155). According to the participant, this deixis of “we/us” represents Western capitalist democracy, while “them” represents terrorists.

This participant talks in detail about how this daily usage of deixis produces banal nationalism that excludes “others”, and how it can flag the homeland, and, in flagging it, make the homeland homely (Billig, 1995, p. 106). According to this participant, “If you go back to fundamental philosophy the concept that I am a member of this nation or that group is a social one. It is taught to us from very beginning when we are very young, from our schools, from national anthem. You know, national flags are hanging everywhere. Well—um—I am not against national pride, but this national pride should not be on the cost of the exclusion of others”. It is evident from this text that according to the participant, nation is a social construction or in Anderson’s words (1983) an imagined community that has been continuously constructed through banal practices in our schools and society all the time, and reminds us who we are on the cost of excluding “others”.

In the last part of the passage the participant himself uses the dichotomy of us/them to distance himself from those Canadians who use to take pride in themselves, in their ability to tolerate everyone, “I hate the word tolerance. It really bothers me. They claim that we are accepting other cultures but to what extent are we really accepting. There is still a degree of conformity that is expected. While in the same sentence claiming to be a part of this imagined community when he says: They claim that we are accepting other cultures but to what extent are we really accepting”. The participant uses the deixis of “they/them/there” that constructs an imagined community of the Canadian nation that does not include many. This is the imagination of the nation that Benedict Anderson (1983) speaks of. Furthermore, the participant discusses whose imagination is distinct and dominating and whose imagination is absent or excluded from the imagination of the nation. Bell (2006) mentions:

It is instead to remake the boundaries of the nation and to identify those subjects who cannot make claims within it. The legitimacy of such action rests on addressing indeterminate risks to Canada supposedly occasioned by the presence of foreign, ‘dangerous’ others. (p. 76)

In the next sentence the participant constructs another imagined community with the help of the deixis of “we”. This imagined community is comprised of the whole human community that has common needs. He concludes: “we need to start urging now that we are all a part of a human society and that we have natural needs, common needs. You know everyone needs safety, shelter, food and basic security and there was an attempt to do that by a declaration of human rights in the UNO back in 1946. But still there is this dichotomy of us/ them”.

### **Silence that Speaks in these Imagined Communities**

Both Muslim and non-Muslim participants use the deixis of “we/us/our” or “them/they/their” in a way that constructs multiple imagined communities according to their own paradigms. However, only three out of ninety-nine participants talk about the community whose

lands, lives, and future are the main targets of this war. This community is not absolutely absent or evaporated from the stage. Its characters are both present and absent at the same time. They show their presence in the form of shadows on the curtains behind the scene, which force the audience to think occasionally that there is someone behind the stage. These nameless and silent shadows are continuously lurking in the background but cannot find any place even at the margins of these aforementioned imagined communities. These shadows may have many stories to tell. Their untold stories are the hollows of our collective memory. This particular silence of collective memory matters in the post 9/11 Canadian society, because these silences are a sort of topography: hollows or indentations left by the hegemonic discourse, unwritten and mute but awaiting memory's voice, a witness, a poet, an orator, or at least a researcher.

These narratives shape one of the silences of collective memory. Sometimes their presence reflects in the form of shadows lurking behind the main actors. Only three participants talk about those Afghan people who are the most affected character in this War on Terror but their presence is a like a concave sort of presence. For example, consider the following statements taken from the narratives of different participants:

I cannot imagine living in Iraq or Afghanistan and seeing what citizens must see each day. My heart breaks for them. (Participant #39)

I have been concerned about the citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan. How they are being sacrificed at the cost of the American Presidential agenda. (Participant #63)

During that time a lot of Muslim/children from Afghanistan I knew were worried. We thought they (as a race) were all bad people and terrorists, which I thought was strange of them to assume until I heard discussions and stories about it on the radio. (Participant #26)

Afghan characters are in the form of shadows in these statements because even here they are not fully present as actors in their own right. Their lives, their pain, their deaths are hidden behind an ambiguous use of pronouns such as "them" or "they". In this whole plotline of the narrative of "the

War on Terror” Afghan people are just like a crowd of extra characters whose faces are blurred and their personalities are without any personal identity. Their presence is not important, however, they are still there. These narratives are in different ways stories of something missing and its continued presence. However, a missing part in any narrative creates a void that marks a rupture, an empty space or, better, an absence, something lost, a missing continuity perhaps. Wittgenstein’s words “where of one cannot speak, one must remain silent” hang over their heads. It is amazing that out of ninety-nine participants only one of my participants represents Afghannies with their proper name. This participant is an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

The term terrorism and terrorist is so vague that it has become so easy to justify everything on the name of this War on Terror, or under the guise of protecting people from terrorism. Whatever, it may be or whoever. Obviously the people in Afghanistan and Iraq are suffering greatly. I heard the stories of Afghanistan that they were dropping the packages on these people’s home. In an effort to help them they were actually harming them because they were destroying their only shelter that they have. (Participant #59)

This participant gives an example of the effects of this war on Afghan people and instead of using the deixis of “them”, at least calls them “people in Afghanistan and Iraq”. The people of Afghanistan and Iraq appear in this text with an identity as nations. There are numerous stories written on the bodies and souls of those Afghannies who are the fuel of this war but these stories are absent from these narratives. As a result, some terrible silences echoed in these narratives of the war. Or in other words, many actors, voices and imagined communities are unrepresented or silenced in these narratives. These narratives are sites of collective remembering that articulate and silence people’s lived histories at the same time. In other words, it is an ultimate unmasking of the truth, or only the embodiment of particular perspectives at a particular moment in history. These imagined communities do not honor both Canadians and Afghannies as having an equally important place in the history. *The lived histories of these identity-less Afghannies and Iraqi*

people go unmentioned here. These people's unspoken stories, their lived histories with idiosyncratic details are still frozen in the deep bottoms of their souls. These unrepresented communities are the imagined communities of Afghanies and Iraqi people whose stories are left untold. What these narratives silence is what might be going on according to the perspective of these Afghanies and Iraqi people. These narratives of Canadian nationalism are examples of what Van Dijk calls "positive self-representations" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 267).

These imagined communities are the manifestation of (political) power by virtue of the access to the preservation and articulation of peoples (Canadian) lived histories. An important means via which the discourse of oppressed people like Afghanies becomes silenced is the denial or lack of the access to public discourse through different sites of collective remembering. These imagined communities silence Afghans' lived histories. Their personal histories are unrepresented in Canada, thus not personalized into collective memory. This missing continuity in the narrative of "the War on Terror" is still waiting for a narrator or a historian perhaps, who would listen, record, and reproduce the narrative of this war written on the bodies and souls of the Iraqi and Afghan people.

These narratives of collective memory insist on remembering the Canadian nation as a civilized nation who is destined to save Afghanies from themselves, a remembrance that vitally depended upon the erasure of the lived histories of Iraqi and Afghan people, on the erasure of colonial practices, on the denial of racisms, and on the re-installment of an innocent, peace-loving nation. In conclusion I can say that a Canadian nationalist narrative is dominant and entering into the narrative of "the War on Terror", in different ways. Rather, there is a contestation between different concepts of Canadian nationalism. The common factor is that the Canadian nationalism depends upon the philosophies of the first person plural. As Billig (1995) notes:

Classic nationalist theories do not start from the Cartesian 'I', which could be the ego of any human being. Instead, they are philosophies of the first person plural. They start from the group, and, in surveying the history of groups, one particular group (nation or culture) is made to stand out from the rest: 'ours'. (p. 162)

Most of the narratives are Canadian nationalist narrative, while some are not, and some ambiguous. One striking element in most of them is the lack of informed judgment. They rely on assumptions or "stories" heard. And these only reinforce their pre-conceived ideas.

One of the interesting ways this nationalist narrative enters into the narrative of "the War on Terror" is in the form of the discourse of Canada as a peacekeeper nation. It is a hegemonic narrative, which chops the government's position on this war. Razack (2004) calls this discourse muscular peacekeeping, which enables Canada to participate in peacekeeping encounters as an entirely innocent party without troublesome histories or ethical dilemmas. The main problem with this national mythology of peacekeeping is that whenever Canada has contemplated any intervention into 'other's' land, Canadians have generally not listened to those who are suffering. Instead, we have used their suffering to reconstitute ourselves as white knights and as victims, taking ourselves out of their histories (Razack, 2004). Ralston Saul (2008) talks about the tradition of insisting on describing Canadians as something they are not. He discusses in detail that to accept and even believe such fundamental representations of Canada and Canadians is to sever our mythologies from reality. One of these mythologies is peacekeeping which he calls, "a mismatched strategy imported from elsewhere to stand in for our own failure to give names to what we do"(p. 97). In the introduction of their book *Discourses of Security, Peacekeeping Narratives, and the Cultural Imagination in Canada*, Harting & Kamboureli (2009) talk about the relationship of the mythology of peace-keeping and the construction of Canadianness:

The popular sensibility of Canada as a peacekeeper persists, and it is as apparent in letters to the editor in newspapers appearing on the occasion of yet another Canadian soldier

killed in the mission in Afghanistan as in official statements such as that made by Adrienne Clarkson, the governor general of Canada at the time, in 2001 in response to 9/11: '[O]ur ability to maintain justice and do what is right ... is a role that history has allotted us'. The unwavering tenacity with which Canada's self-appointed role as peacekeeper returns since the time it was forged as a domestic and international form of national branding operates as a narrative of explanation of what is taken to be a natural marker of Canadianness and as a narrative of rationalization that casts the Canadian military role in the international arena as motivated exclusively by compassionate and thus benign incentives. (p. 12)

Another nationalist position is that "we" believe in peace, not wars and this differentiates us from "those" Americans who went to war. The self-effacing, cooperative, peace-loving Canadian is the heart of the national mythology (Razack, 2004). According to this national mythology, "We" Canadians are not ethnocentric and "we" are there just to promote democracy and education for girls. This nationalist narrative is hegemonic because nationalism, as has been argued, never spoke with a straightforward simple voice. It always used the syntax of hegemony, claiming an identity of identities (Billig, 1995). My participants' claims such as the fight against terrorism, peacekeeping, promotion of democracy, or education for girls in Afghanistan are being made on behalf of the most powerful nations. As they are made, so an identity of interests is asserted: 'our' interests are the interests of the whole world (Billig, 1995). The problem behind these mythologies is that "a dancer who describes himself as a singer will do neither well" (Ralston Saul, 2008, p. 1).

In the next chapter I analyze how my participants make collective memory in relation to "the War on Terror" by using the theoretical framework provided by James Wertsch (2002).

## CHAPTER 6. COLLECTIVE MEMORIES OF THE WAR ON TERROR

Collective memory is the outcome of both the processes of remembering and forgetting. My participants play with both sides of the coin while they write about their collective memories of “the War on Terror”. Ernst Renan (1990, [1881]) discussed the role of forgetting and why people need to forget events that represent a threat to unity, though he didn’t use the term “collective memories”. I have shown in the previous chapter how the Canadian nationalist narrative appears to be the dominant narrative in the process of remembering and how most of my participants have forgotten some things about Iraqi and Afghan people. As a result, the narratives of Iraqi and Afghan people appear to be silence in the process of forgetting and remembering. For example, one aspect of forgetting in this Canadian nationalistic narrative is the number of Afghanies killed by the Canadian forces accidentally. However, in this chapter my main focus is to explore how young people in Canada make collective memories of “the War on Terror”.

### **The Nature of Collective Memories**

The theoretical framework I employ to explore how collective memories are constructed, shaped and transmitted is grounded largely in the writings of Wertsch (1991, 2002), Létourneau (2006), and Hall (1980). Wertsch (2002) discusses in detail the importance of textual consumption in the construction of the narratives of collective memory, and claims that there are cases in which someone has clearly mastered textual resources, yet resist it. He uses the example of Estonians to elaborate his point. Estonians are a national group who had been forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. According to

Wertsch (2002), “official Soviet accounts of events in Estonia were actively resisted by many ethnic Estonians, partly because of their knowledge of alternative, or unofficial narratives” (p. 120). However, Wertsch’s do not offer a full explanation of the background of these alternative narratives, while referring to the example of Estonia. In particular, from where the knowledge of alternative narratives of collective memory came from. This question arises because Soviet authorities exerted a very high level of control over the official account of the past available to its citizens, most particularly through school history education. As Wertsch (2002) says:

Instead of making available a range of perspective and accounts of the past, the Soviet state controlled textual resources very closely, and ended up presenting its accounts as the sole, authoritative, unquestionable truth. The extent of control the Soviet state imposed on this process resulted in what might be called the totalitarian state’s dream: a univocal account of the past that had no competitors. (pp. 85-86)

Létourneau (2006) also reports the presence of an alternative narrative in young people’s minds that fits poorly with what is available through different textual resources in Quebec. According to him the persistence of that vernacular narrative is at odds with the current situation of Quebec. He also explores that neither the curriculum and textbooks nor the school system belong to some sort of patriotic enterprise designed to circulate the type of narrative he finds in his study. Létourneau (2006) finds a highly linear classical nationalist narrative in young Quebecois’ account for the history of Quebec. This account is articulated around basic narrative structures among which we find the binary notions of Canada and Quebec, Anglophones and Francophones, federalism and nationalism. The question arises here: Where did people get the collective narratives of alternative, unofficial memories that are not available through textual resources? I think that we cannot understand the nature of collective memories without exploring this issue.

