REPRESENTATIONS OF PAIN
IN "WAR AGAINST TERRORISM" PEDAGOGIES

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Abstract

This paper discusses representations of war and pain in on-line instructional materials which deal with the Iraq war. It particularly explores how the issue of pain can be treated pedagogically in the classroom by analyzing a corpus of on-line media texts that students are invited to read and related educational activities they are involved in. The paper aims to contribute to a broader research question which concerns the pedagogic instrumentation of on-line materials and programs. It views representations as recontextualizations of social events and argues that pedagogic discourses with different ideological positioning draw on different representations of war and contribute to the construction of different pedagogic subjects.

Keywords: representations of pain, war pedagogies, curriculum, on-line instructional materials, media texts, pedagogic identities

1. Introduction

After September 11, a wealth of instructional materials were produced in order to help young Americans deal with the complex issues related to "war against terrorism" (Apple 2002). Among them are materials produced by educational websites which have made available, in their teacher resources section, a number of lesson plans, suggested activities and other teaching materials illustrating how to use featured articles, reports, editorials and other media texts in the classroom.

This paper analyzes media texts and their accompanying educational materials that deal with the theme of "war against terrorism" in order to explore representations of pain in instructional materials. While there is an important body of media research which portrays pain and suffering (see,

for instance, Chouliaraki 2006; Silverstone 2007), discourse analytic research exploring Sept. 11 attacks (see, among others, Chilton 2002; 2004; Silberstein 2004) and the Iraq war (see, for instance, Graham and Luke 2005; Fairclough 2005; van Dijk 2005), as well as a few detailed linguistic analyses of the language of pain (Halliday 1998; Lascaratou 2007), there have not been systematic research accounts on how pain is handled pedagogically in times of crisis. This study focuses on the texts that students are invited to read and on the ways these texts deal with the issue of pain, aiming to explore what "reading of the world" (Freire and Macedo 1987) they entail. In particular, it attempts to provide answers to the following questions: How is the "war against terrorism" handled pedagogically in the texts students are invited to read? What can be said about the *content* of the articles and the *types of activities* which accompany them? Which representations of pain are recontextualized in the suggested curricula? To what extent is pain backgrounded or foregrounded in the instructional materials examined?

The study draws its materials from two websites, namely, *NewsHour Extra* (www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/) and *Rethinking Schools* (www.rethinkingschools.org). *NewsHour Extra* is an interactive portal which, according to its mission statement, brings current events and issues into the classroom in order to improve students' thinking and analytical skills. Its resources for secondary teachers and educators currently feature more than 150 lesson plans on current events and *NewsHour Extra* stories especially written for students, which are based on world news broadcast on PBS,[1] as well as articles and reports from the *Online NewsHour*, a news coverage site on the Internet. *Rethinking Schools* is an activist non-profit, independent publisher of educational materials which views public education as central to "the creation of a humane, caring, multi-racial democracy" and advocates the reform of U.S. elementary and secondary schools. The overall purpose of its published materials, according to its editors, is to prepare students for a democratic participation and for active citizenship. The website includes a variety of teaching materials, ideas and lesson plans, articles for teachers, parents, and students, which deal with a variety of issues including issues of race and, more recently, issues concerning the "war against terrorism."

Both sites have made available teaching material on the recent situation in Iraq but have actually positioned themselves quite differently. *NewsHour* has implicitly taken a pro-war position, especially on the first days of the war, and, through its lesson plans and the accompanying teaching materials, it has made young Americans understand "the decision to go to war" and to inform them about the official US position.

Rethinking Schools, on the other hand, has openly adopted a position against the war and, through its teaching materials, it has attempted to provide students with an alternative view of the war. In Mitsikopoulou and Koutsogiannis (2005), these teaching materials were analyzed so as to investigate how broad political issues, such as those surrounding the Iraq issues, are materialized in more everyday practices (i.e. classroom teaching). The analysis focused on exploring how opposite positions about the war are handled pedagogically, and the extent to which they imply different theories of instruction and different pedagogic subjects (Bernstein 1996, 47). The study concluded that the two sites actually draw on different pedagogic discourses: *NewsHour* draws systematically on a dominant pedagogic discourse, one which attempts to "unite two worlds," the students' and teachers' world with the world of the official U.S. administration, restricting the possibility of creating what Bernstein (1996, 44) has called a "potential discursive gap." This pedagogic discourse places emphasis on the attainment of national standards, on the production and consumption of technical documents and on the preparation of students as good patriots. On the other hand, *Rethinking Schools* has been found to draw on a critical pedagogic discourse, one which seems to enhance the creation of a "potential discursive gap" in an attempt to shape differently thinking pedagogic subjects. This discourse articulates a critical stance towards the official U.S. politics concerning the war and suggests an alternative pedagogy, urging students towards the "yet to be thought" (Bernstein 1996, 44).

