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Discourse and Hegemony: A New Historicist and Cultural Materialist Study of U.S. Foreign Policy Discourse in the Post-9/11 Era

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctorate in Civilization

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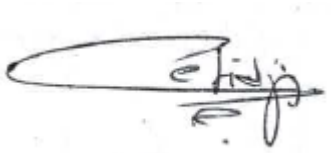
Declaration

I, Amira Metidji, hereby declare that the substance of this thesis, entitled *Discourse and Hegemony: A New Historicist and Cultural Materialist Study of U.S. Foreign Policy Discourse in the Post-9/11 Era*, is entirely the result of my own investigation, with all necessary references duly provided. This work contains no material previously written by another person, nor any content that has been submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma from any institution or university.

I also wish to declare that the intended title of this research is *Clash of or Dialogue among Civilizations? A New Historicist Study of U.S. Foreign Policy Discourse in the Post-9/11 Era*. However, due to administrative constraints, the official title could not be changed.

Mrs. Amira Metidji

Signature



Dedication

To my mother, for standing by me in every joy and sorrow

To my father, for cultivating strength in me

To my brother, for being my noble lifelong companion

To Serine and Abderrahmane, for boundless love

To my husband, for unwavering support

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Abstract

The terrorist attacks on September 11 fundamentally altered global politics and had a deep impact on U.S. foreign policy. In the immediate wake of these events, Bush's administration launched what became known as the "War on Terror," marking a clear transition towards a more assertive and unilateral approach in international affairs. This shift was evident not only in governmental actions but also embedded within the discourse of U.S. foreign policy. Bush's discourse constructed a narrative of moral urgency and inevitable conflict, framing America's response as a necessary defense of Western civilization. On the other hand, Obama's discourse marks a discursive departure from his predecessor's. In this regard, the study critically examines U.S. foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 era by analyzing four major presidential speeches, two from President George W. Bush and two from President Barack H. Obama. The core objective of this thesis is to examine how each president discursively constructs, reinforces, or challenges civilizational narratives, particularly those informed by the paradigms of the Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations, demonstrating how political texts both shape and are actively shaped by their historical contexts. Therefore, the research adopts New Historicism as the main theoretical and methodological framework. Building on this approach, the study argues that both presidents, despite their different discursive strategies, engage in the strategic reconstruction of global order sustained by the logics of U.S. hegemony. Consequently, this work offers a theoretical and methodological contribution by demonstrating how New Historicism, when applied to political texts, can uncover the ideological work performed by discourse in shaping foreign policy civilizational narratives.

Keywords: U.S. Foreign Policy, Post-9/11 attacks, George Bush, Barak Obama, Discourse, Clash of Civilizations, Dialogue among Civilizations, Narrative, New Historicism, Ideology, Power Relations.

List of Abbreviations

DA: Discourse Analysis

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

EU: European Union

IESCO: Islamic world, the Islamic Education, Science and Culture Organization

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

NSS: National Security Strategy

OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation

UN: United Nations

UNAOC: United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States

USA: United States of America

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

WWI: World War I

WWII: World War II

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General Introduction

General Introduction

"War is peace," one of the Party's slogans in George Orwell's *1984*, epitomizes the concept of doublethink, a psychological manipulation in which contradictory beliefs coexist to maintain control over the populace. This paradox, where the truths of war and peace are intertwined to serve the interests of those in power, illustrates how the distortion of reality can shape social behaviour. More than seven decades after Orwell's dystopian vision was written, this slogan strongly resonates in the present day, particularly when considering the context of the United States foreign policy, reflecting the complexities of contemporary geopolitical strategies that often involve conflicting narratives of peace and conflict.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks marked a pivotal moment in global geopolitics, profoundly influencing the course of U.S. foreign policy. In the immediate aftermath, the United States, under President George W. Bush, declared a "War on Terror," signalling a shift towards a more aggressive and unilateral approach in international relations (Kaufman, 2017, p. 145). This doctrine, which prioritized preemptive strikes against perceived threats, led to major military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 sought to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power, while the 2003 invasion of Iraq was justified by the alleged presence of weapons of mass destruction and the desire to promote democracy in the Middle East (Woodward, 2002). These actions reflected a broader strategy to reshape the world geopolitical order by reasserting U.S. hegemony.

In contrast to the aggressive and unilateral foreign policy stance of the Bush administration, the election of President Barack H. Obama in 2008 marked a notable shift in U.S. international relations. Obama's foreign policy approach diverged from his predecessor's by emphasizing multilateralism, diplomacy, and a more measured use of military force. This strategic change was evident in his administration's efforts to rebuild alliances, engage with international institutions, and pursue collaborative solutions to global challenges.

Furthermore, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, American leaders weaponized language to frame a "Global War on Terror" not as a paradox but as a moral crusade (Kaufman, 2017), conflating military aggression with the defense of "civilization" itself. Terms like "Axis of Evil" (Bush, 2002) and "Operation Enduring Freedom" (Hayden, 2009) echoed Orwellian doublespeak, erasing distinctions between war and peace while constructing civilizational identities as either allies or existential threats. These discursive strategies revived Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis, reducing complex geopolitical struggles to a primordial battle between "the civilized" and "the barbaric". Yet, they also coexisted with initiatives promoting dialogue, as exemplified by Barack Obama's Cairo speech, which invoked the principles of "mutual interest and mutual respect" (Obama, 2009). This tension between the clash and the dialogue lies at the heart of U.S. foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 era.

The Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations are two opposing civilizational narratives. Stated differently, they present two contrasting perspectives on global political and cultural relations. Samuel Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilizations argues that in the post-Cold War era, conflicts will no longer be driven by ideological or economic rivalries but rather by deep-rooted civilizational and cultural differences. Huntington (1993; 1996) emphasized the role of religion as a defining element of civilizational identity, suggesting that tensions, especially between the Western and Islamic worlds, would intensify due to these cultural divides. On the other hand, first proposed by the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in 1998 and later adopted by the United Nations in 2001, Dialogue among Civilizations presents a more cooperative vision of global interactions, advocating for cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and respect among diverse societies. This perspective challenges the idea that civilizations are inherently at odds, instead emphasizing their historical interconnectedness through trade, migration, education, and shared values. Supporters of this approach argue that

civilizations are not isolated entities bound for inevitable conflict but are instead deeply intertwined, making dialogue and cooperation essential for global harmony.

Within this framework of civilizational narratives, this research work focuses on conducting a discourse analysis of United States foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 terrorist attacks. The study examines how presidential discourse reflects, constructs, and negotiates between the paradigms of the Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations. To achieve this, this study analyzes a corpus composed of official transcripts of four major speeches delivered by former U.S. Presidents: George W. Bush's *2002 State of the Union Address* and his *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, as well as Barak Obama's *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and his *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*. The full transcripts were obtained from the American Rhetoric website, a widely recognized archive of political discourse. These speeches were selected for their historical significance, international reach, and discursive strategies, particularly in relation to the constructions of identity, power, and foreign policy narratives. This selection also enables a comparative analysis of how each president's discourse engages with these civilizational narratives.

Previous studies extensively analyzed the discourse of Presidents Bush and Obama, particularly focusing on their speeches in the context of post-9/11. A considerable body of literature studied President Bush's discourse. It focuses on excerpts from a number of the president's speeches, shedding light on the notions of terrorism, axis of evil, Islamophobia, and the use of religion in general. Similarly, President Obama's speeches, especially his 2009 address in Cairo, have been subjects of critical discourse analysis, exploring his lexical choices, modality, and efforts to construct Muslim identity. However, there is a notable research gap in comparative analyses that juxtapose the civilizational narratives within the discourses of both presidents. Existing studies often focus on individual speeches or rhetorical strategies without

systematically comparing how Bush and Obama differently framed U.S. foreign policy through the lenses of the Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations paradigms. This research attempts to bridge that gap by conducting a comparative discourse analysis of selected speeches from both presidents, providing insights into the evolution of United States foreign policy narratives in the post-9/11 era.

More significantly, while previous studies have extensively analyzed the speeches of Presidents Bush and Obama through various frameworks, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, rhetorical strategies, and linguistic features, none have applied the literary theoretical approach of New Historicism to these discourses. New Historicism emphasizes the interplay between literature, culture, and historical context, offering an understanding of how texts both shape and are shaped by their socio-political environments. By adopting this theoretical framework, the study attempts to bridge this gap, providing another perspective on the civilizational narratives within U.S. foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 era. In doing so, the study situates this analysis within existing research across American Studies, International Relations, Political Science, and Discourse Analysis, fields which have often overlooked the application of New Historicism to presidential discourse in favour of more political, rhetorical, or linguistic approaches. This underscores the novelty of applying New Historicism to United States presidential discourse that brings to light the subtle interplay between historical circumstances and discursive practices, between hegemony and dialogue.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, U.S. presidential discourse assumed a pivotal role in shaping not only foreign policy directions but also reflecting the cultural narratives that underpinned them. Speeches delivered by President Bush and Obama served purposes beyond political communication; they became powerful instruments for framing global relations, constructing national identity, and delineating the boundaries between the "Self" and the "Other." While Bush's discourse often projected a binary worldview grounded

in morality and national security imperatives, Obama's discourse appeared to mark a departure towards engagement and dialogue, particularly within the Muslim world. However, beneath this shift lies a complex interplay of rupture and continuity in the ideological narratives embedded in the presidential speeches. In this regard, the central problem that this thesis addresses concerns the extent to which these seemingly divergent discursive practices actually reproduce or challenge civilizational narratives.

Subsequently, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies by bridging literary-cultural theory with political discourse analysis. It aims to enrich scholarly understanding of how presidential discourse operates not only as a tool of governance but also as a cultural artifact that reflects and shapes their historical moment. Therefore, this research work seeks to critically analyze how post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy discourse, as articulated in the speeches of Bush and Obama, constructs and contests civilizational narratives through the competing frameworks of the clash and the dialogue. From a New Historicist perspective, this study aims to examine the discursive practices that legitimized U.S. hegemony in contexts ranging from the Afghan War, across the Iraq War, to the Arab Spring, demonstrating that Bush's discourse explicitly embraces the Clash of Civilizations, reinforcing a hegemonic vision of American global leadership. In contrast, the study also seeks to investigate whether Obama's discourse, often perceived as promoting the principles of the Dialogue among Civilizations, in fact subverts or sustains a similar civilizational narrative.