I have explained in my literature review that Wertsch (2002) emphasizes the importance of material technologies and their interaction with human agents in the construction of collective narratives. The following figure represents Wertsch's model of collective remembering and the internal dynamics of collective remembering according to him:

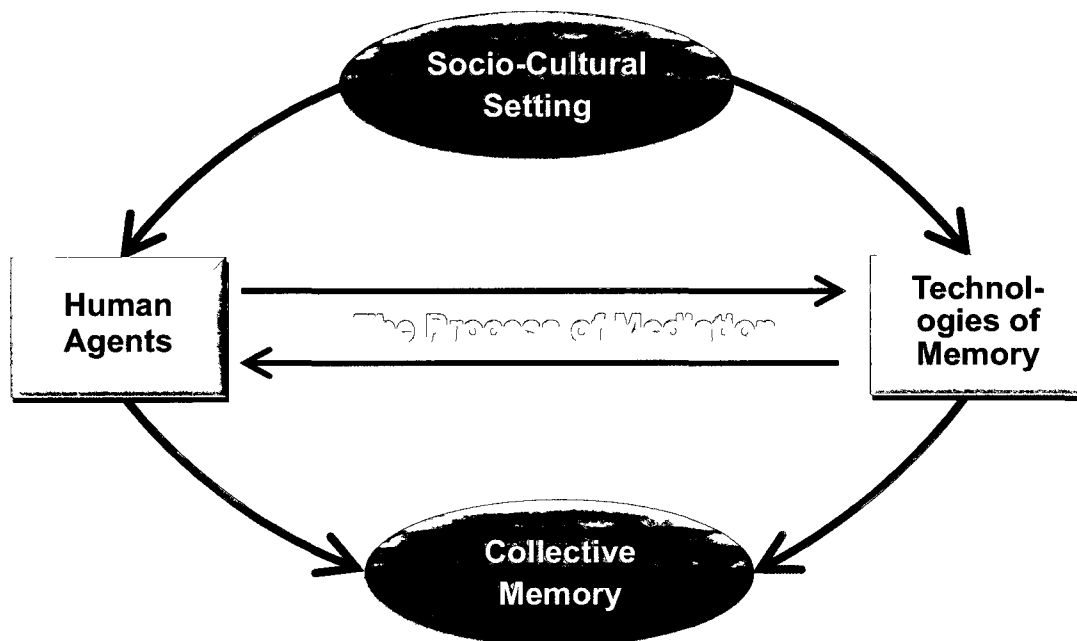


Figure 6.1. Wertsch's Model of Collective Memory (2002)

I discover in my research project that apart from an active agent and technologies of memory involved in mediated memories, another strong force “social groups” is also involved actively in the process of collective remembering. To be more specific I prefer to use the term “interpretative communities” for these social groups that play an important role in how human beings select and interpret different textual resources and as a result construct and transmit alternative narratives of collective memory. Concrete illustrations of my claim can be found in the narratives of my participants and provide us with a comprehensive understanding of the nature of collective memories. I have illustrated my findings with the help of Figure 6.2 that explains the internal dynamics of collective memories in Canadian society.



Figure 6.2. Consumption and Negotiation of Collective Memories in Canadian Society

### **Interpretative Communities**

According to Wertsch’s model, collective remembering is a straightforward interaction between human agents and material technologies of memory. However, my findings suggest that the equation is not that simple. The narratives of alternative, unofficial memories also come from significant “others”. Here Halbwachs (1980) helps us because he claims that individual memory is understood only through a group context; these groups may include families, organizations, and/or nation-state. Halbwachs states that every collective memory depends upon specific groups that are delineated by space and time; the group constructs the memory and the individuals do the work of remembering. Collective memories are not always just a result of the material relationship between human agent and textual resources it also involves what I call “interpretative communities” that intersect between human agents and textual resources.

My findings further extend Wertsch’s theory by providing evidence that the process of

mediation occurs among three forces. These forces interact with each other during the process of collective remembering: human agents, textual resources available through different technologies of memory, and different groups or “interpretative communities”. This insight proves Halbwachs’s (1980) claim that social groups play an important role in organizing collective memories, although he said relatively little about cultural tools employed in the process of remembering. Wertsch (2002) puts forward the idea that members of a group share a representation of the past because they share textual resources and concludes that even a drastic decline in the authority and legitimacy of those charged with controlling collective remembering does not mean that a collective’s memory simply disappears. Wertsch (2002) says, “ Instead, there seem to be quite active, compensating forces in textual consumption that are likely to give rise to alternative ways of representing the past” (p. 170). However, he did not explore those active, compensating forces.

Those active, compensating forces that are likely to give rise to alternative narratives of collective memory are “interpretative communities”. These communities comprise of individuals whose presence shape the coloring of my participants’ readings of different textual resources, and even sometimes plays an important role in the selection of a textual resource. I illustrate my claim using data from my empirical study about the collective memories of “the War on Terror”. For example, the following comment from participant #19 illustrates this point. This participant is a 21 year old female student born in Philippine:

The key sources of information that I use are people of authority. My dad is an essential part to help me determine what I do feel about this War on Terror. I always look, listen and observe [my] professors and teachers in my high school and close friends too. In terms of the media, I only listen for the facts [gotten] through news on TV and newspapers. (Participant #19)

The participant talks about the role played by the “interpretative communities” comprising of her dad, teachers, professors, and friends in establishing an opinion about “the War on Terror”. The participant’s statement reflects the fact that the sort of collective memory at issue in the case of this war is a combination of “textually mediated” and “socially mediated” memories. Both “interpretative communities” and textual resources available through digital and mass media are playing an important role in what the participant remembers or forgets about the war.

Wertsch (1991; 2002) mentions the socially mediated nature of collective memories once and very briefly, with reference to Bakhtin. Bakhtin addresses such issues in connection with the distinction between “authoritative” and “internally persuasive” discourse. In Bakhtin’s (1984) view, authoritative discourse is based on the assumption that utterances and their meanings are fixed, not modifiable as they come into contact with new voices: “The authoritative words demand that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it”. Bakhtin further argues that instead of functioning as a generator of meaning or thinking device, an authoritative text “demands our unconditional allegiance”, and it allows “no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transition, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it” (p. 163). As examples of authoritative texts, Bakhtin cites religious, political, and moral texts as well as “the word of a father, of adults, of teachers, etc”. Wertsch (2002) claims that in the case of authoritative words one is not invited to engage in the give and take of dialogue. Participant #19’s statement shows that she endows the words of “dad”, “teachers”, and “peers” with an authority already fused with them. It is evident that this type of engagement does not involve the give and take of a dialogue with both “textually mediated”, and “socially mediated” memories. There is a clear indication in the narratives of my participants that there is a kind of community

of interpretation that comprises of mainly parents but teachers, peers, and friends lie somewhere in between human agents and technologies of memory. Arguably teachers may be considered as an agent of the state. However, another participant shows us the other side of the coin. This participant is an English speaking 18 year old female:

Once I grew older and realized that this issue would not resolve itself, I acknowledged it more. Then I came to the realization (with the help of my philosophy and English teachers) that the war against “terror” was an unachievable ordeal. “Terror” is a concept and not a concrete thing, as long as one person keeps using methods under that term and believing in them, the war can never be won. (Participant #26)

This participant’s statement reflects the role played by teachers as “interpretative communities” in the process of mediation. The process of internalization goes on gradually with the passage of time because her Philosophy and English teachers helped her to engage in a kind of dialogue with different messages available around. They also help her in reading those messages with a different angle.

The evidence I review suggests that my participants’ collective memories are more complex in their nature. I discover that most of the narratives tend to grasp together the setting, events, and characters involved in the war, into tight plot structures with all the loose ends neatly wrapped up. The participants’ memories are “socially mediated” memories in the beginning of their plotline due to the role played by “interpretative communities”, and gradually technologies of memory are being employed during the process of consumption. As a result, the nature of collective memories shifted towards “textually mediated” memories. For example, when I asked about the sources of information he used to get information about “the War on Terror”. An English speaking 19 year old male student replies in the follow-up interview:

Generally [I get my information] from media. I guess [mostly from] newspapers and usually my dad kind of fixes everything at the end for me. Whatever [information] I got

from my dad explains what really all [the War on Terror] is about. I do not use the Internet a lot for the purpose of information. I usually watch CNN and Fox TV. I read newspapers whatever [newspaper] is available [to read]. Um ... yeh ... I think that media plays a partial role in the representing this war in front of us. What I get from Fox TV is something entirely different than [the] one [available] in newspapers. (Participant #51)

This participant's memories are both textually mediated and socially mediated in the nature because these memories are the result of an inter-play between his agency, technologies of memory, and an interpretative community. In the process of meaning making his "dad" plays an important role. The participant discusses the role of different technologies of memory like newspapers, CNN, and the FOX news, in presenting different narratives of the war and admits their biased role in the representation of "the War on Terror". This statement reflects the complex processes of consumption and negotiation due to an overlapping interaction of human agent with both technologies of memory and "interpretative communities" at the same time.

The sort of collective memory at issue in this research project is not just what Wertsch (2002) termed "textually mediated" memories but also "socially mediated" memories. Participants mention different textual resources available through different cultural tools or technologies of memory such as TV, and radio that they use to consume and negotiate the representations of "the War on Terror". However, they also mention that the war is also negotiated through personal interaction with "interpretative communities" comprising of teachers, family members or friends. I want to mention here that the direction the process of consumption would take is not predictable. Interpretative communities are not always capable of forcing the agent to read textual resources in one way or another. For example, take a look at the following narrative that helps us to understand the active and dynamic nature of collective memory. This participant is an English speaking 19 year old female:

I remember being at school the day it happened. It was the beginning of my high school journey. I was sitting in my first period class when the intercom came on. On 9/11 the principal acknowledged us and informed us that there had been an attack on the twin towers in New York City, NY. He said that an airplane had crashed into the towers and he was unsure of the conditions of anyone. Naturally the class began to buzz with curiosity and panic and nervously we absorbed it. Our teacher went on with the lesson and our class was filled with questions. About half an hour later, the intercom came back on and the principal informed us of a second plane crashing into the tower... We discussed [it] in my high school religion class about whether the Americans bombed the towers. TV helped me to understand the most of it because it had interviews, pictures, stories, videos to show what people thought and what Americans think, even video clips from Osama Bin Laden himself. (Participant #34)

This participant's memories are "personally mediated" in the beginning of the statement "the principal acknowledged us and informed us that there had been an attack". Initially the process of consumption is straightforward as the participant mentions, "and nervously we absorbed it," then another "interpretative community" of religious class enters into this process, "We discussed [it] in my high school religion class about whether the Americans bombed the towers."

The participant further elaborates how textual resources such as TV plays its role in the process of consumption and negotiation of the representations of "the War on Terror". Collective memory is active and dynamic because each and every technology of memory represents a variety of messages for its consumer. As the participant mentions, "it had interviews, pictures, stories, videos to show what people thought and what Americans think, even video clips from Osama Bin Laden himself."

There are always certain technologies around human beings. These technologies are a part of our material world. The boundaries of material world are decided by our social, cultural, economic, and professional backgrounds. These technologies are not distributed, nor access-able for everyone equally. For example, a father may not have access to databases or websites that his

children might have. Human beings are not independent agents in all circumstances. They are a part of many “interpretative communities” at the same time, but are not necessarily consistent in their memberships in different periods of their lives. How influential these communities are can be analyzed from the narratives of those participants whose friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, or friends’ relatives are in the Canadian army and in particular are/were deployed in Afghanistan. There are seven participants who indicated that their “interpretative communities” include people from the Canadian army. For example, the following statement reflects the importance of personal relationships. This participant is an English speaking 18 year old female:

I have learned a lot about the war on terror because my boyfriend’s father is a major for the Canadian Army and spent 6 months in Afghanistan. I do not think [that] people have the knowledge to know when we should pull out until they have gone over there and experience what our militaries are really doing. (Participant #10)

The participant’s belief in the “interpretative community” that includes her boyfriend’s father is very strong and influencing. This statement reflects the impact of human interaction and in particular personal relationships on collective memories.

These “interpretative communities” indirectly, or sometimes directly, play an important role in the selection and access to a certain type of technology of memory. I will illustrate my point with the help of the following answer that my participant give when I asked in the follow-up interview: Where did you get your information about this War on Terror? This participant is a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Well, not any specific [source of information] ... I do not have any time to read newspapers. Sometimes I picked up free newspapers from bus stations. Watch television ... but ... not much. My parents watch Arabic channels a lot but I do not have much time to sit and watch television. In the last few days I watched Arabic channels’ news on television to know what is happening in Gaza. (Participant #1)

This participant mentions different sites of technologies of memory such as newspapers or different television channels available around him. Apparently he claims that he is not very much interested in watching television. However, his access and selection of these technologies depend upon an interpretative community comprising of his “parents” who “watch Arabic channels a lot”. As a result, certain messages and images are always circulating around him. I will explain this point further in the next section of this chapter. The distinctions I have in mind is by no means always easy to maintain when examining concrete empirical cases, but it provides a useful analytical strategy to explore the complex nature of collective memories in this age of modern media and ever changing modes of technologies.

The following analysis reveals the most common technologies of memory that my participants use to master, appropriate, or resist textual resources available through these technologies, because what is remembered individually and collectively, depends in part on technologies of memory and the associated socio-technical practices (Van House & Churchill, 2008).

### **Technologies of Memory**

Before an analysis of how my participants make collective memory of “the War on Terror”, in which I focus on how human agents approach information itself, and make meaning of it, I analyze how the sources of information or technologies of memory are playing an important role in the production, consumption and negotiation of the collective memories of the war. In what follows, I shall address technologies of memory and the associated socio-technical practices used by my participants in more details, and by invoking the notion of “tool kit”. My approach towards technologies of memory is indebted to the efforts of many theorists, but in particular to James Wertsch’s approach of “tool kit”. Wertsch (1991) describes:

A tool kit approach allows group and contextual differences in mediated action to be understood in terms of the array of mediational means to which people have access and the patterns of choice they manifest in selecting a particular means for a particular occasion. (p. 94)

Different groups within the same generation or within the same society may employ different technologies of memory included in the *tool kit* in different ways and may draw their conclusions in different manners. In order to address this, Wertsch (1991) extends Vygotsky's account of mediation by exploring the tool kit analogy. His account revolves around two issues: "first, the notion of 'heterogeneity' which to a general framework for understanding the nature of a tool kit; and second, the implications of a socio-cultural approach to meaning for a tool kit approach" (p. 96). A *tool kit* approach allows me to understand my participants' contextual differences in terms of the array of technologies of memory. To which technology they have access to and the patterns of choice they manifest in selecting a particular technology to help them consume and negotiate the representations of "the War on Terror". A "tool kit" may contain textual tools (narratives, documents, books), non-textual tools (photographs, monuments, landscapes), digital tools (media, the Internet), and oral tools (songs, oral histories). Roediger & Wertsch (2008) and Olik (2008) note that historians rely on textual tools and physical artifacts. Connerton (2008) describes how the availability of printing affects which recipes are remembered. This tool kit is improving, expanding and becoming more complicated as we entered in the twenty-first century. The tool kit has expanded with such a speed that the problem has shifted from creation to curatorial overload. Human beings are surrounded by a variety of technologies. Different type of information is at the distance of a fingertip and it has become too difficult to organize and retrieve this flood of information easily. For example, an English speaking, 18 year old female student talks about the "toolkit" in her follow-up interview:

A lot of information [is coming] from media, which is not the best place to get real information. But you cannot turn off whenever something happened, it just went on and on in the media for weeks. I guess a lot of interesting information is found in documentaries. A lot of discussion in our class is also a source of information. I also like to listen a little bit of radio. My parents also used to talk about this war. I like to watch CBC and other news channels sometimes too. I use journal articles a lot. I use Internet when I write my assignment for the University but for this war usually I depend on media. (Participant # 66)

This text explains in depth what I mean by “a tool kit”. This participant says that she gets her information from media that includes radio and TV channels such as CBC, documentaries, journal articles, parents and her class. So her toolkit includes both textual and non-textual tools (parent’s talk about the war).

