

We dedicate this issue to the victims of September 11th, and to the hope that there will be no future victims. Every newspaper, magazine, celebrity, and advertisement has weighed in on the tragedy of that day. With so much information being given us, it can be hard to gain a deep understanding of what exactly happened and why on September 11th, 2001, and what our response should now be.

*The opinion piece below weighs in on how this kind of understanding can best be gained. While the media coverage has been fairly one-sided in it's call for violence, a few media providers stand out as exceptions. I recommend reading *The Nation* (www.thenation.com), *The Progressive* (www.progressive.org), and *Thomas Paine* (www.tompaine.com) to balance your perspective. I hope that all of this will help you in becoming a more informed citizen.*

*Quinten Steenbuis,
Progressive Student Alliance*

Rhetoric and Facts in the Media

In the media, complex manipulations and proclamations have made. Are the facts being misrepresented? Is rhetoric being used to "vague-ify" strong messages. What are these messages? And in "vague-ifying," are the government and media subtly suggesting and enforcing strong messages?

In this article, I hope to introduce and present not only the facts, but a way of educating the public on how to process, understand, and possibly question facts contained or omitted in the vague discourse of the media. I am part of SPA, Students for Peaceful justice, and I will be working on the media, specifically from a linguistic and rhetorical perspective. [Note: Media analysis here was not done with intentions of finding something specific. It should be done objectively in a manner which does not seek out what one hopes to find.] A close analysis should be done under the assumption that the grammatical choices people make, especially in planned public discourse, are strategic, rhetorical choices.

From the discourse analyses of 10 articles (comprised of Bush's speeches and news articles), the vocabulary and grammatical features make several suggestions. First of all, there are myriad examples of violent vocabulary ("war, fury, rage). These words were used to describe or prescribe what we

should feel (revenge) or do (destroy, defeat, destruct). A Time Magazine article reads "What's needed is a unified, unifying....purple American fury- a ruthless indignation that doesn't leak away in a week or two." The grammar analysis and the content of Bush's third speech show that the U.S. has had no part in the reasons for these actions, that we were simply victims of a large-scale hate crime. There has been little discussion of why the terrorists acts happened, or what the U.S. should do besides "retaliate."

Furthermore, the terrorist acts have been described as "cowardly" or "mindless" (all from Bush's first speech, 9/11). Susan Sontag, an influential figure in the fields of language and literature, was criticized for her commentary on the fact that the

word "cowardly," in the Oxford English Dictionary does not correspond to the usage adopted by President Bush. What kind of freedom of expression and speech does not allow us to have unbiased media, to see the other side of the story and hear both sides?

Can we say that these discourses map onto the reality? I believe that words, used to describe so-called facts, are being manipulated to suit the government's and media's purposes. These discourses seem rather limited in their content and scope, which suggests that the media and the government are succeeding in being vague, and therefore, leaving us to interpret, without facts and clarity, the meaning and motivation behind their words.

For more on this article: see <http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/~psa/spa>

Renewable Energy and Terrorism

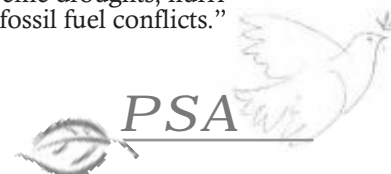
The following quotes are excerpts from an article by Prof. Steve Breyman, Director of the Economics, Values, and Policy Program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

"We did not learn a major lesson of the Gulf War: drastically reduce our dependence on imported petroleum so that America's sons and daughters will never again need to shed their blood for oil."

"Much of US military strategy and force structure came to revolve around the preservation of the anti-democratic oil sheikdoms....The

seemingly permanent US military presence in the Gulf is a chronic irritant in American relations with a significant sector of the peoples of the region, and has increased our vulnerability to terrorism"

"How to avoid the recurring tragedies that inevitable accompany our oil habit? Part of the answer is simple and straightforward: Kick the habit. Let's make the shift to clean energy now, not later after the polar icecaps melt, and we suffer through further extreme droughts, hurricanes, and fossil fuel conflicts."



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“How to avoid the recurring tragedies that inevitable accompany our oil habit? Part of the answer is simple and straightforward: Kick the habit. Let’s make the shift to clean energy now, not later after the polar icecaps melt, and we suffer through further extreme droughts, hurricanes, and fossil fuel conflicts.”

“The answer to our energy woes is neither to commence oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge nor to increase offshore oil drilling. The answer to our energy troubles is not to build more nuclear power plants—themselves potential targets for terrorist attack. Only a rapid and far-reaching transition to renewable energy will ensure US energy security and prevent future oil wars.

Our shift to renewables is a question of when, rather than whether. Making the move sooner rather than later will pay off through cleaner air and water, stabilized climate, and improved human and ecosystem health. Switching to green energy is also one of the most important steps we can take to safeguard our long-term national security.”

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