Elaborating on the findings of the earlier study (Mitsikopoulou and Koutsogiannis 2005), this paper explores how the two identified pedagogic discourses deal with the issue of pain and suffering brought about by war. The present study is based on the assumption that since the two pedagogic discourses have been found to be ideologically and politically grounded, reflective of the wider political conflict, they will most probably treat the issue of pain in "war against terrorism" differently.

2. Theoretical resources and analytic tools

In her seminal work *The Body in Pain*, Scarry (1985, 63) argues that war belongs to two larger categories of human experience: it is a form of violence whose activity is injuring and it is a form of contest whose goal is to out-injure the opponent. However, she notices that quite often war as injury is omitted or holds a marginal position in policy, historical documents, and accounts of war. Her analysis reveals how injuring disappears from the surface of discourse (by being completely omitted or

by being renamed) or how through the use of metaphors it holds a marginal position, according to which injuring is a by-product of war (the "production" metaphor); it occurs on the road to another goal (the "road" metaphor); it is transformed into freedom (the "cost" metaphor); it is a continual act of extension, for instance, the continuation of peace by other means (the "extension" metaphor).

In addition, according to Scarry, war is a kind of contest in which participants "arrange themselves into two sides and engage in an activity that will eventually make it possible to designate one side the winner and the other side the loser" (*ibid*., 87). It is this activity of reciprocal injuring––whose goal is to out-injure the opponent—which will actually identify a winner and a loser. Therefore, Scarry argues, the language of contest is crucial here as it registers the central fact of reciprocity.

Combining Scarry's views with a critical discourse analytic perspective, this study attempts to explore representations of pain in the pedagogic discourses of *NewsHour* and *Rethinking Schools*. Given that social events are represented in texts, we will look at the types of representations which are selected to represent war and pain. However, when we represent a social event we also recontextualize it, since we are incorporating it in the context of another social event. Drawing on Bernstein's (1990) work, Fairclough (2003, 139) argues that social events are recontextualized according to specific "principles," known as "recontextualizing principles" which "underlie differences between the ways in which a particular type of social event is represented". He further suggests that social events are selectively "filtered" according to four main principles: *presence* (which events are excluded or included); *abstraction* (how abstractly or concretely events are represented); *arrangement* (in what order events are represented); and *additions* (to the representation of events, such as explanations, legitimations, evaluations). Whereas the purpose of the present study has not been to investigate the data in terms of all four types of representations, emphasis having been placed on the first of the principles in particular, i.e. that of *presence*, Fairclough's account of representations has provided the necessary discourse analytic tool for the analysis of pain in the two pedagogic discourses. Specifically, an analysis of representations will be attempted on the basis of the two angles identified by Scarry: war as injury and war as contest. Assuming after van Dijk (1998) that discourse structures may be used in the production and reproduction of ideologies and taking into account the different ideological positioning of the two websites, it is expected that the two pedagogic discourses will draw on different representations and

employ different linguistic resources and modes of meaning (van Leeuwen 1996, 34).

3. Representations of pain in *NewsHour*

The data which will be analyzed from the *NewsHour* website come from one thematic area entitled "The rights of detainees at Guantanamo Bay" and consist of a detailed five-page long lesson plan for teachers, 12 related readings (articles, editorials, reports and interviews published in *NewsHour* portal), handouts with reading comprehension activities for the readings and their related teachers' handouts. The particular corpus of materials was retrieved in Spring 2004 when tortures at Guantanamo Bay and other prisons abroad were revealed by the media, something which caused heated debate especially in the U.S. Videos and pictures circulated through the Internet and various featured articles, news reports, editorials, analysis articles, interviews with prisoners, journalists and US officials appeared in the press.

3.1. The backgrounding of human suffering

The most outstanding characteristic of the articles students are invited to read in *NewsHour* lesson is the omission of any reference to human suffering and ill treatment of the prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. This omission of human suffering is quite interestingly replaced by positive accounts of Guantanamo. At a time when extensive media coverages revealed tortures and bad living conditions of the prisoners, the readings for students mainly focus on the prisoners' satisfactory living conditions, the good quality of food and medical treatment offered to them, the care for their religion and the special treatment of teenagers. A few of the texts then presented Guantanamo Bay as an idealized place which resembles a recreational place rather than a prison camp. First, Guantanamo Bay is represented as a "slice of America,"

> M.W.: Now tell us about the camp itself. I gather security is incredibly tight.
> REPORTER: Remember, this is a strange place anyway, the naval base at Guantanamo Bay. It's on the southeastern part of Cuba. …And like a lot of military bases, it's a little slice of America, with McDonald's and a subway and a PX.[2] But the camp, the prison camp is kept in one remote corner. It's behind these mountains. *(Inside Guantanamo)*[3]