Let’s take a look at another side of the picture. The process of forgetting is an integral part of our collective memory. Connerton (2008) points out that forgetting is not always a failure, nor is it always accidental. Sometimes forgetting is desirable and useful. But the new technologies of memory can make some kinds of forgetting impossible, or at least improbable. *Forgetting may be impossible when the record is outside of one’s control; when there are duplicates; or when the data are invisible, such as the traces that allow software recovery and forensic computer science to restore files that are missing or have been ‘deleted.’* As a researcher, I believe that collective memory studies should be concerned with how the developments in the nature and internal dynamics of “tool kit” are affecting not only the methods of the field, but the practices of remembering and forgetting. I focus on the ways in which various types of technologies are used in young people’s everyday lives to establish, maintain and develop a dialogic relationship with the representations of “the War on Terror”. Collective memory comes to us from our mediated experience of different technologies of memory such as textbooks, museums, photographs, documentaries or the Internet. For further investigation into these

relationships, take a look at the answer of an 18 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka. When I asked him about the sources he used to get information about “the War on Terror” in his follow-up interview, he replies:

I read journal articles and watch the popular media as well. I do watch TV. I listen to the CBC Radio, *Ottawa Morning*. I try to pick up newspapers but that does not happen very often. I try to read a couple of newspapers like National Post, Globe and Mail. I do not like to get information from just one source of information because they are so biased. I find the CBC as the only viable source with regard to national news. I also try to catch BBC whenever I can to get international perspectives. But still it is difficult to decide anything with regard to whatever is happening around. I do not use Internet very much except for online journals for my academic purposes. I do not like to rely on the Internet because it is so subjective... full of falsehood, misinterpretations, and skewing facts. I like to collect facts from different sources and then form my own opinion. (Participant # 59)

The participant relies both on textual and digital tools such as journal articles, newspapers, TV, radio, and the Internet in order “ to collect facts from different sources and then form my own opinion”. This statement shows a variety of technologies included in the toolkit available to him.

Wertsch’s (1991; 2002) analogy *tool kit* is quite helpful here to explore the diverse and rapidly changing nature of resources available to the participant through different technologies of memory, “I read journal articles and watch the popular media as well. I do watch TV. I listen to the CBC Radio, *Ottawa Morning*. I try to pick up newspapers”. The above passage reflects how an interaction takes place between the participant as an active agent and the diverse items of the *tool kit*, he uses to consume the representations of “the War on Terror”, “I also try to catch BBC whenever I can to get international perspectives. But still it is difficult to decide anything with regard to whatever is happening around”. This participant’s “toolkit” contains the Internet, journal articles, television, CBC radio, BBC, and various newspapers such as *the Ottawa Morning*, *The Globe and Mail*, or *The National Post*. This statement highlights the fact that a

variety of technologies of memory influence the processes of consumption and negotiation.

The issues of access and selection are very important in the formation of collective memories. One of the properties of today's life is the power of access to different tools available in any socio-cultural setting. The participant mentioned above shows this power by stating, "I do not like to get information from just one source of information because they are so biased".

Ironically, in the world of politics and media where knowledge is power, our collective memory is sometimes too good, and deemed in need of erasure. For example, the processes of new media dissemination complicate in a digital world. Sontag (2007) relates, "The pictures [of the abuses at Abu Gharaib] will not go away. That is the nature of the digital world in which we live.

Indeed, it seems they were necessary to get our leaders to acknowledge that they had a problem on their hands" (p. 3). The clear connections between representing experience (as the experience itself) and family/military-life as theorized by Sontag (2007) take on new meaning and forms in an age of digital enhancement, dissemination, and manipulation. These images, imprinted on each and every computer (and several hand-help devices), refuse to go away. They can be altered, enhanced, erased from individual hard drives; parents can even disable sites where these images "pop up". And yet, as Sontag (2007) acknowledges that media may self-censor [or be censored] but, it is hard to censor soldiers overseas, who do not write letters home, as in the old days, that can be opened up by military censors who ink out unacceptable lines. Today's soldiers are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and then passing them off, against the law, to the media, much to our surprise.

Another important issue involves in the use of a tool kit is "selection". Texts and images available through "tool kit" use different rhetorical strategies. These rhetorical strategies are not merely logical or mindful processes of evaluation, contemplation, and persuasion. They work on,

in, and through human agents' minds, bodies, teaching, learning, and persuading. They select or reject different textual resources according to these feelings and logics. In the above passage the narrator shows the patterns of choice manifested in selecting a particular technology such as CBC radio or BBC, and how a hidden dialogue occurs between the narrator as a consumer and the media's account of the war while negotiating between different versions of the story of "the War on Terror". The narrator explains his choice of the tools among many technologies of memory and clearly shows an agency in this whole process of selection and then opinion formation. This passage also addresses how our live in modern societies is heavily dependent upon mediated texts, which are also crucial in the processes of governance (Luhmann, 2000; Silverstone, 1999; Thompson, 1995). An active agent does not shed the cultural tools away rather, he uses them creatively. The participant as an active agent mentions above, "I do not like to get information from just one source of information because they are so biased... I like to collect facts from different sources and then form my own opinion". A creative use of a cultural tool that organizes comprehension of the past, grants the individual a chance to reposition himself or herself and to establish a solid moral footing in the present (Goldberg, Porat & Schwarz, 2006). I would further illustrate my point with the help of the answer given by a Muslim participant regarding the same question #1. This participant is a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

No... not any specific. I think... I prefer to use the Internet to gather information about anything because a variety of information is available on the Internet. You know what I mean ... I mean you can always find different perspectives about any issue. Um ... I do not mean that whatever is available on the Internet is correct or you can trust it but at least it does not give you one-sided version ... at least. I use Internet for academic purposes mainly but sometimes I watch YOU TUBE or some other websites too. I watch Al-Jazeera television, FOX news, and CBC sometimes but as I said earlier I do not have

much time to watch television. It is interesting to see how media worked as a propaganda machine after 9/11.

This participant talks about a number of technologies of memory available in his socio-cultural setting such as the Internet and its different websites, different channels of television that represent different socio-cultural settings. Al-Jazeera television (Arabic channel), FOX news (American channel), and CBC (Canadian channel) are different sites of the same technology of memory that provide with different and sometimes contradictory textual resources about the same event such as “the War on Terror”. As a result, there is always an irreducible tension between the participant and technologies of memory he employs to consume information about the event. This tension is reflected in the aforementioned quotes. Another participant talks about the source of this tension. This participant is an English speaking 18 year old female:

Actually how do we perceive a reality depends upon who we are, not on the sources of information. If you buy into certain things from a particular source, you will choose from the one, which works according to your views. It is always important what your extremes are. Reality is whatever you make out of the different stuff according to your extremes. Subconsciously we used to believe in I know it, I know this person. But you really do not know. All you know is what other sources are telling you. You just have to understand that actually you do not know anything. That is how I do. I always start from I do not know no matter what source I am using. (Participant #51)

This participant discusses the importance of human agent and her worldviews that play an important role in the selection of technologies of memory and then in the process of consumption or reception. According to the participant, “If you buy into certain things from a particular source, you will choose from the one, which works according to your views. It is always important what your extremes are. Reality is whatever you make out of the different stuff according to your extremes”. These “extremes” are situated in human beings’ historical, national, and cultural parameters.

According to my participants, the most frequently used technology of memory is media. The term media appears in a total of 34 narratives. Media has become one of the most influential cultural tools in modern societies. In my sample, 70% participants mention, either in an implicit or explicit manner, the role played by different forms of media in “the War on Terror”. For example, a 19 year old male student born in Sarajevo (Bosnia) says:

This entire “war on terror” is nothing more than the propaganda of the U.S. to further their economic and political agendas. They want to fulfil their agenda by interfering [in] foreign countries. I feel nothing but compassion for those countries along with Iraq who now must end up an ignorant global view. The media can only influence the dumb, ignorant people who believe into [the] things that they try to feed you. (Participant # 31)

This participant expresses the same view about media as the other two participants mentioned above who represent media as a propaganda machine in this war that persuade the population that the annihilation of Afghanistan and Iraq was both necessary and justified (Friel & Falk, 2004; Kumar, 2006; Miller, 2004). There is a common thread in most of the narratives and follow-up interviews that media is playing a partial and patterned role in the representation of political realities such as “the War on Terror”. For example, take a look at the following statements of three different participants:

What we have seen on the name of this war is that much [is] being done to control other peoples’ lives, and to tell you the truth the way the television, newspapers, and other types of media translate many things they come out as more lies than they are true. (Participant #38)

It pisses me off that since 9/11, the media in Canada, and the majority of those in the West who follow the media think in terms of what is presented in the media. I now think that some of my good friends are no longer Canadians but instead outsiders, because they may share a culture or a language or history with those involved in the attacks on the day of 9/11. Even when the media is positive, it is still insulting them, like when a story is run about how a Canadian who happened to be a Muslim did some community work, and the message is “oh, how good for them doing good things in spite of their religion/culture!”

as though Muslims are by nature unwilling to do good thing. I wish the media would stop trying to make them out to be “others”. (Participant #27)

I think that it’s a kind of personal opinion but I find that media takes things the way they want to tell you or the government wants to tell you. The way media tells you a story, it’s like you can see only what they want you to see. Especially like you know the war on terror ... well, a clip about Iraq or Afghanistan will be finished in one or two minutes. They will show you a selected part while there is a lot going on there that you can only understand if you are there. Concerning the media, I like to have an open mind. I have never been there so how can be so sure what is really there and how it feels to be there. I guess it is just like half speech. Um, because just two minutes cannot really tell you what is really happening there on the name of the War on Terror. (Participant #66)

All these participants represent the process of media communication as partial and patterned in a way that does not reflect the social, political, economic, and cultural realities behind “the War on Terror”. Hall et al. (1980) criticizes liberal models, which treat the process of media communication as the mirror of social, political, economic, and cultural reality. Against this, Hall submits that the media plays an active role in assembling a partial, patterned view of social realities. He coins the concept of encoding to refer to the process by which the media organizes information and communication as a text in order to achieve a preferred reading from the viewers. Media professionals are central in the encoding process. It is their judgment of relevance and public interest that cooks raw social and political events and seeks to feed them to audiences. The process of reporting typically reinforces the position of the dominant interests in society so that this position is constructed to be ‘natural’. Encoding is not a closed system. On the contrary, once raw events have been cooked for the public, they are open to be accepted, rejected or disgorged by them. Decoding refers to the meanings that audiences bring to media presentation which challenge the meanings that are ‘in dominance’. In several respects, the following text taken from the follow-up interview of participant #59 mirrors what I discussed.

This participant is a 19 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

The media's relation with this War on Terror is complicated. I do not know the inner working of the media but what I see as a consumer of the popular media is that media is not allowed to work as an independent or impartial party anymore. They do not get to see everything. They have a very limited perspective. They are very strongly influenced by governments and those who are in power. The prime example in the United States is the Fox news. Everyone knows that Fox news is—heavily—heavily biased {emphasis is not mine}. News stories they were broadcasting about Barak Obama, because if you would change one letter in his name, it would become Osama, and immediately Barak Obama was associated with terrorism. The very notion of 'evil' or 'bad' is used in an absurd manner. They always represent a particular side of the political spectrum.

This participant's statement represents media as an actor that plays an active role in assembling a *partial, patterned view of social realities and the reason(s) why media is not allowed to work as an independent or impartial party anymore*. Why media “do not get to see everything” and have a very limited perspective. He gives explanatory reasons for both statements and an example from FOX news. The participant asserts, “They are very strongly influenced by governments and those who are in power. The prime example in the United States is the Fox news. Everyone knows that Fox news is—heavily—heavily biased {participant's emphasis}. News stories they were broadcasting about Barak Obama, because if you would change one letter in his name, it would become Osama, and immediately Barak Obama was associated with terrorism. The very notion of 'evil' or 'bad' is used in an absurd manner. They always represent a particular side of the political spectrum”. The same participant further asserts:

They cannot provide the third party perspective because they are one of the parties involved in this war now. On Western news media everything is about the effects of this terrorism on [the] U. S and the West. (Participant #59)

The line of reasoning outlined by this participant has interesting implications for understanding the contagious and highly unstable role of media. Giroux (2004) talks about the problems regarding media:

My argument is that the new media provided the conditions, within the existing global war on terrorism and culture of fear, for an extension of the logic of militarism to the realm of the symbolic and that the central elements of the spectacle of terrorism are unlike anything we have seen in the past—given their enshrinement of hyper-real violence, their unadulterated appeal to fear, their diverse forms of resistance to state power, and their elevation of the image to a prominent feature of social and political power. (p. 56)

As we have seen in the above analysis of the narratives of my participants, collective memory is constantly produced through, and mediated by, the technologies of memory (Sturken, 2008). The questions of reception/consumption and mediation are thus central to the way in which collective memory is constructed through technologies and then reproduced in the form of the collective narratives. This means that the theories of collective memory tend to consider these technologies of memory dynamic, contagious and highly unstable – the famous “news stories they (Fox News) were broadcasting about Barak Obama” become a part of an individual’s memory and this memory is incorporated into a narrative of collective memory. This participant is reading the media’s role in a particular way. It is a completely different question to explore whether the media is doing so or not. I read only what my participants are telling me whether it is accurate or not. My concern is to represent the image of one of the most influential technologies of memory as represented by my participants.