In order to achieve the aims outlined above, and informed by the principles of New Historicism, this study is guided by one main research question, supported by a set of focused sub-questions designed to explore the historical, textual and ideological dimensions of U.S. presidential discourse in the post-9/11 era:

General Introduction

- Main question: How do the selected U.S. presidential speeches in the post-9/11 era construct civilizational narratives through historically embedded discursive practices?
- Sub-questions:

  1. In what ways does President Bush's discourse embrace the core assumptions of the Clash of Civilizations paradigm?

  2. To what extent does President Obama's discourse align with the principles of the Dialogue among Civilizations approach, and how does it negotiate continuity or rupture with Bush's discourse?

  3. How do the selected presidential speeches function as cultural texts that are both shaped by and discursively shaping the historical context of the post-9/11 era?

  4. How do strategies of subversion and containment manifest within the speeches, and what do they reveal about power relations in post-9/11 U.S. political discourse?

To address these research questions, this study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach grounded in New Historicism, and informed by Discourse Analysis. The selection of the New Historicist approach stems from the fact that both Discourse Analysis and New Historicism are context-oriented interpretive frameworks, concerned with the interplay between language, ideology, and power within specific historical moments. Hence, the application of New Historicism to the analysis of the discourse of Presidents Bush and Obama is pertinent.

Therefore, New Historicism constitutes the primary methodological foundation of this study, providing the critical tools for analyzing the selected presidential speeches, not only as historical artifacts, but as cultural texts that both reflect and discursively shape the post-9/11 historical context. This framework enables critical readings that examine how the speeches construct ideological meaning, negotiate power relations, and participate in the formation of national identity. As a practice of critical inquiry, New Historicism facilitates a contextualized

texts interpretation that foregrounds the reciprocal relationship between discourse and historical circumstances.

Key interpretive principles guiding the analysis, drawn from the work of Stephen Greenblatt (2000; 1988; 1980) and other new historicists, include twin tenets of the historicity of the text and the textuality of history, and the concepts of representation, ideology, power relations, subversion, and containment. While the theoretical framework of this research includes a discussion of Discourse Analysis particularly given the discursive nature of presidential speeches, the study does not employ any specific discourse-analytical model. Rather, Discourse Analysis is treated as a conceptual resource for understanding the interplay between language and ideology, whereas New Historicism remains the sole methodological foundation for the analytical chapters.

This thesis is structured into four chapters. The first chapter, entitled *New Historicism and Discourse Analysis*, lays the theoretical foundation for the study by detailing New Historicism alongside an overview of Discourse Analysis. It begins with an exploration of the emergence and general aspects of New Historicism, drawing on the influential ideas of poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Clifford Geertz. The chapter then delves into the main tenets and key concepts of New Historicism, including the historicity of the text, the textuality of history, the interplay between discourse, ideology and power, and between subversion and containment. Additionally, it provides an overview of Discourse Analysis, clarifying the distinctions between text and discourse, and examining the characteristics of political discourse and narrative formation, particularly in relation to foreign policy.

Chapter two is titled *Civilizational Paradigms: The Clash and Dialogue Narratives*. It examines two influential frameworks shaping U.S. foreign policy discourse in the Post-Cold War era. It begins by exploring Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, tracing its origins from Bernard Lewis's *The Roots of Muslim Rage* to Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History*.

It also delves into its core assumptions and the debate it sparked, especially around the 9/11 period. This chapter then shifts to the Dialogue among Civilizations paradigm, outlining its historical context, defining its key concepts, and demonstrating how global dialogue initiatives challenge Huntington's confrontational narrative by advocating for a more cooperative international framework.

In chapter three, entitled *George W. Bush's Discourse: Embracing the Clash of Civilizations Narrative*, the focus is shifted to the analytical part of this study. This chapter offers a detailed New Historicist analysis of President Bush's speeches, arguing that these texts actively shape historical narratives rather than merely reflecting them. The chapter begins by setting the historical context, examining how the post-9/11 national security imperatives, and shifts towards neoconservatism and unilateralism framed presidential discourse, while also considering the socio-cultural impacts like collective trauma, rising patriotism, and increased discrimination. It then turns to a close textual analysis, uncovering the discursive strategies that reinforce the Clash of Civilizations narrative, exploring the New Historicist concepts of representation, ideology, and power relations as they are embedded in Bush's discourse. The chapter concludes with an analysis of subversion and containment, focusing on how Bush's discourse suppresses dissent and frames the United States as the protector of Western values in a perceived global conflict.

The fourth and final chapter, under the title of *Barak Obama's Discourse: Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations*, turns attention to President Obama's discourse analysis. Using a New Historicist framework, this chapter examines how Obama rearticulates American and global identities by promoting the narrative of Dialogue among Civilizations; a marked shift from confrontation to engagement. It explores how historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts shape his discourse, and how his discursive practices construct a vision of a multipolar world founded on intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation. Finally, the

fourth chapter analyzes how Obama's discourse reflects the New Historicist dialectic of subversion and containment, showing how appeals to dialogue and cooperation are intertwined with the reinforcement of dominant ideologies.

Chapter One

New Historicism and Discourse Analysis

Chapter One: New Historicism and Discourse Analysis

1.1. Introduction

1.2. New Historicism: Emergence and General Aspects

1.3. Contribution of Key Post-Structuralist Theorists to New Historicism

1.3.1. Michel Foucault

1.3.2. Clifford Geertz

1.3.3. Louis Althusser

1.4. Main Tenets and Key Concepts in New Historicism

1.4.1. Historicity of the Text and Textuality of History

1.4.2. Discourse, Ideology and Power Relations

1.4.3. Subversion and Containment

1.5. Discourse Analysis: An Overview and Characteristics

1.6. Text and Discourse

1.7. Political Discourse and Foreign Policy Discourse

1.8. Political Discourse and Narrative

1.9. Conclusion

1.1. Introduction

New Historicism and Discourse Analysis are interdisciplinary practices that study literary and non-literary texts within their socio-cultural and historical contexts. Both focus on how meaning is constructed at specific historical moments, rejecting traditional singular interpretations and the transparency of language. They emphasize the reciprocal relationship between language and society, where discourse shapes social realities, and is shaped by social factors. New historicism stresses cultural intertextuality, viewing literature as inseparable from its historical context and treating culture as text. Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, examines the structures of texts withing their socio-cultural settings, exploring how they interact with and are influenced by societal discourses and practices.

Chapter One lays the theoretical foundation for the study by introducing New Historicism and its key concepts, alongside an overview of discourse analysis. It begins with an exploration of the emergence and general aspects of New Historicism, drawing on the influential ideas of poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Clifford Geertz. The chapter then delves into the main tenets of New Historicism, including the historicity of the text, the textuality of history, the interplay between discourse and power, and concepts like subversion, and containment. Additionally, it provides an overview of Discourse Analysis, clarifying the distinctions between text and discourse, and examining the characteristics of political discourse and narrative formation, particularly in relation to foreign policy.

1.2. New Historicism: Emergence and General Aspects

In the early 1980s, New Historicism entered the theoretical landscape as a reaction against traditional hermeneutics. Its emergence was marked by two key developments. In Great Britain, it took shape within Renaissance Studies as a critique of the history-of-ideas approach exemplified by Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture*, which sought to derive thought and

attitudes of the period from literary texts. In the United States, New Historicism arose from the "French turn" within North American academia, which questioned formalist interpretations through Poststructuralism and Deconstruction (Middeke et al., 2012).

American New Historicism was informed by a variety of concepts and interpretative methods in literary analysis, drawing on poststructuralist theories. Most notably, it was heavily influenced by Michel Foucault's theories on power and discourse. Additionally, it drew on Louis Althusser's concept of ideology as a system of meaning. Raymond Williams' exploration of cultural institutions, such as language, education, the press, literacy, forms of fiction and drama, also played a significant role. Other sources of influence included Michel de Certeau's heterology, which viewed historiography as the study of the "other," and Clifford Geertz's understanding of culture as an evolving collection of symbolic forms and systems that are socially created and historically transmitted (Middeke et al., 2012).

Stephen Jay Greenblatt, an American literary critic, theorist, historian and a scholar, coined the term "New Historicism" in his introduction to *The Power of Forms in English Renaissance* (1982), he often referred to the term "Cultural Poetics." He aimed to establish a new practice for interpreting Renaissance literature. He described the origin of this approach in his essay *Towards a Poetics of Culture*. Additionally, Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, published in 1980, became a seminal work. It was soon followed by the founding of the journal *Representations* in 1983 by Greenblatt and his colleagues at the University of California. Apart from Greenblatt, Luis Montrose, Hayden White, Jonattan Dollimore, Catherine Gallagher, and some other scholars, have enriched New Historicism.

Throughout the twentieth century, critical theories like New Criticism, Formalism, Structuralism and Deconstruction developed one after another, each focusing on the linguistic elements of literary works. New Criticism arose as a reaction against historical and biographical

approaches, directing readers' attention from historical context to the text itself through the method of "close reading" (Ryan, 2017, p. 23). Formalism similarly values form over content, suggesting that the form of a text defines its aesthetic worth. Structuralism also treats the text as an objective structure, examining its system of signs and relational codes independently of the author, reader or any external reality. Deconstruction likewise examines the text independently, demonstrating that literary texts do not resolve into "determinable meanings" (Ryan, 2017, p. 14). These strictly formal approaches emphasise that, since the text is the reader's primary reality, there is no need to go beyond it. Each of these theories treat literature as an autonomous text, detached from its social and cultural roots. New Historicism, however, emerged as a broader critique of these language-centred approaches, not rejecting them outright but rather seeking to address their limitations by incorporating the socio-cultural context of literature. Therefore, New Historicism pursues the re-historization of both literary and non-literary texts, giving significant importance to the cultural context of their production, meaning, influence, interpretation and assessment.

However, this approach should not be confused with traditional Historicism. Unlike earlier scholars who treated "social and intellectual history as background" to literature, New Historicism diverges significantly in its views and practices, interpreting literary works not as independent reflections of their periods' worldview (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 244). This does not mean that New Historicism opposes the theory of Historicism, but instead, it offers a distinct approach (Sayar, 2024). The main difference lies in how each approach treats texts. Traditional Historicism views texts as objective mimesis of historical reality, while New Historicism questions this objectivity, attributing historical narratives to the cultural and social forces that shape them. New historicists question the accuracy of the context presented in the text, arguing that it was shaped by the narrator's interpretation and the interconnectedness of cultural, political and social influences surrounding the text.

The notions of objectivity and truth in history were critically challenged. Greenblatt (1990) asserted that "the historical evidence is unreliable" (as cited in Sayar, 2024, 1237). History, much like literature, is a form of writing shaped by experienced facts, whether intentional or unintentional imagination, subjectivity and interpretation. Accordingly, New Historicism considers historical texts as narratives rooted in significant events but infused with the author's subjective thoughts and interpretations. This perspective leads new historicists to align history closely with literature, effectively blurring the boundaries between the two disciplines.