Details are also given of the prisoners' living conditions. We are informed that when prisoners arrive, they are "issued an orange jumpsuit, a pair of sandals, towels and personal grooming items such as soap and shampoo" and stay in cells which are approximately eight-by-seven, they have a flush toilet, a small washbasin, a metal bed, a mattress, sheets and blankets. The experienced commander of the prison is stated to pay attention to details, "right down to the toothpaste" *(Update: The detainees)*. In several articles, reference is made to the "recreational period:" "for two or three 15-20-minute periods a week they are let out individually for showers and some simple exercise in a little... just a little area, and they usually kick around a soccer ball" *(Inside Guantanamo),* "they can go out and walk around and do calisthenics and anything that they might want to do inside the recreational center." *(Update: The detainees)*

The texts further stress the degree of consideration for the prisoners' religions which is taken by prison authorities:

> And the military is very eager to demonstrate tolerance of Islam, so each cell, the inmate has a copy of the Koran… beads, oils, for prayer. And it's the only military base in the nation or abroad in which the Muslim call to prayer rings out five times a day from the loudspeaker. *(Inside Guantanamo)*

> The Americans have gone to considerable lengths to provide only food deemed to be halal under the strict requirements of Islam, and each cot is etched with an arrow to indicate the direction of Mecca, which Muslims face in prayer. *(Guantanamo Bay on trial)*

Extensive reference to the good quality of food focuses on the types of meals offered to prisoners, the effects of good meals on malnourished prisoners and changes of the prison program for the feeding hours during fasting periods:

> REPORTER: The food distributed to the inmates is prepared according to Muslim religious requirements. The diet is Middle Eastern.
> J. K.: This is fish stew that will go on rice, plus the vegetables. They will also get a baguette, a French baguette, a small roll, bread. They'll get milk, they'll get a piece of fruit, and there will be additional cake served as well.
> REPORTER: Because of the diet, officials say, detainees, many of whom arrived malnourished, have gained an average of 13 pounds. Navy Commander T.C.D. is the base supply officer. He says it was his idea to serve the detainees culturally appropriate meals. *(Update: The detainees)*

M.W.: You talk about trying to be culturally sensitive in terms what was they had in the cells. What about the food?
REPORTER: Well, they're served three meals a day, two of them hot… they're pretty good meals by some standards. The camp went out of its way during Ramadan to serve them breakfast quite early before dawn, because they... most of them fast, and something of a larger meal or a feast later. *(Inside Guantanamo)*

NewsHour articles also stress the special care taken of the underage prisoners. We are informed that three prisoners, at the ages of 13 to 16, are kept in a special house which is not locked, and they live there communally taking lessons in the native language, Pashto *(Inside Guantanamo)*. A 14-year old who was released from Guantanamo is reported to have said "I am lucky I went there, and now I miss it. Cuba was great." He describes his typical day as including watching movies, playing football with the guards and going to classes for Pashto, English, Arabic, maths, science, and art. As stated in the text "He was fascinated to learn about the solar system, and now enjoys reciting the names of the planets, starting with Earth." *(Cuba? It was great)*

Similarly, prisoners are reported to have good quality medical care probably for the first time in their life. According to the texts, there is a traditional patient—care-giver relationship in which "the same doctors and nurses who treat the general base population also provide medical care to detainees" who are stated to be "very appreciative of the care they receive." *(Update: The detainees)*

Moreover, in addition to the overall positive picture of Guantanamo Bay prison, there is also an exclusion of any suspicion concerning prisoners' mistreatment:

REPORTER: Yes, I actually interviewed the head of the Washington Office of the International Committee of the Red Cross, …[he] said publicly that the conditions at the camp were just unacceptable.
M.W.: But I gather he wasn't so much talking about physical conditions as the... what—the sort of uncertainty of their condition?
REPORTER: Indeed. He had no public complaints about the physical conditions—torture, food, any of those kind of things that the Red Cross usually deals with. His complaint, and the committee's complaint, is a far broader and in a sense more subtle complaint that these people are being held indefinitely with no sense of what the legal process is. *(Inside Guantanamo)*

Prisoners, on the other hand, are represented as passive entities, "detainees," as also the stative verb "remain" indicates in the following

extract from the lesson plan: "After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. moved about 600 captured prisoners to Guantanamo Bay. Most have remained there for the past two years without being charged with crimes or being given hearings." Notice also that the lack of agent of who made them "remain" in the above clause construes it as if it was their choice to stay there. A very different representation would have been employed, for instance, through the use of "keep" instead, as in "Most have been kept there for the past two years." Overall, systematic exclusion of any types of representations of pain characterizes most *NewsHour* texts which instead choose to focus on describing the good conditions at Guantanamo Bay. This selection is highly ideological and important, considering the time period that these texts appeared: shortly after videos with tortures were made available worldwide.