Many scholars show their concerns that collective memory studies have not yet paid enough attention to the problem of reception both in terms of methods and sources and that collectivities may respond very differently than individuals do to traumas and other life experiences (Kansteiner, 2002). One of the reasons is that very few studies have been done to understand the process by which collective memory circulating in a society would be grasped by people living in that society (Letourneau, 2006). In the following section, I focus on the problem

of “reception or consumption” to understand how my participants make collective memory in more depth.

### **The Process of Consumption**

To explore how young people in Canada make collective memory, it is important to understand the problems of reception or consumption first, both in terms of methods and sources. My findings suggest that collective memories may respond very differently than individual memories to a historical phenomenon such as “the War on Terror”. My focus of analysis is the relationships between active human agents and technologies or mediational tools. To understand collective memory the relationship between human actions and mediational tools is so fundamental that according to Wertsch (1991), “it is more appropriate, when referring to the agent involved, to speak of individual(s)-acting-with-mediational tools than to speak simply of individuals”(p. 12). In this section I focus on how young people in Canada use mediational tools to consume different representations of the war. A difference between Wertsch’s study and mine is that he sought to understand collective memories in connection with a body of empirical evidence from Soviet and post Soviet Russia. In Russia the dominant narratives are directly controlled by the state. While, I seek to understand collective memories in connection with a body of empirical evidence from Canada. Canada is a pluralistic society and governments do not play the same role in controlling the narratives circulated in the society, as it was the case in the Soviet Union.

It has been acknowledged that today, people operating at levels other than the state are playing more dynamic role in the consumption and negotiation of collective memory (Bodnar, 1993; Wertsch, 2002; Létourneau, 2006). I analyze the narratives of my participants to understand how they consume representations of “the War on Terror”. Their collective memories are the result of both remembering and forgetting, affirming and opposition, or suppressing and

revising. The participants in my study are more self-conscious in their understanding of a historical phenomenon than most theories of collective memory predict. These participants show a tendency to engage with the narratives of the war. But instead of either totally accepting or rejecting them, they engage themselves in a kind of dialogue with these narratives. I argue that the participants' engagement with the representations of the war involves a great deal of careful reflection and their collective memories provide alternative ways of understanding and consuming these representations. I find that consumption or reception of collective memory in contemporary societies is highly complex and multi-dimensional due to two major factors. First, a variety of technologies of memory are available to ordinary people (Wertsch, 2002), and their associated socio-technical practices are changing radically and; second, "interpretative communities" play an influential role in the process.

The process of consumption is analyzed as a process of approaching the textual resources available through different technologies of memory to adopt a particular stance in relation to "the War on Terror". Wertsch (2002) mentions that the "speaker may take many different stances toward textual resources provide to them. They may accept the text wholeheartedly and try to reproduce it without change, they may reject it, they may parody it, and so forth" (p. 118). The evidence I review in this section reveals that young people in Canada adopt a variety of stances towards the textual resources available to them. When examining these instances, it is useful to analyze different levels of consumption that give way to these different stances in the narratives of my participants about "the War on Terror".

In his discussion of consumption or reception, Wertsch (2002) encourages his readers to gloss over a distinction between three levels of consumption that plays an important role in textually mediated collective memory. The first level is the mastery of textual resources, the

second is the appropriation of resources, and the third is resistance towards resources. For my purpose here, I attempt to understand these levels of consumption in terms of my participants' argumentation that give rise to a stance about the war in their narratives. The argumentation, as a part of the process of consumption, is analyzed from separate opinions on question number two and four in a set of sub-questions given to the participants (Appendix F) before they started writing their narratives. The questions are: "Which sources of information are the most important ones for your understanding of "the War on Terror" and briefly explain "how you used them and why"?"

### **Linear Consumption**

It refers to a high level of consumption of the encoded meaning, without any critical reflection, supplied through different technologies of memory. The participants wholeheartedly accept the narratives of "the War on Terror" available around without any critical reflection.

For example, in the following text instead of a critical engagement with the representations of the war, the participant seems to have a single committed perspective invested in the communication by media professionals and dominant social, political and cultural interests. This statement is taken from the narrative of an 18 year old female student who is a Punjabi speaking Canadian whose parents migrated from India:

I believe that the War on Terror needs to be fought. It needs to be waged to destroy extremist groups and totalitarian regimes and restore countries like Afghanistan and Iraq to the equal and fair nations they were once before. I think that Canadian troops should not withdraw from helping the U.S.A. because if it had been Canada that had been attacked on 9/11, we would currently be relying in the U.S.A. for support, if we have to decide to go to a war. Not only is 9/11 a travesty nor it is the only terrorist attack. Embassies have been attacked... these attacks should not continue and for that we must fight and destroy them. I like to watch TV and often I tuned into CNN or BBC to see the

latest news and information. (Participant #24)

This text reflects a single committed perspective “I believe that “the War on Terror” needs to be fought”, and no patience for ambiguity or multiple truths about the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan “Canadian troops should not withdraw from helping the U.S.A. because if it had been Canada that had been attacked on 9/11, we would currently be relying in the U.S.A. for support, if we have to decide to go to a war”. When one begins to use them, it is difficult to imagine, let alone overtly introduce, other information or competing perspectives (Wertsch, 2002). An interesting point in this statement is the use of agency, by couching a personal voice as the voice of an imagined community when the narrator switches over from I to We frequently, “we must fight and destroy them”. The narrator does not take a critical stance toward the sources of information she uses, but rather makes an extreme case formulation, “if it had been Canada that had been attacked on 9/11. Now take a look at the following statement taken from the narrative of a 19 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

To hear the word terrorism, honestly the 9/11 comes into my mind. I remember, it is one of those things that I can easily remember. Who they were? What they were doing? I remember whenever I heard the word terrorism, the image of terrorism on the screen of television, the tower collapsing, the plane flying and hitting the tower, I cannot remember which of the tower it was. That’s what comes into my mind when I heard about terrorism. (Participant #59)

This statement shows that the participant knows how to use textual resources whenever he wants, and employs them with facility. Wertsch (2002) calls this level of consumption ‘the mastery of textual resources’. It involves knowing how to use textual resources available through different technologies of memory. Another participant also shows the ‘mastery of resource’. This participant is a 33 year old female student born in Nigeria:

7 [Seven] years later, with the efforts to defend itself, including so far two American-led

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, detention of uncharged captives at Guantanamo Bay, abuses of prisoners in Abu-Gharib, the American Patriot Act which restricts freedom in the name of freedoms. The World created by the September 11 hijackers is a darker place that almost no one could predict at the start of the new century. (Participant #18)

It is obvious from the list of events, “two American-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, detention of uncharged captives at Guantanamo Bay, abuses of prisoners in Abu-Gharib, the American Patriot Acts” recalled by the participant that she knows how to employ them with facility (Wertsch, 2002). It shows that the process of remembering extends beyond this to include her skill to use these narratives as a foundation for reasoning about the actors and motives behind the events being discussed. There is an implicit reference here, “major marker in the world”. It shows the power of the representation of 9/11 attacks because my participant can still provide details about the events as they were represented by the media in 2001.

Take a look at another example in which argumentation appears as a symbol of unconditional allegiance towards those “who lost their loved ones on 9/11”. This statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 18 year old female student:

I am now angry with George W. Bush, who cannot do anything. Those who lost their loved ones on 9/11 deserve to know that Osama Bin Laden will be brought to justice. America should be on a hunt for Bin Laden and the Taliban. I now feel deep sympathy for all those affected by this terrorism and believe that we should do everything to erase terrorism from the world. I usually get my information from media. (Participant #23)

This participant’s statement shows almost no dialogue, rather it seems that this statement could be made by an American in the United States of America, “Those who lost their loved ones on 9/11 deserve to know that Osama bin Laden will be brought to justice. America should be on a hunt for Bin Laden and the Taliban”. The participant is evaluating it “I now feel deep sympathy for all those affected by this terrorism and believe that we should do everything to erase

terrorism from the world”, and defending it, “we should do everything to erase terrorism from the world”. This level of consumption has three main characteristics: It involves the first level of consumption called “mastery of resources” (Wertsch, 2002); the participants’ stance shows almost no dialogue; and the participants construct an imagined community of “we” which represents an imagined community of the Canadian nation or an imagined community comprising of both Canada and the United States of America.

### **Non-Linear Consumption**

Wertsch (2002, p. 120) calls this level of consumption the “appropriation of textual resources”, and argues that the appropriation of textual resources concerns a different sort of relationship between agent and technologies of memory and a different sort of motivation for using a text when speaking. It means something like the process of making something one’s own. As such, a text that is appropriated may serve as an identity resource—a means for anchoring or constructing one’s sense of who the one is. To understand this pattern of consumption consider the following statement of a Finnish speaking 25 year old female student:

I feel a lot of information on the War on Terror is hidden from the public. To declare that someone is [a] terrorist does not fully explain their reasoning for committing terrorist attacks. It should be made more clear to citizens why terrorism has occurred. I think that the public opinion on the War on Terror cannot be more substantial without more unbiased information. It must be made more clear why the driving forces behind terrorist attacks are ignited, otherwise, how we will be able to prevent it[?] I believe hiding the information is extremely wrong. I feel that more cultural acceptance and understanding should be promoted to young people. Not just promotion of multiculturalism is enough, but young people should be taught to become more sensitive to other cultures and religions such as Muslims. There is no reason not to be objective and respectful of other peoples’ beliefs. [Fighting the] War on Terror should begin with educating people that differences exist and they should not hinder our relationships. Having done an exchange myself, I feel it is impossible not to get along with any person regardless of their

backgrounds. (Participant # 29)

The narrative scheme here is significantly more critical than in the previous one, “a lot of information on “the War on Terror” is hidden from the public”, and tends to emphasize the agency of this narrator as an active negotiator, “I think that the public opinion on “the War on Terror” cannot be more substantial without more unbiased information”, rather than as passive consumer. This participant searches for the answers “It should be made more clear to citizens why terrorism has occurred. It must be made more clear why the driving forces behind terrorist attacks are ignited”. The majority of the participants included in this level adopt a narrative, which critically evaluates the potential agendas behind the war and questions the moral legitimacy of the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan. For example, take a look at the following statement taken from the follow-up interview of an English speaking 18 year old female student:

I think that media’s role is to show that Canada’s role in this war is just peacekeeping and that we are just trying to help people. But like you know, we do not need arms, big tanks and bombs to help people. I think that media’s role in this war is to make it look like a more heroic mission, and not an army mission. I think that they are trying to make it look like that we are not terrorists but they are the terrorists, they are fighting terrorists, but at the same time we are doing the exact same thing. So it is really a war full of terrorists instead of a war on terrorists. (Participant #66)

The participant engages herself in a kind of dialogue with the representations of the war, “like you know, we do not need arms, big tanks and bombs to help people”, which shows a non-linear relationship between these representations and the participant’s narrative. Wertsch (2002) calls this type of consumption “the appropriation of textual resources”, because this statement shows a different sort of relationship between the participant as an agent and the media as a technology of memory, “I think that media’s role in this war is to make it look like a more heroic mission, and

not an army mission. I think that they are trying to make it look like that we are not terrorists but they are the terrorists, they are fighting terrorists, but at the same time we are doing the exact same thing”. This relationship may encourage the participant to resist the complete internalization of the representations available through mass media and to present an alternative narrative, “So it is really a war full of terrorists instead of a war on terrorists”. Take a look at a different example to understand in-depth this type of relationship: This statement is taken from the narrative of an English speaking 25 year old female student:

The way I will always remember this “war” will be the permanent memories of video footage shown on the news. Journalists and people with personal cameras being engulfed in fumes and smoke on the public streets. The stories of fire fighters who on that specific day September 11 lost their lives and thousands of people who died are still in my mind. (Participant #37)

This participant’s collective memories have been shaped by mass media because she talks about personally witnessing the events of 9/11 in the “video footage shown on the news”. Non-linear consumption involves a different type of dialogue with the encoded meaning supplied through different technologies of memory. In the case of “the War on Terror” my participants may accept the general legitimacy of the encoded representation of the war that is presented to them.

However, at the same time, they also contrast these representations of the war with the ‘situational’ knowledge that drives from their dialogue with different cultural tools or technologies of memory such as the Internet or TV, and which may be quite dissonant with the generally legitimated level of reality about the war. Consider this example taken from the follow-up interview of a 19 year old male student whose parents immigrated from Sri Lanka:

I like to collect facts from different sources and then form my own opinion. I tried to be critical of whatever I read or heard. Being a student of political science and philosophy as majors that is what we are expected to do. I carry that into my everyday life and to use

the cliché “I take everything with the grain of salt”. I have a sort of internal dialogue whenever I am reading something or watching something, I am constantly asking questions in my mind. If whatever medium I am using is not adequately giving me the answers then I do not formulate a concrete opinion. I am always flexible in forming opinions on making decisions. (Participant #59)

On the basis of revealing the dialogic processes behind my participant’s argument, “to use the cliché, I take everything with the grain of salt”. I have a sort of internal dialogue whenever I am reading something or watching something”. I became able to see a gradual process of negotiation or mediation (Wertsch, 2002) as he develops the narrative of the war. As this participant mentions, “I am constantly asking questions in my mind”. For a dialogue, more than one perspective is required and also a different sort of interaction between human agent and technologies of memory. This interaction is only possible when the human agent has appropriated the textual resources available through different technologies of memory. This appropriation of resources is reflected in the text mentioned above, “If whatever medium I am using is not adequately giving me the answers then I do not formulate a concrete opinion. I am always flexible in forming opinions on making decisions”. For example, take a look at the text taken from the narrative of an English speaking 19 year old female student:

When the War on Terror first began, I saw it as justifiable as the nation had been attacked and the location of the organization had been found and that the purpose was to seek justice for those who had lost their lives. This was until the war in Iraq, this I saw as a careless and completely disgraceful war far away from its original intent. (Participant # 34)

In this statement a process of negotiation can be seen in the form of a transition in the stance of this participant, “I saw it as justifiable as the nation had been attacked and the location of the organization had been found and that the purpose was to seek justice for those who had lost their lives”, and then he/she states, “This was until the war in Iraq, this I saw as a careless and completely disgraceful war far away from its original intent”. The possibilities for the narrator to

negotiate the representations of “the War on Terror” as an active agent and for her voice to surface overtly are extended much further here than in the previous cases I have outlined. Instead of reflecting the others’ voices the statement is apparently composed of primarily the narrator’s own voice about the war. Wertsch (2002) mentions, “at least two voices—the speaker’s and the textual means being employed. These two voices derive from the unrepeatable and repeatable poles of the text, respectively” (p. 118). A gradual transition occurs in the process of negotiation due to the appropriation of textual resources. A critical stance has been developed due to a dialogic engagement between the narrator as an active agent and the information available through different technologies of memory. The processes of narrative organization and dialogic engagement provide essential semiotic resources that mediate (Wertsch, 2002) in this narrative. These narrators adopt an active role and combine linguistic elements to come up with something novel and critical as compared to the previous examples of low level of negotiation in which narrators simply parrot a widely used text (Wertsch, 2002). Non-linear consumption has three main characteristics: It involves the second level of consumption called “appropriation of resources” (Wertsch, 2002); the participants’ stance shows clear dialogue; and the voice of the narrator is higher than in the first position discussed above.