While traditional and New Historicism share a primary focus on history, they approach this discipline from a different perspective. Traditional Historicists focus on determining what happened and explore what an event reveals about a particular historical time and place in history. In contrast, New Historicists are more concerned with understanding how the event has been interpreted and they analyse what these interpretations reveal about the ideological forces influencing the interpreters. That is to say, for traditional Historicism history is viewed as a sequence of events with a linear, causal relation. They also believe that through objective analysis, it is possible to uncover the facts about historical events, and that these facts can sometimes reveal the spirit of the age, or the worldview of the culture to which they belong. New Historicism, on the other hand, argues that only the most basic historical facts are accessible. For instance, it is known that George Washington was the first American president and that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. However, the meaning of these facts and understanding how they relate to the complex web of competing ideologies, the social, political and cultural forces during the time they occurred is seen by New Historicists as a matter of interpretation, not facts (Tyson, 2015, pp. 267-269).

Another difference between Historicism and New Historicism lies in their treatment of the text and its relationship to history. Historicism regards texts as objective reflections of

historical facts, assuming they accurately mirror the past and serve as reliable records of historical events. In contrast, New Historicism challenges this objectivity, arguing that texts are shaped by cultural, social and political factors, and are influenced by the narrator's interpretation. That is to say, Historicism views texts as unified and complete forms that mimetically represent history, however, New Historicism sees them as heterogeneous combinations of cultural, social, textual and individual influences. Additionally, Historicism often relies on canonical texts as authoritative accounts of the past, whereas New Historicism expands its scope to include non-literary materials such as letters, diaries, official documents, and newspapers, treating all texts as equally significant in constructing historical understanding (Sayar, 2024). This shift reflects New Historicism's emphasis on the mutual shaping of texts and their contexts, rejecting the idea of a single objective historical narrative.

Unlike the old Historicist approach, New Historicism integrates the "linguistic turn" of Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction (textual indeterminacy) with a renewed focus on historical analysis (Murray, 1999 as cited in Sharma, 2014, p. 2). New Historicism provides a robust framework for examining literature as a text by incorporating Post-Structuralism's focus on language and the Deconstructionist view that literary texts inherently resist fixed meanings. While these linguistic approaches can sometimes narrow the scope of textual analysis, their connection to New Historicism remains essential.

Regarding the connection between New Historicism and Post-Structuralism, New Historicism generally adopts the core methods of Post-Structuralism. While Post-Structuralism includes Derrida's deconstructive philosophy and the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Kristeva, it also draws on the historical and cultural critiques of Michel Foucault and the socio-political insights of Jean-François Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze (Sharma, 2014). This approach links textual analysis, emphasizing the inherent instability of meanings in linguistic signs, with the understanding that such signs and texts cannot be fully interpreted outside a cultural

context. For example, nineteenth-century critic W.J. Courthrope argued that language, described as "the instrument of thought," is crucial because our thoughts are deeply culturally influenced, leading to a preference for studying language over literature (as cited in Sharma, 2014, p. 2). Additionally, Structuralism has been criticized for its mechanical tendency to reduce all human activity to mere signs, whether as codes or conventions, prompting Post-Structuralism to extend its reach to encompass all human sciences. M.H. Abrams further noted that this approach applies not only to verbal language but also to psychosexual and socio-cultural systems of signification, thereby integrating literary criticism with other human sciences (as cited in Sharma, 2014). Therefore, this suggests that texts are cultural constructs, and Post-Structuralism provides a solid basis for New Historicism to incorporate social studies, positioning New Historicism as a natural extension of it.

Embodied in the works of Stephen Greenblatt, as a leading figure, Luis A. Montrose, Cathrine Gallagher, and Walter Benn Michaels, New Historicism is a research practice of critical interpretation. According to Greenblatt, New Historicism aimed to reorient the study of literature by anchoring it in its historical context, or more specially, within the various discourses of the time (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p. 193). As such, New Historicism reinforces text analysis that emphasizes cultural intertextuality. In other words, New Historicist practitioners contend that literary texts relate to one another in contexts that are inextricably linked to their historical socio-cultural moment.

New Historicism is not a single methodology; rather it functions as a practice of literary criticism. Key figures in New Historicism, such as Stephen Greenblatt and Luis Adrian Montrose, have resisted defining their approaches as one single methodology (Bressler, 2007). John Brannigan (1998) defined New Historicism as "a mode of critical interpretation which privileges power relations as the most important context for texts of all kinds" (p. 6). That is to say, as a contextualizing practice of interpretation, New Historicism prioritizes power relations

as the most crucial contextual background for all texts. In light of this definition, while New Historicism is primarily used for analysing literary texts, this research applies the New Historicist approach to examine the political discourse of Presidents George Bush and Barack Obama in the post-9/11 era.

New Historicist critics focus on how power operates within self-regulating ideologies. Within literary studies, New Historicism has been particularly influential for its examination of the interplay between literature and history, and for revealing the ideological and political motivations behind literary works. In this regard, Brannigan (1998) argued that "New Historicism has been most useful to the discipline of literary studies in exploring the relationship between literature and history and in demonstrating the ideological and political interests operating through literary texts" (p. 11).

All in all, New Historicism emerged in the late twentieth century as a literary approach that challenges the view of texts as isolated works by emphasizing their deep entanglement with historical, cultural, and political contexts. Drawing on influences from Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction, it rejects the notion of fixed meanings in literature and instead explores how texts are shaped by, and in turn shape, the power relations and social practices of their time. This practice bridges literary analysis with broader cultural studies, arguing that literature is not merely an autonomous creation but a product of its historical milieu. Having established the emergence as well as the general aspects of New Historicism, the next section considers the foundational role of key Post-Structuralist theorists on New Historicism.

1.3. Contribution of Key Post-Structuralist Theorists to New Historicism

American New Historicism emerged as a critical approach grounded in specific theoretical influences rather than a broad range of interpretive methods. It was heavily shaped by Michel Foucault's theories of power, discourse, and the relationship between knowledge and

social institutions. New Historicism also incorporated Clifford Geertz's view of culture as a system of symbolic forms that are socially constructed and historically transmitted. In addition, it drew on Louis Althusser's concept of ideology as a structure of meaning that sustains dominant power relations. These foundational ideas collectively informed the theoretical basis of New Historicism.

1.3.1. Michel Foucault

New Historicist critics found the basis of some of their assumptions in the writings of the twentieth-century French archaeologist, historian, critic, and philosopher Michel Foucault. His ideas significantly influenced New Historicism, particularly in its rejection of history as a linear or teleological progression. Foucault argued that history is not a straightforward sequence of events with a definite beginning, middle and an end, but rather a complex interplay of various discourses—artistic, social, political, etc.—that shape how people understand their world (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p. 189). This perspective led New Historicists to question the objectivity of historical narratives, emphasizing instead the cultural and social factors that shape historical records (Bressler, 2007, p. 189).

Central to Foucault's framework is the concept of the *episteme(s)*. In his book *The Order of Things*, Foucault (1966) described the episteme as similar to a historical period, referring not to historical events, but to the underlying structure and nature of knowledge that defines a given era (as cited in Brannigan, 1998). In other words, the concept of episteme refers to a unifying pattern of thought that defines a particular period in history (Bressler, 2007, p. 189). Gutting (2007) explained that episteme is the "system of concepts that defines knowledge for a given intellectual era" (p. 9). Foucault posited that each era develops its own perceptions of reality, truth, and acceptable behaviour shaped by discourses of that time (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p. 189). He used an archaeological method to analyse history, indicating that historians should dig

through layers of discourse to uncover the episteme of a period, much like an archaeologist digs through layers of earth to uncover artifacts.

Foucault also emphasized that historians are influenced by their own epistemes, making complete objectivity impossible. According to him, historians should piece together the different discourses and their relationship with nondiscursive practices, including cultural institutions like forms of government, to help define the episteme (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p. 189). The ideas of discontinuity, the subjectivity of historical interpretation are tide to Foucault's concept of episteme because each historical period's episteme shapes how reality and truth are perceived, leading to breaks between eras and influencing how historians interpret the past.

In order to situate the literary text in its historical context, the New Historicists, such as Stephen Greenblatt, Catharine Ghallagher, and Montrose, adopted Foucault's concept of episteme (Williams, 2003, p. 125; Brannigan, 1998, p. 15). Early New Historicist studies of the English Renaissance focused on tracing the shift from a pre-modern to modern episteme, particularly the emergence of the modern bourgeois concept of the individual. New Historicism was primarily concerned with identifying different epistemes as well as the historical development of ideas about the individual, state, family, culture, etc. Therefore, many scholars have viewed New Historicism as a renewed engagement with history (Brannigan, 1998, p. 8). By acknowledging the subjectivity of historical interpretation and discontinuities between episteme, New Historicism challenges the notion of a single, objective historical truth, and instead, explores how power, culture, and discourse intersect to shape literary works.

Foucault's theories on discourse, power and knowledge, further, informed New Historicism. His concepts of discourse, power and knowledge are deeply interwoven in his theoretical framework. Foucault defined (1970, 1972) discourse in different ways, emphasizing its role in shaping knowledge and power structures. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he

described discourse as "the general domain of all statements," as "an individualizable group of statements," and as "a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (Foucault, 1972, as cited in Mills, 1997, p. 53). Mills (1997) explained that this means that discourse encompasses all meaningful utterances, yet it also refers to specific groupings of statements, such as the discourse of femininity or racism. More importantly, discourse operates through implicit rules and structures that determine which statements are valid and who is authorized to speak. For instance, students learn to write academic essays without explicit instruction on the rules governing them, illustrating how discourse functions as an underlying framework that shapes knowledge production (Mills, 1997, pp. 53-54).

Besides, according to Miller (1990), Foucault conceptualized discourse as an active force that shapes reality rather than merely reflecting it. He argued that discourse is not "a transparent medium that 'mirrors' the world, but instead constructs the conditions under which knowledge is produced (Foucault, 1978, as cited in Miller, 1990, p. 116). This perspective aligns with Miller's claim that discourse does not provide direct access to an independent reality; rather, it determines what can be discussed and known.

A crucial aspect of Foucault's discourse theory is the relationship between discourse and power. He argued that discourse does not merely transmit knowledge but actively constructs and maintains power relations. He stated in *The History of Sexuality*, "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, 1976, as cited in Mills, 1997, p. 55). This challenges traditional Marxist views of ideology as purely oppressive, as Foucault emphasizes that discourse is both a tool of power and a site of resistance (Mills, 1997). Moreover, in *The Order of Discourse*, Foucault (1970) asserted that discourse does not simply reflect reality but imposes structures upon it, stating that "we must conceive of discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them" (as cited in Mills, 1997, p.