3.2. The foregrounding of war as contest

While, on the one hand, *NewsHour* texts background injuring and omit any reference to human suffering, on the other hand, they foreground the element of war as contest. They do so in several different ways. First, by emphasizing the importance of out-winning the opponent through contest vocabulary in which naming is important. Positive evaluative words are attributed to American soldiers who are repeatedly called "freedom fighters" whereas negative evaluations are attributed to prisoners who are called "enemy combatants" *(War liberties)*, "unlawful combatants," "terror suspects" *(Military tribunals)*. War as contest is thus emphasized through the systematic construction of polarizing subject positions of *us* ("U.S. troops," "innocent people") versus *them*, "our enemy," as in the following extract:

> Images of 9/11 abound at Gitmo. In the room guards use to send e-mails home, a poster showing the World Trade Center cautions, "Are you in a New York state of mind? Don't leak information—our enemy can use it to kill U.S. troops or more innocent people." *(Guantanamo Bay on trial)*

Here we often find what Scarry (1985) has identified as the "road" and the "cost" metaphors which are employed in projecting the contest element of war and in construing patriotic feelings. According to these metaphors, war is the cost we have to pay in order to achieve peace, or it occurs on the road to peace. As one of the members of the intelligence service at the camp stated to a reporter, "We are developing information of enormous value to the nation," "We think we're fighting not only to save and protect our families, but your families also" *(Guantanamo Bay on trial)*.

In this account, we have a few negative representations of the prisoners who are represented as savages or "spoiled brats" who are in need of discipline:

> REPORTER: ….Guards say that in the early days, when prisoners first arrived, detainees spat, yelled at, and threw urine at them, but that now a cool and correct relationship prevails. *(Update: The detainees)*

> In the camp's acute ward, a young man lies chained to his bed, being fed protein-and-vitamin mush through a stomach tube inserted via a nostril. "He's refused to eat 148 consecutive meals", says Dr. Louis Louk, a naval surgeon from Florida. "In my opinion, he's a spoiled brat, like a small child who stomps his feet when he doesn't get his way." Why is he shackled? "I don't want any of my guys to be assaulted or hurt," he says. *(Guantanamo Bay on trial)*

However, it seems that the negative representations of the enemy come in second place, while the focus remains the positive self-representation. The following extract is characteristic of this tendency:

> REPORTER: There are probably people listening right now who are cringing. These guys are accused of being terrorists. Why are we catering to their dietary needs?
> CMDR. T.C. DOWDEN: I don't believe that we're catering. I think that we would be doing the same thing that we would expect from them if they were... if the shoe were on the other foot. If we have people who are going... who could end up being captives someplace, we would expect that our cultures, our traditions would be followed by them as well.
> …
> CMDR. JAIME CARROLL: We don't ask our staff to throw compassion out of the window. We're providing medical treatment, and when you provide treatment for someone who is ill or injured, compassion is part of that. *(Update: The detainees)*

The polarizing positions are maintained in the above extract by both the reporter ("why are we catering to their dietary needs") and by the prison authorities ("we would be doing the same thing that we would expect from them"). Noticeable in this last example is the use of the hypothetical "would" and the unreal "if they were," to refer to the possibility of U.S. soldiers becoming captives of the enemy. What prevails though in this extract, as well as in several other texts, is the positive representation of *us*. Treating the others the way you want others to treat you (e.g. "I think that we would be doing the same thing that we would expect from them"), respecting the other cultures ("we would expect that our cultures, our

traditions would be followed by them as well"), showing compassion (mentioned twice in the last turn), treating them on equal terms ("the same doctors and nurses who treat the general base population also provide medical care to detainees") work towards a positive self-construction. Even interrogations are stated to be "conducted humanely and legally" with no complaints from the part of detainees *(Detainees at base in Cuba yield little valuable information)*.

Positive attributes for the Americans, however, do not only come from the American side. A released 14-year-old teenager is reported in one of the readings to have said: "Americans are great people, better than anyone else," "Americans are polite and friendly when you speak to them. They are not rude like Afghans," "If my father didn't need me, I would want to live in America" *(Cuba? It was great)*. The above positive evaluations, coming from a variety of sources, such as reporters, prison authorities, prison guards and prisoners themselves, are construing a positive image of America and, in times of war, work on reinforcing the patriotic feelings, on the one hand, while maintaining the polarization climate, on the other.

Moreover, another way through which war as contest is foregrounded in *NewsHour* data is through the engagement of students in contest-type activities. Specifically, quite often students are invited to participate in role-plays and debates which involve groups of students supporting opposing sides on an issue. As stated in the lesson plan, one of the lesson objectives is for students to "understand the clash between civil liberties and national security during wartime." Students read in one of the articles: "the administration contends that they are dangerous enemy combatants being detained and interrogated legally and humanely during the ongoing war on terrorism." They are then invited to participate in the following simulation:

> Pretend you are the President of the United States. You have a suspected terrorist in custody, who may have information leading to the capture of a ring of terrorists believed to be responsible for a recent bombing. Do you, a) hold him indefinitely until you get the information you think he has, or b) give him access to a court trial where he may go free without providing any information? Explain your rationale.