### **Oppositional Consumption**

According to Wertsch (2002), at this level the speaker masters the textual resources exposed through technologies of memory but he/she does not appropriate it as an identity resource. In this case widely circulated narratives are actively resisted. An example of this oppositional consumption is obvious in the texts taken from the follow-up interview of a 19 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

This war started after 9/11 when a group of people from different countries hijacked

airplanes and destroyed the twin towers in New York City. This event gave America a chance to invade and control land, resources, and [the] lives of Muslims. America and other white nations joined their hands together. Um...I think whatever is happening after 9/11 on the name of the war on terror is just an attempt to segregate and separate Muslims so that they would become an easy target. First, they went into Afghanistan and in 2003 they went into Iraq. (Participant # 1)

In several aspects, this narrator also accepts the general legitimacy of the encoded representation of the war that is presented to him, by using a standard set of events to construct an alternative narrative about the war, “This war started after 9/11 when a group of people from different countries hijacked airplanes and destroyed the twin towers in New York City. First, they went into Afghanistan and in 2003 they went into Iraq”. It even uses some stock phrases (e.g., “Muslim terrorists”). However, in this statement an alternative reading appears, as the participant does not wholeheartedly accept the representations of the war as they are. The participant knows how to use textual resources available through different technologies of memory but uses an alternative or oppositional narrative as a foundation for reasoning about the actors and motives behind the events being discussed, “This event gave America a chance to invade and control land, resources, and [the] lives of Muslims. America and other white nations joined their hands together”. The participant’s account of the war represents it along racialized lines. The text is taken to be something that invites redefinition of the war from the point of view of the participant, and generates new racialized meanings of “the War on Terror”, “Um ... I think whatever is happening after 9/11 on the name of the war on terror is just an attempt to segregate and separate Muslims so that they would become an easy target”. This level of consumption also involves a number of critical or philosophically questionable commitments to internal mental representations, as you can see in the following statement taken from the follow-up interview of a 19 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

This war has created so many questions: Can you tell me who gave birth to those so-called Mujahedeen and their leader Osama bin Laden? From where did these terrorists are getting the money to do whatever they did and doing right now? Do you know about the network spread up from America to its tout Saudi Arabia who provides funding to these so-called Mujahedeen? Who is providing [these] sophisticated weapons to them and why Mr. Bush and his followers in North America and Europe cannot find this network, although they have the most advanced technologies, power and secret service agents all over the world.

Instead of reflecting the others' voices and reproducing them as it is, this text primarily raises many questions: "Who gave birth to those so-called Mujahedeen? "Who provides funding to these so-called Mujahedeen? and "Who is providing these sophisticated weapons to them?" This participant further argues:

What happened on 9/11 was terrible but it was not the first event of its type. They have killed thousands of innocent Muslim civilians to show their might and superiority. I am a walking time bomb because I am a Muslim. I can explode on their heads any time because I have a label on my forehead—a Muslim—a terrorist. America used the event of 9/11 to expand its imperial project in the world with the help of other white nations. When America killed thousands of people in Nicaragua, or when Israel is killing Palestinians in Gaza with phosphorus bombs, it is not terrorism, it is their right to kill these people because might is right. (Participant # 1)

In this text, the narrator elects to redefine the events "America used the event of 9/11 to expand his imperial project in the world with the help of other white nations", and actively shows a critical stance, "What happened on 9/11 was terrible but it was not the first event of its type".

This participant's statement "When America killed thousands of people in Nicaragua, or when Israel is killing Palestinians in Gaza with phosphorus bombs, it is not terrorism, it is their right to kill these people because might is right", can be seen as a marker of the speaker's political orientation.

At this level of consumption the participants accept that the issues around "the War on

Terror” have been coded by the encoding process but elect to redefine the events. Only 36 participants can be situated within this oppositional position. This oppositional position appears to be embedded in the knowledge of alternative, unofficial histories contributing to the production of the alternative narrative in this case. For example, take a look at the following text taken from the follow-up interview of a 19 year old male student whose parents migrated from Sri Lanka:

It seems like an action for an action. Somebody hurts us so we need to go and hurt in response to show that we are doing something about it. The Iraq war is even more vague. The pattern of this war is to fight against leaders you put there before. Ah—well—it is another story. But it almost seems that they are there to clean up their own messes. (Participant #59)

This participant redefines the whole war by calling it, “action for action”, and at the same time, considers it as a vague war. On the one hand he represents American occupation of Iraq as revenge, “Somebody hurts us so we need to go and hurt in response”, while at the same time represents the war in Iraq as a war against your own man “to fight against leaders you put there before”. Another example also shows the same characteristics in which the narrator has thoroughly mastered the textual resources but clearly has not appropriated it. This example is taken from the follow-up interview of a 19 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

Well! I think that [the] Canadian society lives in a state of denial. A denial of racism, a denial of discrimination on the basis of colour, a denial of being a part of American imperialism, a denial of the role of a partner who is helping America in achieving its targets in Afghanistan on the name of this War on Terror. (Participant #1)

This statement shows an oppositional position and has no personal sense for its user (Wertsch, 2002), because it seems that he is distancing himself from a society that “lives in a state of denial”. This participant elects to redefine the issue through an alternative narrative, “the narrative of denial”. The participant talks about different types of denial in the Canadian society

such as, “A denial of racism, a denial of discrimination on the basis of color, a denial of being a part of American imperialism”. This oppositional consumption has three main characteristics: It involves the third level of consumption called “resistance to resources” (Wertsch, 2002); the participants’ stance shows almost no dialogue; and it represents an alternative narrative.

### **Role of Worldviews and Political Orientation in the Process of Negotiation**

Much thought and interaction in modern societies is ‘mediated’ (Fairclough, 2003) but the level differs according to an individual’s position in the society and the nature of interaction with the issue. It is obvious from the statements of my participants that their socio-political positions and the nature of interaction with this war also play an important role in the processes of consumption. For example, take a look at the following text taken from the follow-up interview of an English speaking 18 year old male student:

Um, I think people kind of find their own ways to settle their opinion about this war or other issue ... oh this one kinds of make sense ... if you are conservative then you will believe Fox news or CNN. One that corresponds with their pre-existing thoughts—makes more sense for people. I think, I kind of use to do that by comparing and critically analyzing different stories from different sources about the War on Terror. I just kind of take them all critically and then try to see whatever reality I can find after that. I just try to be critical of everything, even kind of my own type. I am pretty leftist by trend. I want to see how everyone lives. I do not know if that works or not but I always try to be critical of my own trend, yeh. (Participant #51)

This statement shows the role of socio-political position in the processes of consumption, “if you are conservative then you will believe Fox news or CNN. One that corresponds with their pre-existing thoughts—makes more sense for people”. The participant mentions that worldviews or “pre-existing thoughts” generally play an important role in the process of selecting a technology of memory and then in the formation of an opinion. Then the participant talks about the role of

his own political orientation and its role in the give and take of dialogue, “I am pretty leftist by trend. I want to see how everyone lives. I do not know if that works or not but I always try to be critical of my own trend, yeh”.

In most of the cases, it is possible to track the relationships between the technologies of memory used by my participants and their religious, cultural, political, and national backgrounds with the help of data collected through demographic questionnaires. For example, take a look at the following quote taken from the follow-up interview of a 20 year old male student who is a first-generation immigrant from Palestine:

I know that western media is so biased about Islam and Muslims. Did you ever watch Fox news or CNN? You know how biased they are. I was watching a program on the FOX television. A woman who wrote a book about Muslim terrorists was telling that the first woman Palestinian suicide bomber exploded her to protect her from honor killing and her boy friend provided the jacket full of explosives. They are always partial, biased and inaccurate, when representing Muslims. Media has turned into ... what should I say ... some sort of weapon in the hands of white nations. Western media work to promote the politics of labelling Muslims as terrorists. Media has played a prominent role in separating and segregating us from the main society because they always focus on and sometime fabricate bad things about Muslims. (Participant #1)

This statement shows the role played by worldviews or the context in shaping the narrative, “They are always partial, biased and inaccurate, when representing Muslims”. Context or worldviews is not viewed as a stimulus that simply switches collective memory on or off. Instead, it is viewed as supplying a dynamic force of its own that fundamentally shapes representations of the past (Wertsch, 2002, p. 135). The participant also negotiates with the media on a racialized basis and considers media as, “some sort of weapon in the hands of white nations”. This statement reflects a strong sense of resentment towards the role played by western media in the representations of Muslims. Wertsch (2002) has approached the issue of negotiation as a part of a story about the

more general category of “mediated action”. From his perspective, speaking, thinking, and other forms of human action are taken to involve a process of mediation between agent and cultural tools. I argue that there is something else going on in the process of collective remembering rather than just the direct interaction of different technologies of memory with human agents. Where my participants live and with whom they live also play an important role in the process of mediation with textual resources. My participants are at the same time relying on certain social groups or “interpretative communities” to decode the meanings attached to the messages available through different technologies of memory. In sum, the analysis I have outlined in the above sections reveals how my participants construct collective memories of “the War on Terror”.

### **The Location of Collective Memories**

The narratives of my participants show that collective memories of “the War on Terror” are mediated at both social and textual levels. The question arises here: Where is collective memory located? Collective memories are located in the society at large in the form of an uneven topography. The findings of my research project suggest that the construction of collective memories can be represented as some sort of topography. Topography is the science or practice of describing a particular space in detail usually on maps or charts in a way that shows the relative positions of the different features of that place. The term derives from the Greek *topos*, meaning place, and *graphein*, to write. The term “topography” means representation of a portion of the earth’s surface showing natural and man-made features of a give locality such as rivers, streams, ditches, lakes, roads, buildings and most importantly, variations in ground elevations for the terrain of the area.

([www.hancockcoingov.org/surveyor/drainage\\_glossary\\_of\\_terms.asp](http://www.hancockcoingov.org/surveyor/drainage_glossary_of_terms.asp))

Collective memories are, in their nature and distribution, a sort of topography made up of

different features distributed unevenly. The features most influencing the construction of collective memories are the textual resources available through different technologies, and different interpretative communities available around the individuals. Social groups in the form of “interpretative communities” emerge as an important feature in shaping the topography of collective memory. A slight change in the relative positions or the nature of the different features of a geographical space may have a determining influence on the nature and character of the whole place. The same is true for the topography of collective memories. Any change in the relative positions of individuals, technologies of memory, and interpretative communities may have a determining influence on the collective narrative of individuals. Collective memories are distributed unevenly in this space. As a result, each individual’s narrative of collective memory is different. Some of the boundaries of this topography are a bit more solid than others.

I find that “interpretative communities” play a vital role in shaping the narratives of the War in Terror in a particular way. Individuals always mediate technologies with the help of these communities to produce an account. This is how collective memories work in the society. Collective memories are constructed through individuals but they move through different nodes of technologies and more than one interpretative communities before going through individuals. The presence of different narratives of “the War on Terror” is not problematic because this is what the memories of a collectivity are. I have analyzed these nodes and find that some of these nodes are interpretative communities and some are technologies. When an individual’s memory intersects with any of these nodes, it makes collective memory. The whole topography or the network represents collectivity: it is a big and complex graph. This topography of collective memory is represented through the following figure:

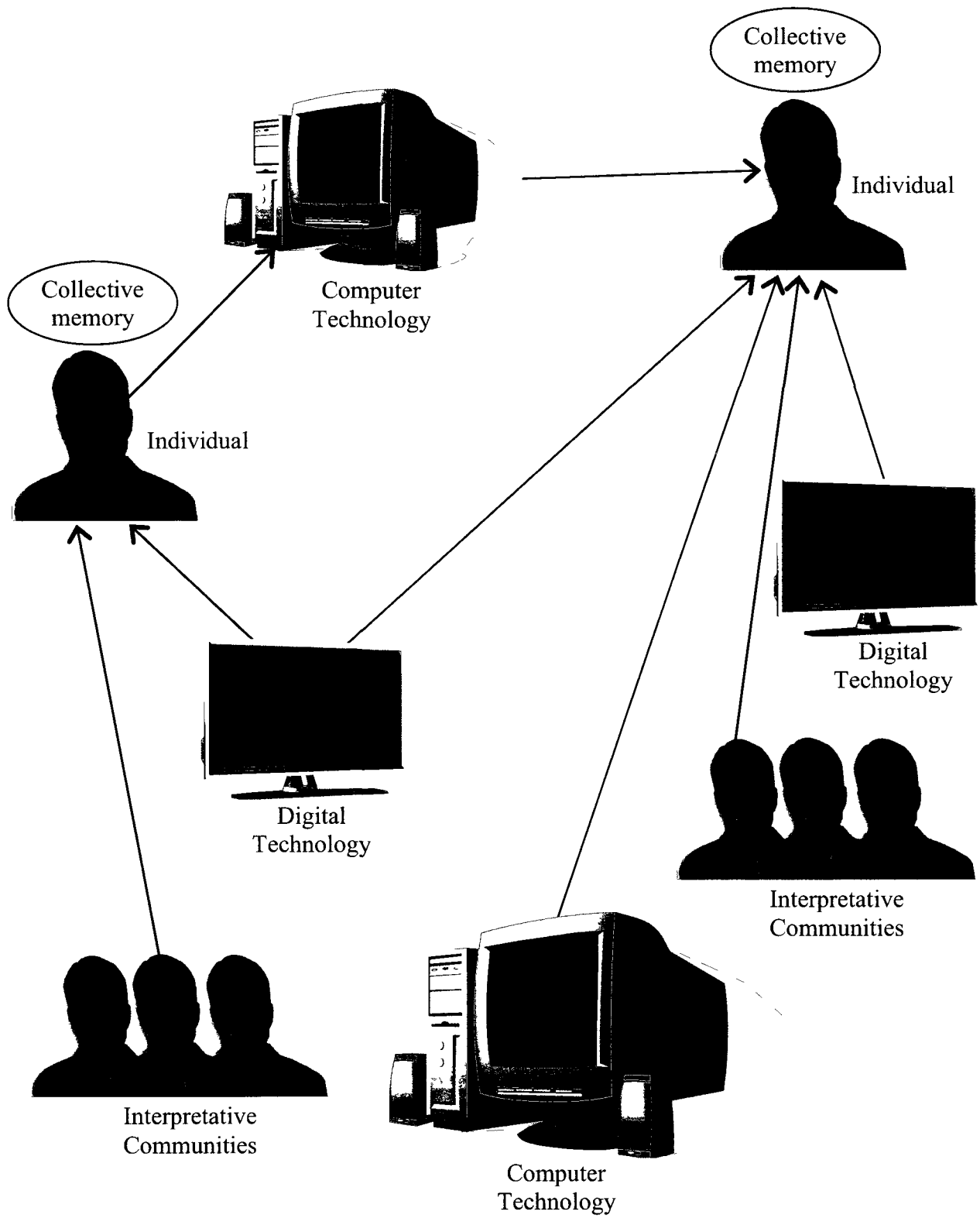


Figure 6.3. The Location of Collective Memory

In this chapter, I explore how a group of ninety-nine young people construct collective memories of “the War on Terror”. Throughout my engagement with these university students’ collective memories of the war I focus on the understandings, experiences, and perspectives of my participants in the form of narratives. This chapter shows that people’s experience of collective memory is basically social. People make collective memory through negotiating with different representations of an event. The process of negotiation occurs between individuals, technologies of memory, and interpretative communities or between different nodes of a big network. This big network represents the collectivity of my participants’ memories. I also document the collective memories of young people in Canada, in the form of stories within the context of “the War on Terror”. As Denzin (1989) clarifies, “A life lived is what actually happens ... A life as told ... is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context” (p. 30). Prevalent common features in my participants’ accounts of the war clearly point to a dominant nationalist narrative as the dominant collective memory- a narrative influenced by the social context. The dominant or hegemonic position is that Canada is a peace loving country and has nothing to do with this war waged by others. My participants use this hegemonic narrative to negotiate their understandings of the war. This hegemonic narrative of Canadian nationalism enters into the process of negotiation from different places and in different forms. It also enters into some of the narratives of Muslim participants but not in all. These narratives also show another interesting difference between Muslim and non-Muslim participants’ collective memories. Non-Muslim Canadians’ (90%) collective memories started from the horrible day of 9/11, while Muslim Canadians’ (90%) collective memories started after 9/11. This finding may help us to exemplify how a reconfigured, process-oriented conceptual scheme of collective memory can enrich our ability to

make sense of the transformation of memories across time and how narratives of the past both shape and are shaped by current concerns and social contexts (Olick, 2008). These narratives are clearly shaped by current concerns and social contexts.

I focus on narratives as a technology of collective memory produced by my participants as they engage in remembering their experiences of the war. The analysis of these narratives reveals that people living in Canada are not trapped in obsolete narratives, and univocal representations (Létourneau, 2006) of the complexities of “the War on Terror”. The presence of a fairly large amount of narratives ( $n = 83$ ) expressing critical reflection towards different representations of the war (of these, 75% present a strictly critical stand and 25% present a moderately critical stand towards the war) reflect a close reading of the interaction between individuals, technologies and interpretative communities, and re-imagining of alternative understandings of the war.

## CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research project led me to a kaleidoscope of conceptualizations of learning and teaching. These narratives of “the War on Terror” become a sort of journey for me that, once begun, led to many unanticipated journeys, gathering new understandings of differences and similarities along the way. I have shown throughout my data analysis, how the theorists included in my literature review support this study’s findings. Now I will turn to the ways the findings contribute to my own learning process. Prior to my data collection, my understanding of the boundaries and construction of collective memory in a society was limited.

By exploring the ways collective memory of “the War on Terror” is constructed by young people in Canada, I learn that students are capable of thinking critically about much broader issues than I imagined possibly in the initial phase of my research project. I realize that narratives can be used as a pedagogical tool to build collective memory that resists the reduction of historical /political/cultural/national issues into single dimensional stories provided by those who are in power. The findings do not contradict my use of the theorists in the conceptualization of my research project. Rather, my data analysis allows me to expand the horizon of the theories of collective memory. Encounters with collective memories of a group of under-graduate students from many different cultures provide me with an opportunity to understand the complexities of a contested phenomenon—”the War on Terror” from their perspective. In addition, their assumptions and beliefs, and the meanings they give to their own experiences in relation to this war, are an inextricable part of my learning process as a teacher. I conduct an inquiry involving a diverse set of participants and sites, exploring an emergent theory instead of a predictive theory and engaging in a critical, and reflexive analysis involving a socio-cultural perspective of collective memory. However, no one can deny that new technologies of memory

transform and morph with each new day, which further complicates researchers' job to further investigate the complex nature of collective memory.

These young Canadians show me that there can be more than one narrative about one event or historical development. My findings also help me to learn that the real benefit of using narrative as a pedagogical tool does not lie in my fixation on whether narratives present a true experience or not. Rather I need to think instead of the cultural, social and political effects of the many voices that contributed to the project. I learn that different narratives of the same event or any historical/cultural or social phenomenon can help both me and my students to challenge different types of oppression, exclusion and marginalization of certain identities. In sum, this research project help me to understand how does replacing the idea of one "story" with the concept of multiple stories works against the exclusion, marginalization or bring about social change.

Research in the field of collective memory goes to the heart of many of the issues at the forefront of contemporary political debate and struggle. These include the political effects of the continuing presence of the past—and particularly of past hurts—in the present (Radstone, 2008). I began this research project on a contested issue in the context of collective memories with some questions in my mind. These questions were about a few theoretical and practical issues around my project. These issues include: the contested nature of collective memories; the problems faced by collective memory studies as a field of research; the importance of small or alternative narratives for both society and classroom learning; and the effects of "the War on Terror" on the Canadian society in general but on Canadian Muslims in particular. After an extensive literature review, I decide to use Letourneau's (2006) methodological approach to investigate my research problem, and plan to collect data in the form of written narratives. However, I was afraid that narratives only might not take me far enough into what I regarded as the heart of qualitative

work—the opportunity to know a few people or a historical phenomenon really well. I am interested in exploring the full complexity of the issue and placing it in its context to understand the making of the collective memories. I decide to conduct the follow-up interviews of a few participants, after collecting the narratives. The purpose is to dig in more depth, or in other words, to expand what they write in their narratives.

This decision led to yet another question. What theory or a combination of theories would actually guide my gathering of data and the data analysis? I eventually built up a conceptual framework that pieced together the theoretical models I use for gathering data and writing my analysis. The theoretical models that guide me, to answer my research questions within the empirical evidence provided by my participants, are from the field of collective memory studies (Halbwachs, 1980; Wertsch, 2002), nationalism studies (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995), and the theories of representations (Said, 1980; Hall, 1979, 1980). The purpose of the study was to examine the following research questions:

1. How do my participants understand and represent “the War on Terror”?
2. How do the participants of this study emplot the narrative of “the War on Terror”?
3. How do my participants use a deixis of little words in their narratives?
4. How do my participants construct collective memories of “the War on Terror”?

As I search for the answers to these questions, I begin to understand that the issues I am investigating are more complex than I had initially understood. I realize that through the writing of this research report, I attempt to provide a few pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that displays the stories of young Canadian people’s lived lives. This research report presents the narratives of “the War on Terror” provided by young people in Canada, who are silently walking the streets of

Canada, sitting quietly in front of their televisions, reading newspapers, or attending lectures in their classrooms, and apparently consuming the representations of the war.

In this concluding chapter, I will briefly revisit my findings. Then, I will present the conclusions I have drawn from the study I conduct. After discussing the implications for future research, I will conclude the chapter with the implications for teaching and learning.

### **Summary of the Findings**

According to my participants, the narrative of “the War on Terror” is a sequence of events linked by a causal connection among characters and events such as who is fighting whom, when and how did it start, who started it and why, what the major events are and how are they linked. It is interesting to see that for majority of the participants, 9/11 is the starting point of the narrative of the war. These participants discuss a causal connection between “the War on Terror”, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The majority of my participants argue that the United States of America used this War on Terror as an excuse to invade Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003. The manner in which the narrative of the war is told tends to legitimize some things and delegitimize other things through a variety of political positions. Most of the political positions are implied rather than explicitly stated and emerged from the interplay of characters, events, and argumentation in the narratives. As I analyze the stated (and supposed) positions stated by my participants, I find that sixty-five narratives express critical reflections (of these sixty five narratives 75% present a strictly critical stand and 25% present a moderately critical stand about the war), seventeen narratives express a clearly favorable stand, while seventeen narratives show a mixed, or ambivalent standpoint towards the war and the Canadian involvement in it. The immediately noticeable pattern is the high frequency of critical stands and the dominance of the strictly critical stand over the mixed or ambivalent attitude towards the

nature, and the purpose of the war and in particular the Canadian involvement in it.

An important aspect of my findings is related to the effect of this war on young people in Canada. My participants discuss both general and particular effects of the war for the Canadian society. According to my findings, this war affects different people differently. How this war has affected Canadians can be divided into five versions: The first version represents those participants who live in a kind of bubble (no effect); the second version represents those participants who think that this war does not affect their lives; the third version represents those participants who show a critical consciousness about the effects of this war for the Canadian society; the fourth version represents Muslim Canadians, who have been affected personally due to the racialized nature of this war; while the fifth version represents those Canadians who are affected due to their personal relationships with those Canadian soldiers who are/were deployed in Afghanistan.

Another important finding is that the narrative of “the War on Terror” is not the dominant narrative, according to my participants. Rather, the Canadian nationalist narrative is the dominant narrative and enters into the narrative of “the War on Terror” in different ways. Though there is a contestation between different concepts of the Canadian nationalism. The common factor is that the Canadian nationalism depends upon the presence of an imagined community. The majority of my participants are using the first person plural “we/us/ours” or “they/them/ theirs”, or the deixis (Billig, 1995), in a way that tends to create an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) of the Canadian nation. Most of the narratives are the Canadian nationalist narrative, while some are not, and some are ambiguous.

The last section of my findings explores how my participants make collective memories of “the War on Terror”, and what roles different technologies of memory play in the construction

of collective memory. I find that these young people in Canada are not trapped in obsolete narratives, and univocal representations of the war. I discover that apart from an active agent and cultural tools involved in mediated memories, another strong force, “social groups”, is also involved actively in the process of negotiation. To be more specific I prefer to use the term “interpretative communities” for these social groups that play an important role in how human beings select and interpret different textual resources. Concrete illustrations of my claim can be found in the narratives and the follow-up interviews of my participants and provide with an in depth understanding of the nature of collective memories.

In sum, my study indicates that the theories of collective memory did not pay enough attention to how collective narratives are constructed and transmitted. This research project attempts to find the answer of these questions by using the theoretical framework provided by Wertsch (2002). The findings of this project can be summarized as follows: people not only construct collective memories through an interaction between them as active human agents and a shared tool kit (Wertsch, 2002), these processes also involve a collectivity of significant ‘others’ or what I call ‘interpretative communities’; the hegemonic narrative is not the narrative of “the War on Terror”, rather, the hegemonic narrative is the narrative of Canadian nationalism; and war has affected the young Canadian Muslim participants at a personal level as compared to the non- Muslim participants of this study. As I search for a way to interpret these results, I began to reframe my own assumptions and presuppositions. In addition, my findings confirm some previous studies which found that there is no resemblance between students’ narratives and the official narratives provided by the state or school textbooks (Wertsch, 2002; Letourneau, 2006; Goldberg, Porat & Schwarz, 2006). The results of the study also indicate that the students are more likely to insert their own voices into their retellings of “The Untold Story”.

## **Implications for Future Research**

Exploration and the understanding of my participants' narratives about "the War on Terror" have several implications for future research. These narratives of collective memory provide researchers with new venues for further exploration of the processes of consumption and negotiation, and the internal dynamics of collective memories in the twenty-first century. This research will also help teachers and scholars to investigate how new technologies of memory, like the Internet and the other forms of media, play a vital role when students struggle in silence against the gap between what they feel and what cannot be said (Dirlik, 2006). My research project focuses on the narratives of young people in Canada who may or may not have equal access to public discourses. Some of these narratives are the collective memories of those individuals and groups whose knowledge and histories have been marginalized, or excluded from the public discourse of "the War on Terror". Another important implications of this research project is that it opens new directions for further investigation into the impacts of this marginalization and exclusion of Muslims or any other marginalized group on the future dynamics of Canadian society.

A number of theoretical as well as practical issues in a variety of educational fields like history, cultural studies, philosophy and political science, can be raised or addressed from the perspective of this collective memory research project. The roles played by the narratives of collective memories in the mediation of religious, gendered, and ethnic identities are some of the issues. Collective memory belongs to the leading subjects in research, due to its social construction, and its role in identity politics. Most importantly, it constitutes not only a specialized branch of investigations, but it is also crucial for the identity formation of various social groups, associations, nations and international organizations (Halas, 2008). Identity is

always mediated through contestation between the master/official narratives and the narratives of people. Moreover, such contestations are not limited to the academy, but surface frequently around questions of collective memory in the society. Boehm (2006) highlights how the American identity in the post-9/11 period is mediated through contested narratives of collective memory. This research project may open up new venues for further research about how the Canadian identity, or multiple identities in the Canadian society is/are mediated through contested narratives of collective memory in the twenty-first century. What are the implications of such narrative accounts of military conflicts for 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy? When popular cynicism toward political leaders and institutions is high, how are citizens supposed to provide consent or alternatively show dissent to intervention?