55). This means that discourse shapes perception, categorization, and meaning, rather than merely describing an objective reality (Mills, 1997).

Foucault (1981) also identified constraints that regulate discourse, ensuring that only certain statements gain authority while others are marginalized (as cited in Mills, 1997). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he described discourse as being "controlled, selected, organized and redistributed" through various procedures (Foucault, 1981, as cited in Mills, 1997, p. 57). This means that discourse is regulated in every society. Foucault outlined three major exclusionary practices: taboo, which limits discussion on certain topics (e.g., sexuality or death); the distinction between madness and sanity, which excludes the voices of the mentally ill; and the division between true and false. Individuals recognized as experts due to their authoritative positions are the ones granted the ability to define truth, while those without power are often dismissed as lacking credibility. Foucault argued that truth should not be regarded as self-evident; rather, it is sustained by a network of institutional structures, including universities, government agencies, publishing houses, and scientific organizations. These institutions play a crucial role in filtering discourse, endorsing statements they deem true while systematically marginalizing those they classify as false. This way these institutions determine what counts as legitimate knowledge (as cited in Mills, 1997, pp. 57-58). Accordingly, discourse is not neutral but it operates as an apparatus for producing and maintaining power.

Furthermore, Foucault examined the relationship between power and knowledge, arguing that historical shifts in knowledge are intertwined with new forms of power and domination (Rouse, 2007, p. 95). His studies in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), revealed how power is not merely repressive but also productive. Foucault's power/knowledge connection is particularly evident in his analysis of prisons and the discourse on sexuality, where knowledge about individuals, such as criminals or patient, was not merely descriptive but instrumental in exerting control over them (Rouse, 2007).

Power, in this sense, does not operate from a single, centralized authority but is dispersed through institutions, norms, and discursive practices, continuously shaping and reinforcing knowledge. Rouse (2007) explained that Foucault's examination of disciplinary power demonstrates how institutions like schools, hospitals, and prisons do more than regulate individuals; they actively produce knowledge that, in turn, legitimizes their methods of governance and social control (pp. 99-101).

Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge also challenges the traditional understanding of sovereignty and legitimacy, arguing that power is not merely a top-down force but a dynamic and relational network (Rouse, 2007). Unlike traditional political theory, which focuses on the authority of sovereign rulers, Foucault considered power as operating through everyday practices and discourses that define what is considered normal, deviant, or true. This shift is crucial because it undermines the idea that power can be understood purely in terms of legal authority or institutional control; instead, power operates through mechanisms and techniques such as surveillance, examination, and documentation, which classify and regulate individuals (Rouse 2007; Mills, 1997). Rouse (2007) observed how Foucault's studies of disciplinary practices reveal the emergence of new forms of knowledge and power that not only control individuals but also produce new objects of knowledge, such as categories of mental illness, criminality, and deviance (p. 102).

Besides, Foucault argued that power is not centralized but pervasive, operating through social institutions, cultural practices and discourses. He claimed that "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, as cited in Brannigan, 1998, pp. 8, 49). In this way, discourse, knowledge and power are inextricably linked. By linking power and knowledge in this way, Foucault demonstrated that truth itself is historically shaped by the very systems of power that claim to describe it.

The idea that power is pervasive—what Brannigan (1998) referred to as "power's pervasiveness"—forms a fundamental assumption among New Historicists who borrowed from Foucault's theory (p. 8). Therefore, New Historicists often frame their methodology as an act of exposition, aiming to uncover the mechanisms and operations of power. By doing so, they seek to enhance readers' ability to discern the underlying interests and power relations embedded in cultural texts. In addition, for New Historicists, power itself remains constant, but the ways it manifests change over time. In this regard, Brannigan (1998) noted: "the nature of power may remain the same, but the form that it takes does not," (p. 8). Drawing from Foucault, New Historicism focuses on tracing how power shifts across different historical periods. As Paul Hamilton (1996) indicated, this process reflects "the repetition of power through different epistemes" (as cited in Brannigan, 1998, p. 8).

Having explored Foucault's profound influence on New Historicism, particularly through his concepts of discourse, power and knowledge, it is essential to examine another key intellectual foundation of New Historicism: the work of Clifford Geertz. The following section explores how Geertz's anthropological theory, particularly his assumptions on culture and interpretation, further shaped the theoretical foundations and analytical methods of New Historicism.

1.3.2. Clifford Geertz

Clifford Geertz's theories and methodologies significantly influenced New Historicism by providing a framework for understanding culture, human behaviour, and the subjectivity of historical interpretation. Geertz asserted that there is "no human nature independent of culture" (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p. 190). This idea underscores that individuals are shaped entirely by their cultural context. Besides, Geertz defined culture as "a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions" that govern behaviour, suggesting that every individual can be seen as a "cultural artifact" moulded by these mechanisms (as cited in Bressler, 2007, p.

190). This perspective aligns with New Historicism's focus on how cultural forces shape human actions, texts, and historical events. More specifically, this perspective supports New Historicism's view that literary texts are cultural artifacts, embedded within and shaped by the discursive practices of their time. By adopting this approach, New Historicists analyse texts not as isolated works of art but as products of their cultural and historical conditions, reflecting the ideological forces at play in a given period.

Geertz's concept of the "information gap" further informs New Historicism's approach to interpreting history and culture (Bressler, 2007, p. 190). He argued that individuals experience a gap between their innate instincts and the knowledge required to function in society, leading to unique and subjective interpretations of the world. Similarly, society as a whole cannot fully comprehend every event or interaction among its members, so it fills these gaps with assumptions. This information gap, in both the individual and societal understanding, contributes to the subjectivity of history (Bressler, 2007). This idea applies to the New Historicist analysis of history. New Historicists argue that historical narratives are not objective truths but are constructed through subjective interpretations.

Furthermore, Geertz's influence extends to the methodological level as well, particularly through his concept of "thick description." Thick description refers to the meticulous examination of subtle, often overlooked details embedded in cultural practices. By paying close attention to these details, one can uncover the underlying tensions and contradictions that shape and define a culture (Bressler, 2007). Rather than merely documenting factual events, thick description seeks to interpret the deeper social conventions, cultural codes, and worldviews that shape these practices. This method applies to a wide range of cultural productions, including birthing rituals, ceremonies, legal systems, games, and artistic works, all of which reflect the values and structures of the society that produced them (Tyson, 2015, p. 274).

Unlike traditional Historicism, which often prioritizes major political or military events, thick description emphasizes the personal aspects of history, such as family relations, leisure activities, sexual and child-rearing practices. By shifting the focus towards private life, thick description addresses the limitations of traditional Historical analysis, ensuring that subjective and lived experiences are given due consideration in historical inquiry (Tyson, 2015, p. 274). Drawing on Geertz's idea, New Historicists assert that the various discourses within a culture must be analysed to reveal how they intersect with one another, as well as with institutions, individuals, and other cultural elements. These interactions among multiple discourses contribute to shaping a culture and linking all aspects of human activity, including the processes of writing, reading, and interpreting texts, which remain central to the New Historicist approach (Bressler, 2007, pp. 190-191).

Taken together, Clifford Geertz's theories profoundly shaped New Historicism by framing culture as foundational to human behaviour and historical interpretation. He argued that culture, as a system of "control mechanisms," moulds individuals into "cultural artifacts," aligning with New Historicism's view of texts as products of their cultural contexts. His concept of the "information gap" underscores historical subjectivity, as individuals and societies interpret incomplete realities through assumptions. Additionally, Geertz's "thick description" method, which prioritizes analysing everyday cultural practices over grand historical narratives, enables New Historicists to uncover contradictions in discourses and link all human activities, including textual creation and interpretation.

Having examined Clifford Geertz's anthropological approach to culture and its influence on New Historicism, it is now necessary to turn to the final major theoretical influence shaping this framework: the work of Louis Althusser. His Marxist theory provides a distinctive perspective on power, ideology, and the structure of society. Althusser's conception of how ideological forces shape history and culture offers a valuable foundation for understanding how

texts operate within specific historical and social contexts. The following section therefore examines how New Historicism incorporates Althusser's insights to explore the interplay of ideology and power in literary discourse.

1.3.3. Louis Althusser

Louis Althusser's theories, particularly his Marxist ideas about ideology and the role of literature influenced New Historicism. His theories on ideology as a material force that shapes consciousness and social structures are foundational for New Historicism, which emphasizes the role of literature and culture in reflecting and reinforcing the ideologies of their time (Lyu, 2021; Hickling, 2018; Elridge, 1993; Brannigan, 1998; Petcher, 1987). In his essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser (1970) posited that ideological state apparatuses —such as education, religion, the media, and the family—are essential in maintaining the power structures of society (as cited in Elridge, 1993, p. 190-192). These apparatuses are not simply tools of coercion but are deeply embedded in the cultural and ideological fabric of everyday life, shaping how individuals perceive and respond to their conditions of existence. The function of ideological state apparatuses is to reproduce the conditions of production and ensure that individuals accept their roles in society, often through a process called "interpellation," where individuals are "hailed" by ideology and come to recognize themselves as subjects within the existing social order (Elridge, 1993, pp. 198-205).

In this context, Althusser defined ideology as a "social practice" which is not merely a system of ideas but a set of practices that influence how individuals perceive and engage with the world, emphasizing its function to interpellate individuals, meaning that it constitutes them as subjects (as cited in Smith, 1989, p. 497). According to Althusser, ideology is constantly present, shaping both the material and mental worlds. This framework has profound implications for understanding art. In Althusser's view, art is not a neutral or autonomous sphere; instead, it is deeply intertwined with the ideological state apparatuses that sustain social

and economic relations. Artistic works, much like other cultural products, are shaped by the ideological forces in which they are produced (Elridge, 1993, pp. 190-193).

Furthermore, Althusser introduced "symptomatic reading" as a method of that goes beyond the surface of a text to uncover its underlying ideologies, similar to Freudian analysis of dreams (Smith, 1989, p. 494). The objective of this reading is not to interpret the author's intent but to reveal the unconscious assumptions embedded in the text. According to Althusser (1971), texts are never neutral; rather, they are influenced by the ideological structures that govern them, making it crucial to look beyond surface-level readings to expose these hidden forces (as cited in Smith, 1989). By focusing on these ideological forces, symptomatic reading challenges traditional interpretations that prioritize the author's intention. Althusser's emphasis is on identifying silences, absences, and unspoken elements that influence the text's meaning. This approach aims to uncover how ideology functions within texts, as texts are not neutral but are influenced by external ideologies that shape them. This underlines the New Historicists' emphasis on the historical and ideological context of texts, rejecting the idea that a text's meaning can be solely derived from the author's intentions or the text's internal coherence.