One, however, wonders what types of arguments students are likely to develop concerning the prisoners' civil liberties after reading the specific texts when these texts systematically avoid any type of reference to the constitutive elements of civil liberties, such as freedom from torture, and when, instead, they merely focus on the provisions offered to prisoners. Moreover, when the dilemma is posed between safety and security, on the

one hand, and civil liberties, on the other hand (which, according to the readings, are guaranteed and even graciously offered to the prisoners), then students are implicitly guided to an answer which would argue in favor of national safety and security. The use of activities like this one points towards the adoption of a particular view, one which is in agreement with governmental decisions, and actually reinforces the foregrounding of the contest element in *NewsHour* texts. Overall, here too, in contest-type activities as well as in other representations of "war as contest" presented above, there is lack of representations of pain in the data.

4. Representations of pain in *Rethinking Schools*

4.1. The foregrounding of human suffering

In the context of developing a critical curriculum, texts in *Rethinking Schools* foreground pain and injury by emphasizing the human suffering caused by war. Instead of the technical documents of lesson plans which describe steps to be followed, *Rethinking Schools* publishes personal accounts of lessons already conducted by teachers in their classes and editorials expressing the editors' views. A collection of 21 such accounts constituted the selected corpus of teaching materials which refer to the "war against terrorism" and which cover the period immediately after the attack of Sept. 11 and up to Summer 2004. The agenda of *Rethinking Schools* concerning educating students about the "war against terrorism" is clearly illustrated in the following extract from an editorial addressing American teachers:

> **Editorial: Teaching Against the Lies**
> Summer 2004
> *By the Editors of Rethinking Schools*
> As the horrifying photos and reports of U.S. military personnel abusing Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prison have made their way into the public eye, a clearer picture of the occupation is emerging. Even before the scandal broke on "60 Minutes II" in late April, Amnesty International warned that U.S.-led forces have "shot Iraqis dead during demonstrations, tortured and ill-treated prisoners, arrested people arbitrarily and held them indefinitely, demolished houses in acts of revenge and collective punishment."…The question before educators is whether or not we are equipping students with the tools to think critically about our government's policies…Some of our former students are coming home maimed or in body bags, while the military continues to step up recruiting.

Acknowledging that "it's important that a critical curriculum does not itself become propaganda, simply offering conclusions and handing students anti-war positions," the overall purpose of the published materials, according to the editors of *Rethinking Schools*, is to equip students with the thinking skills they need "for a life of democratic participation, of active citizenship."

The pedagogy developed in this context is not one which focuses on technical aspects, but one which deals explicitly with the dark side of war by illustrating the destruction that war brings about. In a lesson account entitled *Images of war*, part of which is reproduced below, a bilingual elementary teacher describes her class discussion of war images that her students see or do not see in the U.S. media.

Fig.1: Source *Images of war* (AP Photo / Diane Bondareff, 2001)

On Monday Oct. 9, the day after the U.S. government began to bomb Afghanistan, I asked my fourth grade students about the images they remembered from the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center….I specifically asked students to talk about the images they had seen…I felt compelled to help students examine photos of the war on Afghanistan because, especially in those early days of bombing, the media did not portray with either words or pictures the suffering that must have been occurring in Afghanistan as a result of the U.S. attack. Through our discussion, I hoped to help students develop a critical perspective on the stories and images that they and their families are consuming everyday.
Even though the images of Sept. 11 were almost a month old, when I asked students about images from that day, an animated conversation ensued. Native speakers of Spanish and Spanish language learners shared their memories in Spanish.

"Yo via las personas saltando de los edificios," said one student ["I saw the people jumping from the buildings"],

"Yo vi la gente en la calle corriendo y tratando de escapar," said another ["I saw people in the streets running and trying to escape"],

"Vi los bomberos que se murieron tratando de salvar a las personas," remembered a third student ["I saw the firefighters who died trying to save people"].

After several comments about people, I asked if they remembered images that did not involve people. More hands.

"Los edificios cuando el avión chocó" ["The buildings when the plane crashed into them"].

"Los edificios cuando se cayeron" ["The buildings when they collapsed"].

"Los zapatos de una mujer que se quedó atrapada" ["The shoes of a woman who was trapped"].

…

I then asked the students if they had seen any of the people in Afghanistan since the attacks began. No hands. I asked if they had seen any pictures of Afghanistan. One student raised his hand and mentioned something about a bomb dropping in the middle of a barren field. …"Keep this in mind as you watch the news in the next few days. Look closely and see if you see any people," I said.

Students in the above account are not mere consumers of media texts to which they respond by expressing their opinion after they have identified opposing arguments on a specific subject. The pedagogy employed here operates rather differently. It activates students by drawing on their personal experiences, by urging them to recount these experiences and talk about their feelings, and by guiding them to investigate issues for themselves (e.g. "Keep this in mind as you watch the news in the next few days. Look closely."). In addition, it foregrounds human suffering, pain and injury, as well as physical destruction (examples of buildings collapsing), as is illustrated in the description of the following activity:

That Friday, five days after the bombing began, I brought all the newspapers I had received since the U.S. attacked Afghanistan. In groups of four, students studied the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* or the *New York Times*. Their task was to look at all the images and pick out one image of the war in Afghanistan that impressed their group.