This research is also an attempt to enhance the field of collective memory as an authentic research domain because the amount of research devoted to individual memory is many times greater than that devoted to collective memory (Wertsch, 2002, p. 34). This mix-method inquiry highlights new angles of investigation for other inquiries into the field of collective memory. For example, it may allow the possibility of providing a rigorous conceptual framework for collective memory studies. This study may provide a new angle for researchers to investigate the role of different technologies of memory in the construction of knowledge. Or how the processes of consumption and negotiation of collective memories have been changed throughout the age of information technology? This study will help researchers to explore “the War on Terror” from a variety of angles such as the impact of 9/11 on the Canadian society, the differences in perception and perspective among the Canadian and the American society, the differences between first generation Muslim immigrants and second generation Muslim immigrants, or the lived experiences of those Canadian soldiers who have returned from Afghanistan.

Several researchers identify a need for locally situated narratives to promote human consciousness (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Mink, 1978; White, 1987; Young, 1988). My research in the area of collective memory provides a variety of ways for researchers to investigate how to promote historical consciousness through locally situated narratives. The narratives of young people, who were children when the events of 9/11 occurred and grew up alongside this War on Terror, are important because they reflect emergent history. As early as 1931, Becker (1932) stressed that “Mr. Everyman” will create the history suitable to his needs and comforts, warning historians not to ignore these needs, lest their work be made irrelevant. In seeking to create such history, these narratives of “the War on Terror” offer a fertile and useful path to both historians and educators.

### **Implications for Teaching and Learning**

As I stated before, the exploration and understanding of students’ narratives on “the War on Terror” has several implications, both for the academy and society as well. Human beings are bombarded with a variety of historical, political, religious, and military narratives through different cultural representations every day. Developing historical consciousness in the students means nurturing the ability to think critically about these narratives. Critical thinking is the best skill for students. In fact, this skill is essential for everyone in society. By exploring the small narratives of collective memories in our classrooms, teachers will be able to develop historical consciousness in their students. Students always bring their prior knowledge and experiences in the form of small narratives to their classrooms. Teaching can only be meaningful when teachers would be able to connect their students’ narratives with the content they want to teach. If teachers are really concerned about teaching their students the ways of multiple readings and critical thinking, they must have to create a space in their classrooms in which silence can speak instead of sobbing in the dark corners of their classrooms. My study suggests that the students’

voices are varied and inconsistent and that they are not trapped in univocal representations and obsolete narratives of the past (Letourneau, 2006). Many students come to their classroom with deeply entrenched narratives about the past and the present as well. My findings emphasize the need to be aware of the narratives that students have already mastered, as well as the narratives that students have appropriated or resisted (Wertsch, 2002). These narratives need to be listened to and examined to make both teaching and learning meaningful. Teaching can become meaningful by developing understandings of the sources of information behind these narratives and by exploring how collective memory serves to inculcate particular narratives, though sometimes with inaccuracies. Not only will teachers be able to build a learning community within their classrooms in which everyone has something to teach; but by opening their students to small but different stories, teachers will also help their students to critically listen, read and engage in a dialogue with different narratives available around them.

An important implication of this research in the field of collective memory studies is that it bridges the gap between historical and social approaches in Educational Foundation. The historical approach focuses on the analysis of texts while the social approach focuses on the collection of texts. As the content is clearly Canadian, this research adds to the field of Canadian studies, Canadian adolescent studies, studies of Muslim youth, and to Canadian diversity and multicultural studies. Additionally, it informs ongoing work on Islamophobia, and the nature of how discourse is used to hegemonically engage groups of people.

An important finding of this study is the influential role of “interpretative communities” in the process of consuming and negotiating knowledge, in the lives of young people. This finding has a vital implication for both teaching and learning. It raises many questions for teachers: What are “the interpretive communities” present in our classrooms? What roles do

these “interpretative communities” play in the process of learning, and in particular for those students who come from different religious, cultural, and historical backgrounds? Do in fact teachers themselves teach children or do they make another “interpretative community”?

The accumulated silences around “the War on Terror” also have implications for the constitution of a learning community inside the classrooms. This research project may create the possibility of opening up new windows for those teachers and researchers who are interested in listening and recording the accumulated silences around many other controversial issues like “the War on Terror”. Inclusion of *silenced* voices in the curriculum is quite essential for social and political inclusion of all stakeholders in any society. Only in this way students with different backgrounds and experiences be included in a learning community: in which the past is both shared and multi-faceted, in which discussions can occur in an open space, and the future can consist of equal opportunities for all. However, Ahonen (2001) reminds us, “Such a curriculum implies a critical community that is harder to govern than a community with a uniform identity. It tends to be risky for those in power” (p. 181). An important implication of my research is to open up new angles of investigation. For example, how students of different races, ethnicities, and backgrounds read and interpret historical narratives and what types of narratives they bring with them to their classrooms. The voices of students who have been alienated throughout history and by history education are particularly valuable to the investigations of collective memory. My research project gives way to many research questions: Do these students perceive themselves as a part of a particular story or stories circulating around them? If so, which ones? How do these students perceive official narratives? Do these students tend to master the official narratives, and if not then why? Do they appropriate the official narratives (insert their own voices), or do they resist or even reject them? If students are taught how to resist and/or reject the

official narratives, how can they use this resistance to engender social action? Research along these lines opens up the possibility for social justice and action in any society. This same line of questioning can be applied to issues of gender because official narratives tend to omit the voices of women.

Teachers often rely on textbooks in schools. Textbooks, in turn, are likely to be filled with official narratives of historical events and issues. Thus students tend to hear the official narratives repeatedly throughout their school careers. The authority wielded by textbooks and by the official narratives they contain is strong, and students are supposed to believe that this authority is to be respected and accepted. Many students do not challenge these “authorized” texts. For example, one of my participants considers textbooks as the most important source due to their less unbiased nature. This participant is a French speaking 24 year old female student:

My information sources are TV, quite a lot of CNN and also textbooks for various sources, as well as class discussions on the topic. The most important source has been textbook information, as it was less biased or tainted with personal opinion. (Participant #12)

In addition, students generally tend to think that the discipline of history is about remembering facts, so their understanding of history tends to be superficial. Unfortunately, this perception of history seems to be reinforced by current practices in standardized testing. With the help of small narratives such as those provided by my research project, students can learn how to read critically these authorized texts. Teachers can help students to understand that all narratives represent someone’s interpretation of historical events, and as such, are open to misinterpretations, mistakes, and challenges. A wider range of narratives from various perspectives (including those of women and minority populations) may help students develop historical consciousness, by inserting their own voices into the process of learning. My research

project may help teachers teach students how to use collective narratives with different perspectives as thinking devices. More specifically, it may help both teachers and students to learn to question how, by whom, and for whom these narratives are produced, consumed, and used. Once students learn to compare the dominant narratives of collective memory and collective narratives of memory, then they can use their knowledge to change the world around them. My research may help teachers and students to use their knowledge of locally situated narratives. It would also be beneficial to investigate which voices do students tend to accept and which do they tend to reject? How can students learn to pay attention to a wide range of voices, particularly those that have been previously silenced?

Another implication of my research project is that it may also be helpful to investigate how narratives of collective memory, that teachers have appropriated, impact their teaching. If teachers can include alternative voices in their teaching, beyond the official narratives and schematic narrative templates found in so many social studies and history textbooks, would their students be successful in using these narratives as tools for interpreting and understanding their past and present? Would the students of these teachers be more likely to develop and demonstrate deeper historical consciousness? How can teachers teach complex and emotional issues like wars and terrorism in meaningful ways in classes that have Muslim students, students who have lost their loved ones in this war, and a large number of students in the middle, for whom it is a phenomenon of far away. Where would they begin with?

This study finds that the wider cultural discourse that is at the heart of a collective identity is the narrative of Canadian nationalism. These findings put forward a new direction of investigation into which teachers can venture by exploring the questions: Why and how has this wider cultural discourse of Canadian nationalism become so dominant in the minds of Canadian

young people? What roles do teachers play in the construction of this discourse? What is the importance of the deixis that includes certain people in the imagined community of nation and excludes some other people in the construction of an inclusive environment in the classroom?

I hope this work will give rise to new questions about the nature of collective memories, issues around identities, the importance of social groups or “interpretative communities” in the process of learning and remembering, and in particular about the importance of the lived experiences of “young people” in academy as well as in society. On the basis of the evidence gathered in my research project, I argue that my participants show their ability of entering into a dialogic contact with different representation of “the War on Terror”.. These narratives of young people in Canada with multiple, and sometimes overlapping perspectives, offer the benefit of using texts as thinking devices. Most of these narratives invite readers into a dialogic contact with different voices. In the end, I conclude this project with the voices of some young people in Canada who participate in my study. Perhaps all Canadians need to take seriously the meanings created by the members of the generation that came of age during “the War on Terror”:

It seems to me a bit ridiculous to give it a label such as “The War on Terror” because how, exactly, does one combat TERROR itself? It’s one thing to target individuals who have committed so-called “acts of terror” but to go to war with terror itself? It’s like declaring a war on hell. Good luck. It’s difficult to understand why something like 9/11 happens, but I was immediately wondering—why? Then, news of Bush and his “War on Terror” came to control the world. Another U.S. President was trying to police the world. I realized that he and his country were hurt, but why do they always tell you that violence is never the answer? It seems a bit hypocritical to me, you can’t fight fire with fire. Then news of innocent people being killed and wounded became a routine. Was the War on Terror supposed to create more terror? Because that’s what it did for many people. For me, the War on Terror marks a blemish in the progress we have made in the world so far. You can’t FIGHT FOR PEACE. How does that make any sense? Peace does not involve violence; you cannot fight on its name. These no-fly lists and exceptions to imprison

people for long periods WITHOUT A TRIAL. It seems like we have taken a huge step backwards. (Participant # 46)

Killing is cruel, demonic, and animalistic. But the War on Terror is definitely not an answer for this. I am against any type of war what so ever. However, I almost know that this war is doing the same with people...People are just exploiting this monster to get the almighty dollar. Media's role is disgusting and these are the attitudes that will never end this war because this war is providing new means of profit for these people. In Vietnam, there was such an outcry for peace and if we want to end this ugly thing then we must repeat history and stand up against it. (Participant #66)

I see that the war has been with us since the beginning of time, in the Stone Age etc... That's why war for me is the conflict between those people who want to become the leaders... People fight to gain something, something they want and dream off. But they always forget about consequences that come with their actions. That's how the terror of war comes from. War is the ultimate result of the greed of people who sometimes don't even see before their noses. Leaders' greed makes people dream of perfection and prosperity. But people who follow them don't see the truth behind the dirty work of their leaders. Soldiers are the same as slaves of the high authority. They are being cheated and promised of a world that even in the end won't come true. [The] War on Terror is not just a word that does not mean anything. On the other hand, it means a lot to handle. (Participant # 86)

I think the War on Terror is devastating. Wars in general make me sick and the fact that I am living through one is surreal to me. I do not fully understand the reasons behind the War on Terror—not all of them, anyways. I know there are many parts being kept from the public, and many parts being manipulated to instil fear within us...I see a lot of misguided citizens, a lot of hurt and loneliness and a lot of deaths. I wish I could come up with a win-win solution so this war would end—I live in fear of what has to come in the next months. (Participant # 37)

I am appealed by the fact that [the] U.S.A. and Canada, both [are] trying to convey themselves as heroic countries, while [the] U.S. is trying to invade many countries on the name of the War on Terror. Terror is a very strong fear. Living in fear 24/7 is not the way one should live. And most of the time terror is used to control societies in human history. What we have seen in the name of this war is that much being done to control other peoples' lives. (Participant #38)

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**APPENDIX A: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE PROFESSOR**

**Name:** Farhat Shahzad

**Program of Study:** Ph.D.

**Faculty:** Education

**University:** University of Ottawa

**Research supervisor:** Dr. Timothy Stanley

**The topic of my study:** The War on Terror: Making of collective memory by young Canadian people.

**The purpose of my study:** I am researching young Canadian people's understanding of "the War on Terror", research that deals with their memories of and their experiences in relation to "the War on Terror". I will use narratives written by your students to understand how they make collective memories of "the War on Terror" and, what sources of information they have used to understand this war. I will ask your students to write their own narratives of "the War on Terror" to explain how they understand and experience it.

**The level of researcher's intervention:** I will be waiting outside the classroom while the participants will be busy writing their narratives. I will put a box in your classroom where your students can deposit their narratives that I will pick up after the class.

**The nature of participation in this study:** The participants will be given an information letter, a consent form, the demographic questionnaire and, a small set of sub-questions. I will ask your students to write down their narratives in the light of these sub-questions about "the War on Terror".

**APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR THE PERMISSION**

Dear professor

My name is Farhat Shahzad. I am a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Education working under the supervision of Dr. Timothy Stanley. I am researching young Canadian people's understanding of "the War on Terror", in particular how they make collective memories of the war.

I am contacting you because I need your assistance to complete my doctoral research. This Fall you are teaching a relatively large course whose subject matter is such that it is likely to register students who might be interested in participating in my project. The information that I will be collecting is about their personal experiences in relation to "the War on Terror" and is not related to the specifics of your course or of your teaching (I attached a copy of research instrument for your references). All responses will be anonymous and any identifying information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

If you agree to give me access to your class, I will need no more than an hour of class time (about 5 minutes to explain my project and 55 minutes for participants to respond). I will arrange this at a time of your convenience. Once I have completed my analysis, I would be delighted to share my findings with you and your students.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research now or at any time throughout the study, please email me . To indicate your permission in this study, please sign the permission letter. Keep one copy of the permission letter for yourself and forward the other two to me.

Farhat Shahzad  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

Dr. Timothy Stanley  
Thesis Supervisor  
University of Ottawa

**APPENDIX C: THE PERMISSION LETTER**

I have read and understood the request for my permission to recruit the participants from my class.