Additionally, Hickling (2018) discussed Althusser's influence on New Historicism, particularly his Marxist approach to understanding the relationship between literature and ideology. Althusser's theory posits that history is often constructed to serve the interests of the victors, with literature playing a crucial role in normalizing state power and reinforcing ideological structures. Hickling (2018) noted that this aligns with the core principles of New Historicism, which examines how cultural products, especially literary texts, interact with and participate in their historical context. Althusser's emphasis on the ideological influence of texts and their role in perpetuating dominant power relations is directly linked to New Historicist practices. Scholars like Stephen Greenblatt have drawn on Althusser's work to argue that texts are not just reflections of the past but actively shape and are shaped by the power relations of

their time (Hickling, 2018). This influence underscores New Historicism's focus on understanding texts within the complex web of historical and ideological forces that inform them.

After reviewing the profound influence of Michel Foucault's concepts of discourse, power, and knowledge, Clifford Geertz's anthropological approach to culture and interpretation, and Louis Althusser's ideas on ideology and the role of art in reinforcing social structures, it becomes clear how these Post-Structuralist theories have shaped the theoretical foundations of New Historicism. The following section explores how New Historicism integrates these theoretical insights. This exploration sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the main tenets and key concepts of New Historicism.

1.4. Main Tenets and Key Concepts in New Historicism

As a theoretical framework, New Historicism situates texts within their historical and cultural contexts. In this study, it provides the analytical foundation for examining presidential speeches as discursive practices that both shape and are shaped by their socio-political milieu. The New Historicist tenets of the historicity of the text and the textuality of history, along with key concepts such as discourse, ideology, power, subversion, and containment, are central to this interpretive approach, and form the theoretical foundation of this study's examination of President Bush's and Obama's speeches.

1.4.1. Historicity of the Text and Textuality of History

New Historicism is fundamentally characterized by a mutual focus on both the historical nature of texts and the textual nature of history. The American theorist, Luis Montrose (1989), encapsulated the core tenets of this theory as its focus on "the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (as cited in Brannigan, 1998, p. 203). These tenets set an inseparable relationship between history and literature. First, by "the historicity of texts," Montrose referred

to the idea that all literary works are historical events deeply embedded in their specific historical, cultural, and social contexts (Brannigan, 1998, p. 203). The notion of text as event allows New Historicists to acknowledge its function within a specific discourse under particular historical conditions. The idea of "the historicity of texts" further emphasizes that the text is "part of the process of historical change" (Brannigan, 1998, p. 203). As Brannigan (1998) noted, this perspective has moved New Historicist critics beyond viewing texts merely as reflections or rejections of historical trends. Second, by "the textuality of history," Montrose (1989) meant that history can only be accessed through its textual representations. In other words, history is viewed not to be a collection of unchanging objective facts and events, but rather as a text, similar to literature, that requires interpretation (as cited in Abrams & Harpham, 2012). As such, history is viewed by New Historicists as a fictional construct.

In their book *Practicing New Historicism*, through their exploration of culture as a text and history as a dynamic interplay between representation and real-world events, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) articulated, explored and applied the interconnected concepts of the "historicity of texts" and the "textuality of history," which serve as foundational tenets of the New Historicist approach. These ideas challenge the traditional separation between history and literature, suggesting instead that both are deeply intertwined and that historical texts and literary works are mutually constitutive. The core idea is that texts, whether historical, literary, or cultural, are embedded within their historical contexts, and in turn, they actively shape the understanding of that history.

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) explained the "historicity of texts" through several key arguments and methodological approaches, including texts as historical artifacts, integration of non-literary texts, anecdotes, considering culture as text, and representation, emphasizing that texts are not isolated but embedded in their historical and cultural contexts. Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt (2000) argued that literary works must be understood as historical

artifacts; as products of specific cultural moments rather than isolated creations of pure imagination. They insisted that any text is embedded in the concrete circumstances of its time and is part of a broader network of "cultural representations" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 15). From the outset, the authors emphasized "particularity" and context. They rejected approaches that treat literature as a "transhistorical truth," that is transcending history, or existing in a vacuum. Instead, they aligned with a tradition that sees art and history as deeply interwoven. For example, Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt (2000) cited Johann Gottfried von Herder's view that poetry is "the key to particular historically embedded social and psychological formations" (p. 7). Herder suggested that the first questions to consider about an art form like drama are: When and where was it created? Under what conditions? What factors influenced the author to create it? He argued that the true origins of art are not found in the talent of the individual artist but in the collective cultural and historical resources of a society at a specific time and place (Herder as cited in Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 7). Accordingly, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) embraced this historical line of inquiry, calling Herder's vision of the "mutual embeddedness of art and history" a foundation of their approach (p. 7).

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) supported the above argument by showing how to treat texts as historical artifacts. They broadened the scope of what counts as a relevant text or artifact for analysis. Unlike Formalist or Deconstructionist critics who often focus only on the literary canon, the New Historicists "impetuously rushed beyond the confines of the canonical garden" to consider all sorts of cultural documents and practices (p. 14). The authors explained that while traditional Deconstruction proclaimed "there is nothing outside of the text," New Historicism seeks insight at the level of the "culturally and historically specific" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 14).

Moreover, New Historicists often examine various types of texts, not just canonical literature, because any artifact – a diary, a pamphlet, a law, a ritual, an anecdote – might illuminate the cultural world that produced a Shakespearean play or a Victorian novel (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000). In their view, a play by Shakespeare is one artifact among many in the Renaissance "archive", and understanding it requires examining those other artifacts alongside it. Literary texts are, thus, analyzed as part of an extensive cultural archive. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) referred to "the vast array of textual traces in a culture", meaning everything from poems to legal records, and noted that these traces form "a massive text" of culture that the critic must navigate (p. 14).

Furthermore, Greenblatt recognized all texts, weather they are literary or non-literary, including history, as all cultural artifacts (Veenstra, 1995). This viewpoint underscores the importance of understanding the cultural and social contexts from which they emerge. Montrose (1989) stated that the historicity of texts involves the "cultural specificity, the social embodiment of texts, of all modes of writing" suggesting that texts are not isolated artifacts but are shaped by the ideologies, power structures, and material conditions of their time (as cited in Veenstra, 1995 p. 20). Therefore, it is essential to situate texts within the culture and the society that helped produce them.

However, the practical challenge New Historicists face is how to select and interpret the significant pieces of this archive in relation to a given literary work. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) openly acknowledged that determining which elements are appropriate for analysis becomes challenging when every cultural trace is seen as interconnected. In other words, once it is recognized that each literary text is embedded in a virtually limitless context, it becomes necessary to determine which contextual elements truly shed light on it. To address this, the authors adopted what Ezra Pound called "the method of Luminous Detail" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 15). Rather than attempting to create an exhaustive historical record, they

hunted for small but revealing details, such as anecdotes, incidents, marginal documents, that "illuminate" the relationship between the work and its world. "We attempt to isolate significant or 'interpreting detail' from the mass of traces that have survived in the archive," Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) wrote (p. 15). This way, they focused on finding small, revealing details in the text that can illuminate larger historical truths. They emphasized that one of the central tasks of the New Historicist critic is to find these details, which might not be immediately obvious but are essential for understanding the relationship between the text and its historical context.

This practice of focusing on telling luminous details is evident in the case studies which Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) presented in their book. For example, the chapter of "The Mousetrap" reinterprets Shakespeare's Hamlet by uncovering its context, namely the fierce religious disputes over the Eucharist in Elizabethan England (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 136). The authors traced the detail of the anecdote of a mouse's entrails—a story about a mouse eating the consecrated host—and showed that this detail actually leads into the doctrinal debates on the Real Presence of Christ's body in the sacrament. They connected Hamlet's preoccupation with bodily corruption and ghostly presence to the era's theological anxieties. This example illustrates Gallagher and Greenblatt's method: a literary text is read through a non-literary text (in this case, a religious anecdote), revealing how the play is in conversation with its historical context.

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) presented the literary work not as a self-contained artwork but as one node in a web of social discourse, material conditions, and institutional pressures. By bringing in these "supplementary" contextual materials, they embedded the literary narrative within a larger cultural narrative (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 26). Crucially, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) argued that this approach does not diminish the aesthetic or imaginative power of literature; instead, it deepens understanding by situating

artistic creativity within the "creative matrices" of its time (p. 16). The text is, then, an artifact that is shaped by history.

To reinforce their view of texts as historical artifacts, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) also redefine some fundamental critical terms. One of the "transformations" New Historicism brings is "the recasting of discussions about 'art' into discussions of 'representations'" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 17). By using the term "representation", they removed the hierarchy that places great literature above other forms of expression. A court sermon, a popular pamphlet, a painting, or a stage play are all treated as cultural representations that reflect and affect the historical world. This means Shakespeare's plays, for instance, are studied alongside the religious tracts, political documents, and folk beliefs of his era; all are part of the textual fabric of Renaissance culture. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) noted that in the "larger perspective of the cultural text," even distinctions like fiction versus reality or art versus life become blurred. "If an entire culture is regarded as a text, then everything is at least potentially in play both at the level of representation and at the level of event," they observed (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 15).

A representation, like a poem or play, is not sealed off from real events; rather, representing and doing are intertwined; the act of representation can itself be a historical event . This premise justifies reading literature alongside "real" historical data, since both reside on the same plane of cultural signification. It also leads to what Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) called a "sense of archival and interpretive inexhaustibility" (p. 15). This means that there is always some new historical trace to pursue, always another connection to uncover between text and context. Accordingly, New Historicist critics view literary interpretation as an open-ended historical investigation, treating texts as artifacts whose meanings can only be revealed through thorough exploration of their context.

Having established that texts are historically grounded, New Historicism reconsiders not only the historical contexts of literary and cultural works, but also the ways in which history itself is constructed. While texts are shaped by the histories of their time, history, in turn, is shaped by the texts that are created. This approach leads to the second fundamental tenet of New Historicism: "the textuality of history". The focus here moves from seeing texts as products of history to viewing history itself as a form of text, constructed, mediated, and interpreted through cultural narratives that define each era.

In *Practicing New Historicism*, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) developed the concept of the "textuality of history" through their reconceptualization of how historical reality is constituted and interpreted. Rather than treating history as a stable backdrop against which texts operate, they argued that history itself is constructed through textual practices; a web of narratives, representations, and discursive exchanges that shape what we can know about the past. This tenet emerges most forcefully in their analyses of Renaissance art, anecdotes, and material culture, where they demonstrate how historical reality is always mediated through textual and visual traces. In exploring the tenet of the "textuality of history," this section presents Gallagher and Greenblatt's key aspects of viewing history as a being shaped through cultural texts, history as a narrative and the blurring boundaries between history and representation.