…

One group found a page which had two different pictures of planes: one plane that dropped bombs and another that dropped food. One student offered a thoughtful response: "After they bomb, they will need to send food in for the children who lost their parents in the bombing."

We finished looking at the pictures. "Is there anything we're not seeing?" I asked. A few hands went up slowly. Rosana said: "We're not seeing the

people from Afghanistan who are dying." Roberto spoke next. "We're not seeing the war." *(Adapted from Images of war)*

The pedagogy which unfolds in the above extracts involves students in critical reading of what is there in the texts, a critical unpacking of the reality which is being construed in the media texts. At the same time, it urges students to consider not only what is included but also what is excluded from media texts ("Is there anything we're not seeing?") in an attempt to further develop their critical awareness and to point to an important issue concerning what is reported and what is not reported in the media texts.

Moreover, critical reading involves reading the verbal as well as the visual. Students are involved in activities which invite them to "read" images of war and to respond to them by trying to analyze their feelings. Thus, the foregrounding of pain and suffering in *Rethinking School* texts is also achieved through the dramatic effect brought about by the use of pictures which show images of war and destruction, such as wounded people, people in despair, destroyed buildings and other scenes of injury. The picture which accompanies the lesson account above depicts a scene of destruction with a wounded woman in the foreground, an ambulance, and people trying to help in the background. Quite eloquently, in a picture from another lesson account which is about the Sept. 11 attacks (Figure 2), human absence from the picture implicitly refers to human loss and death. This photo which was taken on the day of the attacks shows a tennis shoe, debris, torn documents and correspondence coated with dust.

Fig. 2: Source *Teaching about Sept. 11* (AP Photo / Mark Lennihan, 2001)

Human suffering and pain are not however considered only from the American point of view. On the contrary, *Rethinking Schools* texts emphasize the horror of war for both sides. Pictures play here an important role by projecting the destructive effect of war on Americans as well as the on people on the other side. The following picture (Figure 3), placed next to the title *Whose "terrorism"?* in another lesson account, illustrates the destruction caused to an Afghani family by U.S. troops.

Fig. 3: Source *Whose "terrorism"?* (AP Photo / Amir Shah, 2001)

Rethinking Schools texts support the view that "education must be about developing the skills and disposition to question the official story, to view with skepticism the stark us-against-them (or us good, them bad) portrayal of the world and the accompanying dehumanization of others" *(Teaching about Sept. 11)*, while acknowledging that this can be especially difficult "when textbooks and pundits alike use *us*, *we*, and *our* to promote a narrow nationalism" *(Sept. 11 and our classrooms)*. In fact, texts in the data systematically avoid polarizing positions of *us* versus *them* in which the "enemy" is negatively construed—something found in most accounts of war, according to Scarry (1985). Instead they foreground the pain and suffering that war brings to both sides. In the following pictures, originally placed one below the other, pain is dramatically marked on the faces of both the Afghani and the American women. The close-up of an Afghan refugee who arrived in Pakistan having lost both her son and her husband in U.S. air raids and the picture of the two American women in despair, holding each other as they watch the twin towers burn after the terrorist attack, convey the meaning that war has the same impact on both sides. The picture of the twin towers burning behind the Empire State Building

placed between the two other pictures stands symbolically in the middle as the event which connects the other two.

Figs. 4, 5, 6: Source *Sept. 11 and our classrooms*
(AP Photos / Shabbir Hussain Imam; Patrick Sison; Ernesto Mora, 2001)

This symbolism constitutes a basic element of the pedagogy outlined in *Rethinking Schools* texts in an attempt to raise students' empathy, their ability to share others' feelings and emotions as if they were their own, and to consider the effects of war destruction on both sides:

> I want to help my students to move beyond the compassion they felt for those who died in the Sept. 11 attacks, and develop a sense of the tragedy the U.S. government is imposing on many innocent Afghani people. *(Images of war)*

> Teachers have a special—and difficult—responsibility to help students extend their circle of caring beyond the victims of Sept. 11 to all of humanity. *(Teaching about Sept. 11)*

This is also illustrated in the activities teachers select for their students. For instance, in *Letters to the universe* students are involved in free-writing activities in order to "understand the power of empathy, and how people gain strength by coming together in times of crisis," whereas in another lesson account poetry is seen as:

> a piece of a much broader social justice curriculum that aims to critique injustice and build empathy. But at this moment in our nation's history, poetic intimacy seems an especially valuable strategy to invite our students

to touch the lives of others—others who may be in urgent need of allies. *(Poetry in a time of crisis)*

4.2. The backgrounding of war as contest

In her analysis of war as contest, Scarry (1985, 89) argues that what differentiates war from other types of contests is that in war "participants must work to out-injure each other" and "although both sides inflict injuries, the side that inflicts greater injury faster will be the winner" while the other will be the loser. It is in this context that different types of texts on war have worked their way to raise patriotic feelings and a strong national identity often by construing polarizing positions. Working systematically against such an account of war constructions, *Rethinking Schools* texts position their pedagogy against the element of contest. They do so by either backgrounding the element of war as contest or by actively involving students in activities which aim to deconstruct such well-established views. One way to achieve this is by working on students' empathy, which involves caring for the other side as well as our own and going against narrow nationalist views. Active citizenship, as proclaimed by *Rethinking Schools,* entails that "children locate themselves in widening circles of care that extend beyond self, beyond country, to all humanity" *(Sept. 11 and our classrooms)*.