I, (Professor's name) \_\_\_\_\_, permit the researcher (Farhat Shahzad of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Timothy Stanley) to recruit the participants from my course \_\_\_\_\_, and allow the researcher to take an hour of my class for data collection in the form of written narratives about "the War on Terror". I understand that neither my students, myself, my department, nor my University would be identified.

There are three copies of the permission letter, one of which is mine to keep, the second copy will be kept in the researcher's office in a locked cabinet, and the third one will be sent to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa.

Signature of the Professor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS**

**Name:** Farhat Shahzad

**Program of Study:** Ph.D.

**Faculty:** Education

**University:** University of Ottawa

**Research supervisor:** Dr. Timothy Stanley

**The topic of my study:** The War on Terror: Making of collective memory by young Canadian people.

**The purpose of my study:** I am researching young Canadian people's understanding of "the War on Terror", research that deals with your memories of and your experiences in relation to "the War on Terror". I want you to write a narrative about "the War on Terror". The purpose of my study is to listen your stories and experiences in relation to "the War on Terror" and, to understand "the War on Terror" from your perspective, and what sources of information you use to understand "the War on Terror".

**The level of researcher's intervention:** I will wait outside the classroom while you will be busy writing your narratives. I will put a box where you can deposit your papers that I will pick up after the class.

**The nature of participation in this study:** Phase 1: I will give you consent form 1, a demographic questionnaire and a small set of sub-questions, and will ask you to write your narratives about "the War on Terror" in the light of these sub-questions. If you are not willing to participate in the research, you do not have to complete the questionnaire or the consent form. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from this project at any time, and may choose not to answer any or all questions.

Phase 2: I will conduct the follow-up interviews with a sample of those participants who will agree to be interviewed. I will contact only those participants who are willing to participate in the follow-up interviews for the second phase of data collection. Before participating in the interview you will be asked to fill and sign a second consent form. The interviews will be face to face and audio taped. Participants in the interviews will be asked to discuss their personal experiences and understanding of “the War on Terror”. After the interview, the participants will be given a transcript of the interview as soon as possible for their approval. I will send the transcripts by email and make sure that they are password protected so that nobody else than the participants can have access to the document. I will use and analyze approved transcripts only. Participants may withdraw from this project at any time, and may choose not to answer any or all questions. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your interview will not be used. However, your involvement in this study will permit you to reflect on your personal experiences and to critically analyze emergent histories. The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board has approved this research. Any information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project may be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research at the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room No. 159 (613-562-5841) or e-mail at [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca) or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Timothy Stanley

Dr. Stanley is an Associate Professor and Vice Dean (academic programs) in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. If you have any questions about this research now or at any time throughout the study, please email me To indicate your  
 decision to participate in this study, please sign the consent form and fill the demographic  
 questionnaire.

Farhat Shahzad  
 Faculty of Education  
 University of Ottawa

Dr. Timothy Stanley  
 Thesis Supervisor  
 University of Ottawa

**APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM 1 (TO BE FILLED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS)**

Researcher: Farhat Shahzad

Name of the thesis supervisor: Timothy Stanley  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in a research that deals with my memories of and sense of “the War on Terror” as a part of the research study entitled “The War on Terror: Making of collective memory by young Canadian people” conducted by Farhat Shahzad.

**Purpose of Participation:** The purpose of the study is to research young people’s understanding of “the War on Terror”. I am being asked to write a narrative about “the War on Terror” to understand “the War on Terror” from my perspective and, to understand what sources of information I used to understand “the War on Terror”. I understand that this research will deal with my memories and sense of “the War on Terror” that I got from different sources of information.

**Participation:** I am willing to participate in this study. I understand that I will be asked to complete a demographic letter and the consent form 1, and then I will be asked to write a narrative about “the War on Terror” in approximately 30 minutes. I understand that the nature of the topic discussed is controversial. I may experience some discomfort, however, the researcher has assured me that she will do anything to minimize this discomfort including measures for confidentiality and anonymity. She has assured me that if I feel any emotional strain or anxiety, she will refer me to a counselor.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that the information that I provide will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for

understanding my written text in the form of narratives about “the War on Terror”, and that my confidentiality will be protected.

**Anonymity:** The data will be handled and communicated with great care. My name, identifying characteristics and affiliations will be altered to maintain my anonymity.

**Conservation of data:** I know that the data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Dr. Timothy Stanley’s office. All data will be destroyed after five years.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed immediately. I have read and understood the request for my participation in the study.

**Acceptance:** I, (please print your name) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Farhat Shahzad of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Timothy Stanley (Associate Professor of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa) I certify that I am 18 years of age or older and that I understand the nature of the research. I understand that by accepting to participate, I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I know that the researcher will send me the transcripts for review by a password protected email so that nobody else than myself can have access to the document.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the numbers mentioned above. If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, (Pavillon Tabaret Hall), Salle/ Room 159. Ottawa, ON. K1N 6N5 Tel: (613) 562-5841, Fax: (613) 562-5318 or [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca).

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to receive the transcripts, which will be sent to me by the researcher.

Yes     No

If yes, please provide an e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

(The researcher will send you password protected transcripts so that nobody else than you can have access to the document)

**APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM 2 (TO BE FILLED BY THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW)**

Researcher: Farhat Shahzad

Name of the thesis supervisor: Timothy Stanley  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in a follow-up interview as a part of the research study entitled “The War on Terror: Making of collective memory by young Canadian people” conducted by Farhat Shahzad.

**Purpose Participation:** The purpose of the follow-up interview is to discuss in detail the narrative text written by me.

**Participation:** I am willing to participate in this study. I will be interviewed for 1 to 2 hours during which I will be asked to expand, clarify and/or discuss in depth my feelings, and experiences in relation to “the War on Terror” and the sources of information I used. Questions during the interview will be mostly conversational. I understand that the nature of the topic discussed is controversial. I may experience some discomfort, however, the researcher has assured me that she will do anything to minimize this discomfort including measures for confidentiality and anonymity. She has assured me that if I feel any emotional strain or anxiety during the interview, she will refer me to a counsellor.

**Confidentiality:** I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for understanding my written text about “the War on Terror”, and that my confidentiality will be protected.

**Anonymity:** The data will be handled and communicated with great care. My name, identifying characteristics and affiliations will be altered to maintain my anonymity.

**Conservation of data:** I know that the data will be kept in a locked cabinet in Dr. Timothy Stanley's office. All data will be destroyed after five years.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed immediately.

**Acceptance:** I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Farhat Shahzad of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, under the supervision of Dr. Timothy Stanley (Associate Professor of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa). I understand that by accepting to participate, I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study. I know that the researcher will send me the transcripts for review by a password protected email so that nobody else than myself can have access to the document.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at the numbers mentioned above. If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, (Pavillon Tabaret Hall), Salle/ Room 159, Ottawa, ON. K1N 6N5 Room, Phone: (613) 562-5841, Fax: (613) 562-5318 or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please complete the following detail. All responses will be kept confidential.

Section A: Please complete the following (optional):

1. Gender: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_
2. Religion: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Language spoken at home: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
6. The name and the location of your high school \_\_\_\_\_
7. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ethnic background: \_\_\_\_\_

Section B: If you are willing to participate in a follow-up interview to expand on your written responses, please complete the following (optional):

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Email address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Before participating in the interview, you will be asked to fill and sign the second consent form. I will contact you at a later date to either arrange an interview or to thank you for your assistance in my project.)

**APPENDIX H: SUB-QUESTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS**

To stimulate my participants' memories and to generate narratives about "the War on Terror" I will give them the following sub-questions:

1. Please write a short essay on: What has been the course of "the War on Terror" from its beginning until today, the way you see it, you remember it and you experience it? How has "the War on Terror" affected you?

2. From where did you get your information about "the War on Terror"? Such as:

(Please tick mark the source(s) you use)

a. Internet: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_

c. TV: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Radio: \_\_\_\_\_

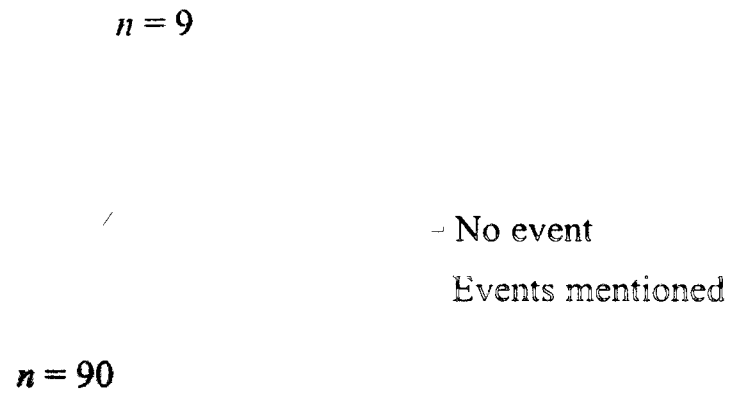
e. Peers: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Any other source (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

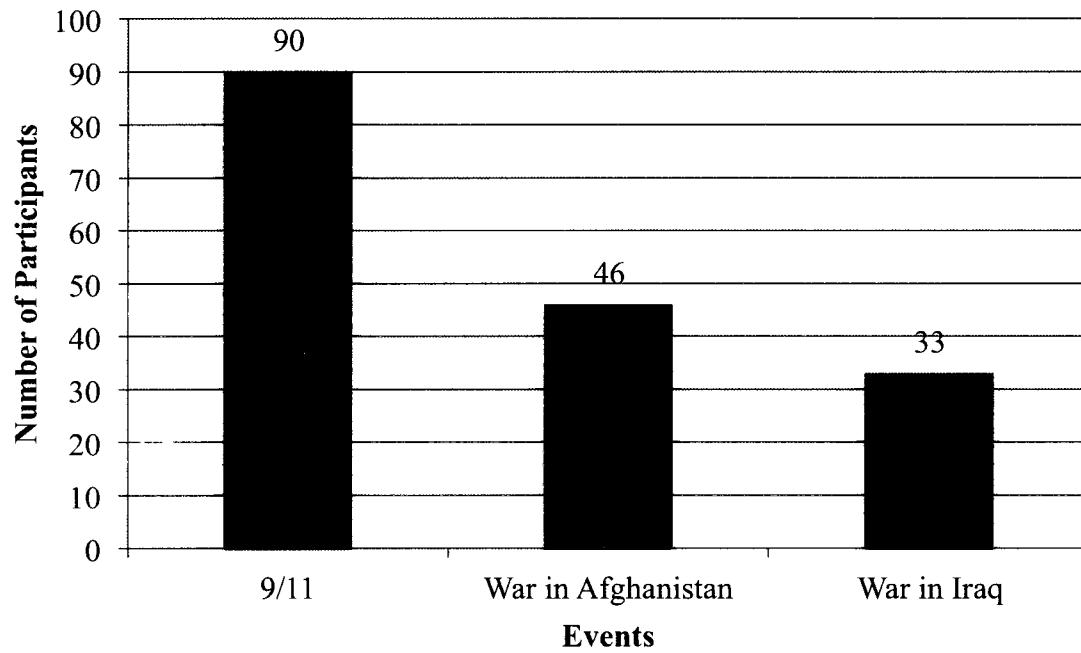
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of these sources are the most important one for your understanding of "the War on Terror"? Briefly explain how you used them and why.

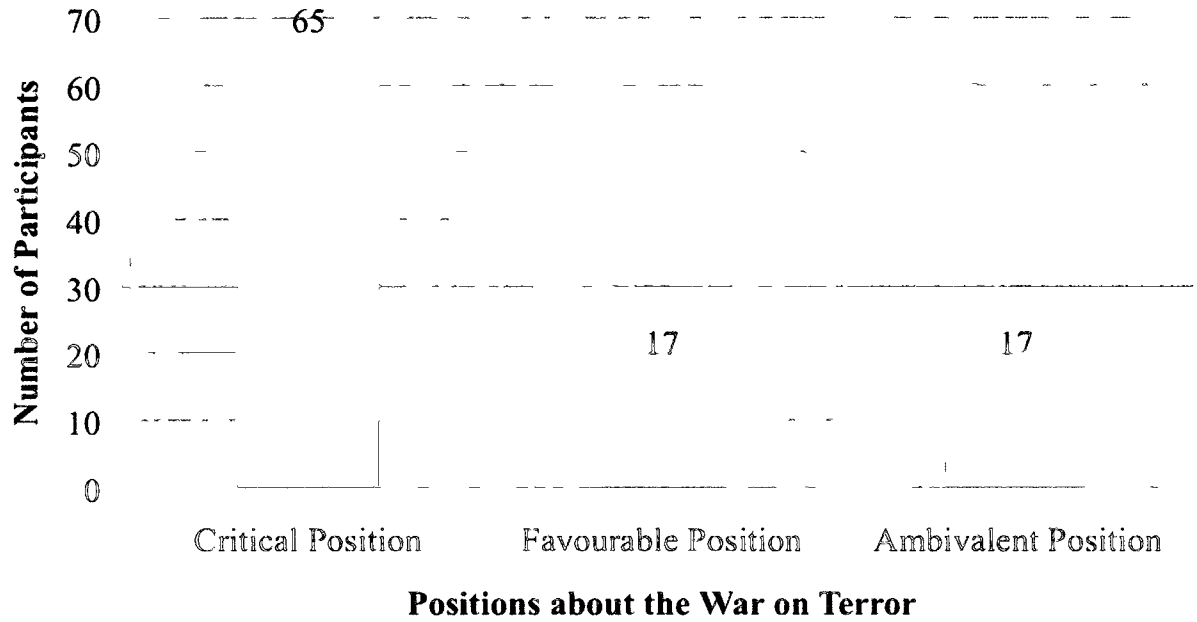
**GRAPH 1: REPRESENTATIONS OF EVENTS IN THE NARRATIVES OF 99 PARTICIPANTS**



**GRAPH 2: MAIN EVENTS REPRESENTED IN THE NARRATIVES OF MY PARTICIPANTS**



**GRAPH 3: POLITICAL POSITIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE WAR ON TERROR**



**GRAPH 4: THE PURPOSE OF THE WAR ON TERROR AS REPRESENTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS**