In New Historicism, the tenet of the "textuality of history" challenges the conventional understanding of history as a fixed, objective recounting of past events and facts. Instead, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) argued that history is constructed through cultural texts and is intertwined with culture. They stated that "the notion of a culture as text has a further major attraction: it vastly expands the range of objects available to be read and interpreted" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 9). This suggests that historical events are always mediated through cultural texts that society produces, whether, according to Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), are

works of literature, visual art such as paintings, social rituals, or other forms of expression. These texts are the means through which history is interpreted, and they shape how historical events are understood.

Not only does the "textuality of history" encompasses the aspect of history being constructed through cultural texts, but it also includes the concept of history as a text. The phrase "textuality of history" itself implies that history is made of texts, history is framed as a narrative, just like any literary text, that is deeply shaped and constructed through cultural representations (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000).

Besides, the idea of blurry boundaries between what is an event and what is a representation is an important aspect of the notion of history as a text. Traditional historiography often draws clear distinctions between historical events (the real past) and representations of those events (literature, art, media, etc.). However, New Historicism argues that this boundary is unclear and, in fact, history itself is a form of representation. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) noted, "it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a clear, unambiguous boundary between what is representation and what is event" (p. 15). This blurring of boundaries means that the study of history also involves the study of literature, art, and other cultural forms that reflect and construct understanding of the past. History, like a text, is open to interpretation and re-interpretation, shaped by the ways in which cultural representations communicate ideas about the past. Events are not simply facts but are embedded in cultural narratives that determine how they are understood and remembered. The interpretation of history, therefore, is not simply a matter of reconstructing the past but involves understanding the way historical events are framed, represented, and mediated by cultural texts.

In this framework, historical representations are not passive reflections of reality but active constructions that shape and reshape what is understood as the past. Every cultural artifact becomes a text that participates in the creation of historical narratives. This concept

challenges the traditional view that history is a straightforward recording of events and instead emphasizes the interpretive and contingent nature of historical knowledge.

Furthermore, Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) developed a sophisticated methodology that treats history as fundamentally textual, arguing that the past is accessible only through its discursive traces, by analyzing texts and artifacts through a lens that treats history as a narrative constructed through cultural representations rather than a fixed record of events. This approach is evident in their treatment of anecdote that exemplifies their core argument about the textuality of history, which they analyzed not as transparent windows into historical reality but as carefully constructed narratives (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 21).

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) defined the anecdote as a small, vivid narrative fragment that serves as a tool for historical and literary analysis. They emphasized its ability to disrupt grand historical narratives ("*grands récits*") and to create a sense of immediacy or "the touch of the real" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, pp. 49-50). The Moroccan sheep-stealing story from Geertz's fieldwork serves as their foundational example, demonstrating how ethnographic anecdotes gain their power precisely through their double status as vivid, seemingly "raw" encounters and carefully constructed texts (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, pp. 21-23).

By presenting the story without explanatory framing, a tribal leader named Cohen, a French soldier, and a Jewish merchant entangled in a conflict over stolen sheep, Geertz created an effect of unmediated historical presence. Yet as Gallagher and Greenblatt emphasized (2000), this rawness is itself a rhetorical strategy; the anecdote's resistance to immediate interpretation mirrors the anthropologist's experience of cultural difference while simultaneously demanding the reader's active hermeneutic engagement. This tension between presence and mediation encapsulates what they term "the touch of the real" (p. 31), where historical reality feels most tangible precisely when we recognize its textual construction. They

underscored this point by quoting Geertz saying that the anecdotes are "really our own constructions of other people's constructions" (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 23).

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) extended this approach to their analysis of Uccello's *Profanation of the Host* altarpiece, particularly the predella painting, depicting a Jewish desecration of a Eucharistic Host (pp. 97-102). This story, repeated in sermons, written accounts, religious plays, and artwork, tells of a Jewish man who buys a consecrated communion wafer. His goal is twofold: to desecrate it and to prove Christian belief in the Eucharist is foolish. But when he stabs and boils the host, it miraculously bleeds and transforms into flesh. In different versions of the story, this miracle either leads to his conversion to Christianity or his execution by burning (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000, p. 87). The story vividly embodies Christian Eucharistic doctrine, and works to resolve doubts about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This is contrasted with the more doctrinal and abstract representations in the upper panels of the altarpiece, which focus on institutional and structural ideas rather than specific events (pp. 83-87).

Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) examined how visual anecdotes can challenge doctrinal formalism. The "wound in the wall," through which the host's blood miraculously seeps, serves both as a narrative device (exposing the crime) and as a metaphor for representation (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000, p. 98). Just as Geertz's anecdote balances between raw immediacy and constructedness, Uccello's blood operates simultaneously as a sign of divine truth and mere paint on canvas. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) used the painting as an example to show how representations of history are not fixed but are shaped by the cultural and ideological contexts in which they are produced. Uccello's predella is analyzed through this lens to explore the intersection of doctrinal narratives and legendary storytelling, revealing how both elements of representation reflect and affect societal beliefs.

The hole in the wall where the blood escapes, according to Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), has a dual purpose: it functions as a narrative device within the story while simultaneously showing how artificial the whole scene is (p. 97). Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) argued that such paintings do not merely depict historical events but demonstrate how history is actively constructed through carefully designed representations that blend factual and fictional elements.

Studying how this small painting tells its story—what it includes, what it omits, and how it seeks to persuade its audience—reveals that all history reaches its audience through such kinds of constructed texts and images, never entirely objective or complete. The blood that is both a holy miracle and plain paint encapsulates this idea, illustrating how even the most authoritative historical claims rely on the narratives and pictures through which they are conveyed (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 99). Therefore, history is textual.

While the historicity of texts and textuality of history reveal how cultural works are embedded in and actively reshape their historical moments, New Historicism further extends this inquiry by examining discourse as a medium of power. By analyzing how language, narratives, and institutions collaborate to enforce or subvert authority, this approach exposes the ongoing struggle between dominant ideologies and marginalized perspectives. Hence, the ensuing section explores the role of discourse, from a New Historicist perspective, as a vehicle for ideology as well as power.

1.4.2. Discourse, Ideology and Power Relations

New Historicism involves more than just reading literature within its historical context. It also examines the intricate relationship between texts and the social forces that produce them. This approach moves beyond the idea of literature as a passive reflection of history, viewing it instead as an active participant in the construction of meaning within a given cultural and

political framework. In this sense, New Historicism delves into how ideologies, power relations, discursive formations and various modes of representation shape the narrative (Brannigan, 1998, p. 151). By situating literary works within the broader web of historical and ideological interactions, New Historicism reveals how texts both express and contest the power structures of their time.

New Historicism emerged partly in response to traditional Marxist ideology critique. Marxist ideology critique, which dominated mid-twentieth-century literary analysis, assumed that ideology functioned as "false consciousness" (Jay, 1993, p. 149). Yet Greenblatt and Gallagher (2000) distanced themselves from this approach acknowledging: "We have found ourselves [...] slowly forced to transform the notion of ideology critique into discourse analysis" because they were "uncomfortable" with "key concepts as superstructure and base or imputed class consciousness" (p. 9). Their shift signalled a move away from viewing ideology as a singular system that mystifies subjects, towards a conception of cultural meaning shaped through multiple, competing, historically contingent practices of representation.

New Historicist critics, therefore, treat a work of art or any other text and even social activities as forms of discourse. No longer is one discourse superior to another, but all are necessary components that shape and are shaped by society (Bressler, 2007, p. 193). Influenced by Foucault's conceptualization of discourse, New Historicism views discourse as a form of social language created by specific cultural conditions in a given time and place, reflecting a particular way of understanding human experiences (Tyson, 2015, p. 270). Stephen Greenblatt (1980) argued in his introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* that "the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power" (as cited in Brannigan, 1998, p. 56). He indicated that written texts are deliberately situated within particular communities, social context, and power structure. Montrose expanded on this idea by analyzing how the pastoral literary form serves as a vehicle in mediating power relations (as

cited in Brannigan, 1998, p. 56). Hence, discourse, as understood in this framework, refers to the ways in which texts reflect, shape and negotiate power relations.

On the other hand, any text, rather than reflecting an external reality, is understood as a discourse composed of what are called representations. The new historicist term of representations refers to "verbal formations which are the ideological products or cultural constructs" of a specific historical period (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 245). New Historicists contended that these cultural and ideological representations primarily serve to reinforce, confirm and propagate the intricate power structures of dominance and subordination within a society (Abrams & Harpham, 2012).

While discourse and ideology are closely related and often used interchangeably, discourse specifically emphasizes the role of language as the primary vehicle through which ideology is communicated and perpetuated (Tyson, 2015, p. 270). According to Tyson (2015), discourse encompasses not only the content of ideas but also the linguistic structures and rhetorical strategies that shape how those ideas are expressed, received, and normalized within a society. This focus on language underscores the performative power of discourse, as it actively constructs and reinforces social realities, power relations, and cultural norms. For instance, dominant ideologies, such as those related to gender, race, or class, are not merely abstract concepts but are embedded in the everyday language and institutional practices that govern societal interactions. Through discourse, these ideologies become naturalized, appearing as common sense or universal truths, even as they serve to maintain existing power hierarchies.

At the same time, discourse also provides a space for resistance and negotiation, as marginalized groups can challenge dominant narratives by redefining or subverting the language used to describe their experiences (Tyson, 2015, p. 271-280). In Tyson's exploration, discourse emerges as a central concept in New Historicist analysis, offering a framework for

understanding how language mediates power, ideology, and cultural meaning. This perspective bridges the gap between the historicity of texts and the textuality of history, demonstrating how discourse serves as a key mechanism through which historical narratives are constructed, contested, and transformed.

Moreover, no single discourse, form a New Historicist perspective, can fully account for the complex cultural dynamics of social power (Tyson, 2015). This is because there is no "monolithic spirit of an age," nor a comprehensive explanation of history that serves as a universal key to understanding all aspects of a culture. Instead, there is "a dynamic, unstable interplay among discourses" which always interact in complex, overlapping and conflicting ways. Stated differently using New Historicist terminology, discourses are always "negotiating" exchanges of power rather than remain fixed (Tyson, 2015, p. 270). Besides, no discourse holds permanent authority; while it empowers those in control, it also provokes resistance. This belief underpins New Historicist view that individual identity and society shape each other.