Consequently, the stories the students read about the "war against terrorism" are not stories which arouse such feelings of hatred and fear as "our national security and safety are in danger," which would justify the decision to go to war. For instance, in a lesson account entitled *Not in our son's name*, students are asked to read a letter, part of which is reproduced below, written by the parents of one of the World Trade Center victims, before the bombing of Afghanistan began:

By Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez
Our son Greg is among the many missing from the World Trade Center attack. Since we first heard the news, we have shared moments of grief, comfort, hope, despair, fond memories with his wife, the two families, our friends and neighbors.
We see our hurt and anger reflected among everybody we meet. We cannot pay attention to the daily flow of news about this disaster. But we read enough of the news to sense that our government is heading in the direction of violent revenge, with the prospect of sons, daughters, parents, friends in distant lands, dying, suffering, and nursing further grievances against us. It is not the way to go. It will not avenge our son's death. Not in our son's name.

Our son died a victim of an inhuman ideology. Our actions should not serve the same purpose. Let us grieve. Let us reflect and pray. Let us think about a rational response that brings real peace and justice to our world. But let us not as a nation add to the inhumanity of our times.

In the teaching ideas which follow, students are invited to "discuss how Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez would respond to the policies of the U.S. government in the weeks after they wrote this letter." In another activity, they are asked to find a newspaper letter to the editor about post Sept. 11 events and write a letter in response adopting the Rodriguezes' perspective.

5. Pedagogies of war

Scarry (1985, 63) argues that the essential structure of war resides in the *relation* between the collective casualties that occur *within* war and the verbal issues that stand *outside* war—the various discourses before, during and after the act of war. Her analysis of the interior content of war as constituting a form of violence, whose activity is injuring, and as a form of contest, whose activity is to out-injure the opponent, has provided us with a useful theoretical and analytic tool in the attempt to explore representations of pain and human suffering in two different pedagogic discourses which deal with "war against terrorism." Elaborating on Scarry's model, a summary of the findings can be best illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Representations of pain in "war against terrorism"		
	War as injury	**War as contest**
NewsHour	Backgrounded	Foregrounded
Rethinking Schools	Foregrounded	Backgrounded

In fact, the analytic procedure of the present study has been informed by Scarry's claim that it is in the relation of the two (war as injury and war as contest), rather than in either individually, that the nature of war resides. Thus the findings of this survey suggest that, if we want to engage in a deeper understanding of the war pedagogies which are outlined in the previous sections, we need to approach the model suggested in Table 1 both across the horizontal and the vertical axes. In other words, what in fact differentiates the two pedagogies does not only rely on the

foregrounding of pain in *Rethinking Schools* and the backgrounding of pain in *NewsHour*. The pedagogy employed by the *NewsHour* also obtains its meanings by the respective foregrounding of war as contest, whereas the pedagogy outlined in *Rethinking Schools* is to a great extent affected by the backgrounding of the contest element of war. Moreover, while in theory at least other combinations may be possible (for instance, the foregrounding of war as injury and as contest, or the respective backgrounding of both), it can be suggested that the very nature of the two pedagogies developed above lies in the specific combinations employed.

Furthermore, the analysis of representations in the data has revealed other important elements which permeate both the categories of war as injury and war as contest. For instance, *NewsHour* texts have been found to systematically build upon the creation of a positive self-presentation. Elements of the *Rethinking Schools* pedagogy include critical reading of what is there (and of what is not there) in the texts, reading of the verbal as well as of the visual, and the building of students' empathy.

An important difference between the above two pedagogies concerns the students' needs addressed. Adopting an *expressive* approach, the *NewsHour* pedagogy attempts to help students develop thinking and analytical skills and to "understand a current events issue happening right now and why it's important." It assumes that the students already have, to a great extent, the intellectual resources they will need, and through its activities it attempts to enable students to look for their authentic voice and express themselves, using language in order to tell the truth as they perceive it. A special section in the *NewsHour* website, *Speak Out*,[4] hosts students' writings such as *editorials*, where students express personal opinions on important current events; *stories,* where students share experiences that have impacted them personally; *debates* where students outline different perspectives on an issue; and *poetry*, where students create their own poems. In this account, students should be creative and take chances, let their "natural voices speak out" and produce writing which is fresh and has integrity (Grabe and Kaplan 1996, 88).

Rethinking Schools, on the other hand, adopts a *critical* approach "seeking to respond to students' emotional and intellectual needs." This approach views students holistically and assumes that it is the educators' job to deal with students' feelings and emotions as well as with their intellectual needs, yet in a different way from the one employed in *NewsHour* pedagogy. The curriculum here teaches students how to ask critical questions, in order to equip them with the tools to think critically, to reflect on the world around them, and to help them develop "habits of skepticism." It also employs the systematic use of a metalanguage which

shows how "a critical perspective on the world differs from what they might encounter in their textbooks or on the nightly news." (*Teaching against the lies*) Understanding current events here includes placing texts and events in their socio-historical contexts, resorting to the past in order to understand the present, challenging established truths and dealing with reality as construed in the media texts.

At this point a connection can be made between the pedagogies of war employed in the two websites (which includes the specific combinations concerning the foregrounding or backgrounding of pain) and the ideological positions of the two websites concerning the "war against terrorism." Students in the two sites are presented with a different aspect of reality and they experience two very different curricula on the same subject. We could suggest that the two curricula are consistent with the ideological positions of the two sites and the pedagogies each one of them promotes: one supporting the U.S. decision to go to war, thus objectifying the war and treating it as a technical issue from a detached point of view; the other challenging the decision to go to war, thus subjectifying the war, raising students' empathy, and emphasizing the destruction that accompanies war activities. Thus, the initial assumption of this study, i.e. that the ideological positions of the two pedagogies will affect their representations of pain, has been borne out.

6. Conclusion

On a final note, it is worth pointing to the effects of the two curricula on the "imagined pedagogic identity" (Bernstein 1990; 1996) and the future lives of the students. Kress (1996, 16) defines curricula as a design for a future social subject and a future society, as they put forward knowledges, meanings, values and skills in the present which students will be encouraged to use as models in the future. The *NewsHour* and the *Rethinking Schools* curricula on "war against terrorism" can thus be seen to put forward a particular set of cultural, social and linguistic resources which will be available to students in the (re)construction of their subjectivity. The questions which arise concern what different resources will be available to the specific students who experience the two curricula, how specific representations will affect their future active (re)construction of reality and what vision of the future each curriculum implies.

Let us for a moment try to obtain a vision of the future by considering what seems to be the imaginary ideal student-subject in each one of the pedagogies. Based on the analysis proposed in this paper, we could suggest that the students who experience the *NewsHour* curriculum, and

its associated pedagogy, will most probably be informed adults who try to understand the reality around them, who have learned to analyze facts and approach issues from opposing sides. At the same time, however, since they have not learned to challenge governmental decisions they will most probably align themselves with the official view of things, as good American patriots. It is quite likely that they will approach reality and the world around them as something they need to understand, but they may not try to change it as the pedagogy experienced today does not equip them with resources that would enable them to become active agents intervening in their environment. In moments of crisis, such as in war, they may develop an attitude of the type: "our country decided to go to war, let's try to analyze and understand why we had to do so."

On the other hand, the students who experience the *Rethinking Schools* curriculum, and its associated pedagogy, will most probably be adults who have been trained to ask questions, challenge the reality construed for them in the media, search history in order to understand the present, connect present events to their socio-historical contexts, and in moments of crisis, such as in war, confront important issues directly and with empathy. Trained through a pedagogy which adopts a self-reflective perspective, they are likely to become critical readers of the world around them, and of themselves. Most importantly, they have been trained to view themselves not within the strict national boundaries, but as citizens of the world, as "cosmopolitans" (Silverstone 2007; Mitsikopoulou 2007) who show understanding to the difference of the "other." The socially driven approach of the *Rethinking Schools* curriculum which has aimed to prepare them for a "life of democratic participations, of active citizenship" may affect their ways of being and acting accordingly.

An account such as the one presented above does not intend to draw deterministic conclusions about the curriculum as a one-sided process with students being passive recipients of a pedagogy. This would oversimplify a much-more complex issue. Acknowledging that pedagogies may be resisted, negotiated, challenged, it merely attempts to draw attention to the effects of the various curricula which are often oversighted by both educators and policy makers, or cannot be predicted as the following extract from a *Rethinking Schools* lesson account eloquently puts it:

> No teacher education program could have prepared us to confront the emotionally shattering events of Sept. 11. We began school that morning in one era, but left that evening in a different era—one filled with sorrow, confusion, and vulnerability. No matter what age student we work with, we found ourselves rethinking and revising our lesson plans, if not our life plans. *(Sept. 11 and our classrooms)*

Notes

[1] A non-profit media enterprise which combines the use of public television, the Internet and other media "to enrich the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services that inform, inspire and delight" (www.pbs.org).

[2] A large department store-like shop operating on U.S. military installations worldwide.

[3] Titles of sources from the data are given in italics as they can be found in the website.

[4] Information about submissions to *Speak Out* can be found at:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/students/submissions.html

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