In this way, New Historicism fundamentally reconceptualizes the relationship between discourse, ideology, and power, rejecting Marxist models that treated ideology as false consciousness imposed by ruling classes operates. Discourse functions as both a tool of power and a site of contestation, reflecting the broader New Historicist concern with the interplay between cultural expression and socio-political structures. By analyzing discourse, critics can uncover how ideologies are constructed, circulated, and contested, revealing the ways in which language shapes, and is shaped by historical and cultural contexts. This approach aligns with New Historicism's commitment to exploring the reciprocal relationship between texts and their socio-historical environments, as well as its focus on the material conditions that influence the production and reception of cultural artifacts.

Having explored how discourse, ideology, and power relations are conceived within the New Historicist framework, it becomes necessary to extend this discussion to the mechanisms through which power is negotiated, resisted, and reaffirmed within cultural and political texts. New Historicism does not treat power as fixed or unilateral; rather, it emphasizes its circulation through a continuous interplay of resistance and reinforcement. This circulation ensures that power is never total or uncontested, but instead is continually challenged, renegotiated, and even undermined from within its own structures. It is in this context of perpetual negotiation that the New Historicist concepts of subversion and containment become crucial. The following section turns to these twin concepts to examine how cultural works, including presidential speeches, operate within this tension.

1.4.3. Subversion and Containment

The concept of subversion and containment represents an essential principle of New Historicism and is central to Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicist approach to literature (Lyu, 2021; Brannigan, 2011). Subversion and containment should not be understood as an opposition; however, it is a conceptual pattern, or what Abrams and Harpham (2012) called "the subversion-containment dialectic" (p. 249). On the one hand, this concept revolves around the central thesis that any long-lasting political or cultural system maintains its authority by not only permitting but also deliberately nurturing certain "subversive" forces, yet in a controlled way that enables it to effectively "contain" potential challenges to the established order (Abrams & Harpham, 2012). In this regard, Montrose defined subversion and containment as an interconnected mechanism through which power functions through the production of contradictions to reinforce itself. He characterised the dialectic of subversion and containment as "the capacity of the dominant order to generate subversion so as to use it to its own ends marks the very condition of power" (Montrose as cited in Balkaya, 2014, p. 7071). This means

power does not simply resist or suppress contradictory forces, rather, it produces those contradictions as part of its own operation.

Brannigan clarified this point by noting that "power can only define itself in relation to subversion, to what is alien or other, and at the heart of power is therefore the production and subsequent containment of subversion" (as cited in Balkaya, 2014, p. 7075). Following this logic, the present study aims to show how political discourse, specifically the speeches of Presidents Bush and Obama, constructs contradictions as forms of subversion, only to subsequently contain them. In so doing, these speeches neutralize challenges to dominant ideological frameworks while simultaneously reinforcing the very structures of power they seem to question.

On the other hand, Brannigan (2011) summarized the meaning of subversion and containment by observing that New Historicist critics agree that literature, similar to other forms of writing, creates the potential for "subversion" directed at the state, only to ultimately "contain" and neutralize that very subversion (p. 422). Brannigan's point articulates the New Historicist belief that cultural texts do not simply challenge dominant ideologies, rather, they stage moments of dissent in ways that reaffirm the authority of the prevailing order. In this sense, the production of subversion becomes an essential mechanism through which power defines, sustains and legitimizes itself. Building on this premise, the present study seeks to demonstrate how political discourse, most notably the speeches delivered by Presidents Bush and Obama, generates dissent as a form of subversion, only to subsequently contain it. By doing so, these speeches work to neutralize challenges to dominant ideological frameworks while simultaneously reinforcing the very structures of power they appear to question.

This theoretical assumption and reading strategy can be illustrated through the critical practices of Greenblatt, Montrose and Miller. First, Greenblat revealed the processes of subversion and containment in his seminal 1988 essay *Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority*

and its Subversion, Henry IV and Henry V. Hohendahl (1992) mentioned that Greenblatt identified a pattern in which authority is simultaneously undermined and reinforced, and this pattern emerges directly from the contradictions embedded within the political and ideological discourses that inform the plays. Just as Harriot's colonial report reveals that the "radical undermining of Christian order" becomes the condition for reinstating that same order, Shakespeare's histories dramatize a similar tension (Hohendahl, 1992, p. 95). That is power exposes its own vulnerabilities even as it uses those vulnerabilities to secure itself. This inherent contradiction is not an incidental feature but the very mechanism that generates subversive energies within the plays (Hohendahl, 1992).

In *Henry IV*, the contradiction is embodied in Prince Hal, whose double identity destabilizes the coherence of royal authority. Hal's movement between the world of taverns and the sphere of kingship produces a contradiction between disorder and political destiny that Greenblatt read as deeply subversive (Hohendahl, 1992). Hal's behaviour "raises hopes in men only to disappoint them," revealing the instability of the structures he later inherits (Hohendahl, 1992, p. 95). However, this contradiction is ultimately absorbed back into the affirmation of monarchy. Hal's seeming rebellion becomes the very process through which he legitimizes his future rule. The contradiction, therefore, functions as a subversive moment that is later contained and redirected into the consolidation of political authority.

Sakespeare's play *Henry V* extends this dialectical structure by showing how royal authority depends on the manipulation and management of ideological contradictions. Hohendahl (1992) indicated that Shakespeare's histories operate within the same circuits of power they appear to question. In *Henry V*, the king's theatrical self-presentation, his rhetorical appeals, and his strategic concealments reveal the contradictory nature of leadership. Henry V must embody both humility and absolute command, both piety and calculated force. These contradictions generate subversive possibilities by exposing the artificiality of royal power. But,

consistent with Greenblatt's model, the play reinscribes these contradictions into a narrative of national unity and political legitimacy, demonstrating how containment transforms subversion into an instrument of authority (Hohendahl, 1992). Thus, in both *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, contradiction is the central engine through which subversion arises and through which authority ultimately absorbs and stabilizes it.

Second, Brannigan (2011) presented Montrose's essay, *Shaping Fantasies*, that was published in 1986 in *Representations*, as exemplifying the New Historicist framework of subversion and containment. Montrose investigated how Elizabeth I's political authority was constructed and maintained through shared cultural narratives. Rather than treating Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the primary text and historical documents as secondary evidence, Montrose reads the play alongside a dream described in the autobiography of Simon Forman, an influential Elizabethan medical guide, a colonial travel account by Sir Walter Raleigh and additional narratives about journeys to the Amazon. Montrose (1986) demonstrated that these works employ similar images, themes, and metaphors, all of which directly influence how power is represented in Elizabethan society. Montrose (1986) analyzed Shakespeare's play alongside medical, colonial, and travel accounts to show how the public image of Queen Elizabeth I was constructed and circulated. His work shows how literary works and non-literary texts are mutually dependent, i.e., they are shaped by social and political discourse while simultaneously helping to shape it (Montrose, 1986, as cited in Brannigan, 2011).

Brannigan (2011) examined Greenblatt's and Montrose's positions on subversion and containment in order to draw attention to a significant theoretical shift. For Greenblatt, all kinds of texts show us moments of subversion, but they do so in order to neutralise them; power needs some visible representation of threat, dissent, or contradiction so that it can justify its own operations, and therefore "subversion is always exposed only to be made safe" (p. 422). In this

view, representation functions primarily as a safety mechanism; it stages challenges to authority so that they can be absorbed back into the dominant order, reinforcing rather than undermining existing power structures.

Montrose (1986), however, is described as complicating this logic in the specific context of Elizabethan culture. The text stresses that, for him, "representations of Elizabethan forms of power are less effective in containing subversive possibilities than Greenblatt allows," because Elizabeth's authority as a woman ruling a strongly patriarchal society is intrinsically precarious and riddled with "contradictions and complications" that must be constantly "manipulated and managed" at both bureaucratic and symbolic levels (as cited in Brannigan, 2011, p. 422). Within this unstable configuration, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does not simply display subversion in order to neutralise it; rather, it threatens the Queen's powerful role as the mother of the state by establishing male-centric powers, marking a historical moment when the symbolic status of the virgin Queen had become uncertain. On this basis, Brannigan (2011) concluded that Montrose advances a "more complex and inherently unstable notion of power" than Greenblatt does, in which subversion is not always securely contained but can contribute to the visible instability of an epoch's modes of power (p. 423).

Furthermore, Brannigan (2011) compared the work of Montrose and D. A. Miller to understand common and different features of New Historicist criticism. Miller's essay *Discipline in Different Voices* employs Foucault's and, to a lesser extent, Baudrillard's theories of the carceral to analyse how Dickens's *Bleak House* represents carceral structures in Victorian England. However, Miller's focus is narrower than that of Greenblatt and Montrose. He concentrated on a single novel rather than investigating how power relations and their representation shift across multiple texts and contexts. His analysis remains confined to *Bleak House* itself and does not explore a broader discursive formation composed of different genres,

as Montrose does. As a result, Miller's work functions more as an application of a Foucauldian concept to literature than as a genealogy of power (as cited in Brannigan, 2011).

Yet Miller and Montrose shared a fundamental position, both regard literary texts as bound to their contexts, and Miller's treatment of *Bleak House* as a vehicle for the carceral in Victorian Britain reflects his conviction that literary texts are rooted in social and political discourses (as cited in Brannigan, 2011). Miller identified a specific function for the novel within these discourses. It offers readers comfort by creating an apparent separation between repressive institutional spaces where power acts upon individuals and a supposedly free, private, and safe liberal world outside, typically imagined as the family home. While Miller did not directly address subversion, his argument implies that power deploys cultural forms such as Dickens's novel to defend itself against subversive threats. *Bleak House* reinforces this by reminding readers and families that beyond the safety and comfort of home lurk the prison, workhouse, and mental hospital, thereby cautioning against any breach of the settled order and values of domestic life.

In his simplified version of Foucauldian ideas about textual function, Miller argued that the novel conveys two messages: that institutions require reform and that families must guard against internal conflict. Miller also noted that the connection between the novel and the carceral emerges from the specific forms each assumed in the Victorian era, which thus possesses its own distinct mode of power (as cited in Brannigan, 2011). In this respect, Brannigan (2011) maintained that except for the first criterion of reading across multiple texts and genres mentioned earlier, Miller's essay manifests the core features of New Historicist criticism, most importantly the view that literary and all other texts serve as vehicles of power.

In conclusion, the New Historicist concept of subversion and containment reveals how power produces and absorbs threats to authority, yet the framework itself remains contested across different critics. Greenblatt's model, exemplified in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry*

V, presents subversion and containment as complementary processes where contradictions strengthen rather than destabilize power. However, Montrose complicated this framework by arguing that in contexts where authority is unstable, such as Elizabeth I's position as a female ruler, subversive possibilities cannot be as securely contained as Greenblatt suggested. While Miller reinforced that literary texts function as vehicles of power, his analysis suggests alternative mechanisms of containment beyond Greenblatt's model. Collectively, these critics demonstrate that subversion and containment operate as historically specific processes rather than uniform mechanisms.

This study applies Greenblatt's model to presidential discourse, arguing that speeches strategically raise subversive possibilities through contradiction and dissent only to contain and neutralize them. By exposing contradictions or generating dissenting voices, presidential speeches create moments of apparent critique that generate doubt about authority. Yet these subversive moments are absorbed back into affirmation of presidential power, transforming potential threats into mechanisms that strengthen the dominant political order.

This firs part of chapter one has examined New Historicism as a framework that connects texts with their historical and cultural contexts. It draws on Post-Structuralist insights from theorists like Michel Foucault, Clifford Geertz, and Louis Althusser, illuminating the interplay between discourse, ideology and power. Key tenets such as the historicity of the text, the textuality of history, in addition to key concepts of representation, discourse, ideology, power relations, subversion and containment, have been discussed as central to understanding how texts both shape and are shaped by their context. The second and next part of this chapter turns its focus to Discourse Analysis.

1.5. Discourse Analysis: An Overview and Characteristics

While this study does not adopt Discourse Analysis as a formal analytical method, its inclusion in the theoretical framework is justified by the discursive nature of the selected texts. Presidential speeches are a strategic form of discourse aimed at producing, legitimizing, and disseminating particular visions of identity, power, and global order. The study, therefore, draws conceptually on discourse theory to underscore the importance of language as a medium through which ideology is constructed and circulated. However, rather than applying a specific model of discourse analysis, such as those proposed by Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, or Michel Foucault, the thesis situates discourse within the broader historical and cultural analysis enabled by New Historicism. In this sense, Discourse Analysis serves not as a method but as a conceptual background that reinforces the interpretive assumptions of the New Historicist approach. As this study seeks to conduct a discourse analysis, it is important to clarify the concept as well as the scope of Discourse Analysis. In so doing, this chapter delves into explaining what Discourse Analysis is, and clarifying the meaning of key concepts of text, discourse, political discourse, and foreign policy discourse.

In recent decades, the term “discourse analysis” has spread across many academic domains. Zelling Harris (1951, 1952) coined the term discourse analysis to describe the study of interconnected spoken and written language (as cited in Alba-Juez, 2009, p. 13). Fairclough (2013a) held that the field of Discourse Analysis (DA), within the broader academic discipline of linguistics, is a comparatively new one. The foundations of discourse analysis theory are established in structural linguistics. However, due in large part to the linguists and researchers who contributed to the current development of discourse analysis, it has recently become a separate field in its own right.

In *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* by Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000), Discourse Analysis is positioned as a method for investigating the ways in which

discourse shapes and structures social and political realities. The authors defined Discourse Analysis as a critical and systematic approach that seeks to understand the relationship between language, power, and social practices. It involves examining the ways in which discursive formations, the particular ways in which things are talked about, construct meaning, influence social relations, and contribute to the creation of power structures. Discourse Analysis, as defined by Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000), goes beyond simply examining language as a set of words or texts. It considers language as part of social practice. That is, language is seen as a key element in the construction of social realities (p. 4). Discourse Analysis, therefore, is not just concerned with what is being said, but also with how, why, and by whom certain things are said. This emphasis on language as a social practice allows Discourse Analysis to explore how discourses create and maintain power relations and social norms. Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) further explained that Discourse Analysis is concerned with how particular representations of social, political, and cultural phenomena become dominant or marginalized.

Discourse Analysis is fundamentally the academic study of language as a form of social interaction. It is a cross-disciplinary practice of critical inquiry for discourse studies across the linguistics borders into other fields. McCarthy (2000) noted that DA emerged during the 1960s and early 1970s from research conducted across several fields, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Discourse analysists examine language as it is used, analyzing both written texts of various types and spoken language ranging from everyday conversation to formal, institutional forms of speech (p. 5).

In the light of the cross-disciplinary nature of DA, this study seeks to undertake discourse analysis of political discourse from the lenses of a literary approach of criticism, that of New Historicism. The choice of this approach is justified, first, by the fact that both New Historicism and Discourse Analysis study texts and their socio-cultural functions. Second, both

of them explain the circulation and production of meaning in specific historical moments, and share a micro-analytic mode of interpretation.

Furthermore, a central aspect of Discourse Analysis in this context is the relationship between discourse and power. As Foucault argued, discourse is not neutral; it is bound up with power relations (as cited in Howarth, Norval & Stavrakakis, 2000). Those who control discourse also control how reality is framed and understood. Discourse Analysis examines how dominant groups or institutions maintain power by shaping the discursive field, by controlling what can and cannot be said, and by producing truths that serve their interests. Ideology is, thus, often embedded within discourse, serving to legitimize power structures and social inequalities. In this case, Critical Discourse Analysis emerged as a stream of thought within Discourse Analysis (Alba-Juez, 2009, p. 12).

Another critical aspect of discourse analysis is its historical and contextual approach. Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) stated that discourses are shaped by specific historical and social contexts. Discourse Analysis, therefore, involves tracing the development of particular discourses over time, understanding how they emerge, evolve, and interact with other discourses. It seeks to understand the historical and political conditions that give rise to particular ways of talking about the world. This means that Discourse Analysis focuses on describing spoken and written language in light of the context in which they are used. In addition to that, according to McCarthy (2000), discourse analysis is concerned with "the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used" (p. 5). That is to say, in order to interpret and fully understand language use within a given context, Discourse Analysis therefore implies a link between language and context. Accordingly, the study of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used is applicable to the analysis of political discourse.

Overall, Discourse analysis is not simply about describing how discourse works but also about critically engaging with it. It aims to uncover the power relationships embedded in discourses and to challenge those that reinforce inequality, oppression, or domination (Alba-Juez, 2009). In this sense, Discourse Analysis has an emancipatory potential, as it provides the tools to reveal how social norms, ideologies, and practices can be contested and transformed through new ways of speaking and thinking. Discourse analysis involves a detailed examination of texts, speeches, media representations, and other forms of discourse. It examines the structure of language, the choice of words, metaphors, framing, and narrative strategies, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning. Discourse analysis can be applied to a wide range of texts and communication forms, from political speeches to media coverage to everyday interactions (Alba-Juez, 2009).

By and large, Discourse Analysis is a methodological approach that examines language as a form of social practice, emphasizing how texts and conversations shape and are shaped by their historical contexts. It investigates how language constructs meaning beyond mere words, uncovering the underlying assumptions, and power relations that are embedded in everyday communication and institutional practices. Drawing on insights from linguistics, sociology, and critical theory, this approach views language as an interactive process, rather than a fixed system of rules, and employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze patterns of discourse.

By focusing on the interplay between text, context, and interpretation, Discourse Analysis reveals how narratives are formed, maintained, and contested, and how they contribute to the construction of social identities and the reinforcement or disruption of established hierarchies. This analytical framework not only enhances our understanding of how language functions in various settings but also serves as a critical tool for exploring the subtle ways in which power operate within society. Therefore, one might ask this question: What

does Discourse Analysis actually involve, the study of text or discourse? To address this issue, the next section clarifies the distinction between the terms "text" and "discourse".

1.6. Text and Discourse

Discourse is a broad term with several definitions integrating meanings from different disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy, etc. it can signify one thing in linguistics and another in sociology or philosophy. The word discourse is, however, ambiguous and it has got an unclearly specific usage in linguistics. It is basically defined by the linguist Fairclough (2013b) as being "language as a form of social practice" (p. 18). Fairclough (2013b) explained that language is a part of society and a socially conditioned process. In this regard, he made the difference between text and discourse holding that discourse refers to "the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part" (Fairclough, 2013b, p. 20).

Moreover, Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000), framed discourse as a complex and multifaceted concept that is central to understanding the interplay of political and social life. They defined discourse as a structured system of meaning that shapes how individuals and groups understand the world. It is not just a set of words or texts but encompasses the larger meanings that those words communicate. Discourse, in this sense, is a framework through which social realities are constructed and understood. This perspective aligns with social constructivist theories, where meaning is not inherent in things but is rather constructed through language and social interaction. Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) also viewed discourse as a form of social practice (pp. 3-4). This means that discourse is both a reflection of power relations and a medium through which power is exercised. The way language is used can enforce certain norms, values, and power structures within a society. Discourse, therefore, is seen as constitutive of social order and change, rather than just a passive reflection of existing structures.

Additionally, Power plays a critical role in the definition of discourse in this context (Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis, 2000, Fairclough, 2013b). Discourse is inherently linked to power relations because the ability to define and control discourse means the ability to influence social and political realities. Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) emphasized how those in power can shape the discourse to their advantage by determining what is considered normal, truthful, or acceptable within a society. Besides, they argued that discourse is not static but evolves over time. Discourse is shaped by historical and cultural contexts, and it adapts to the changing dynamics of society. The meanings embedded in discourse are not fixed; they can shift depending on the time, place, and socio-political conditions.

Finally, Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis (2000) tied discourse to the construction of identity. The way people speak, categorize, and relate to others is influenced by the discourses available to them. Political identities, social roles, and group affiliations are all formed and reformed through discursive practices. In this sense, discourse is not only a vehicle for political and social communication but also an instrument through which identity is negotiated.

On the other hand, a text is defined in different ways. Schiffrin (1994) explained the meaning of text through drawing the difference between the terms “text” and “context”. According to her, the term “text” serves to distinguish the actual linguistic material, what speakers articulate through verbal communication, from the surrounding circumstances in which that communication takes place (context). When examining utterances, “text” refers specifically to the linguistic content itself; the fixed semantic meanings conveyed by words, expressions, and sentences, excluding the interpretations and conclusions that listeners may draw based on the particular contexts surrounding those linguistic forms. Context, by contrast, constitutes the broader communicative environment comprising individuals who generate utterances and who possess distinct social, cultural, and personal characteristics, including their

knowledge, motivations, intentions, and desires. These individuals engage with one another within specific social and cultural situations (Schiffrin 1994, as cited in Alba-Juez, 2009, p. 8).

Following Schiffrin's approach, Alba-Juez (2009) concluded that Discourse Analysis "involves that study of both text and context" (p. 9). Stated differently, Discourse Analysis requires examination of both the linguistic content (text) and the communicative environment (context) in which language is produced and interpreted. In this regard, van Dijk perceived discourse as "text in context" (as cited in Hussein, 2016, p. 86). That is to say, discourse is a single spoken event, or a collection of connected utterances or texts, communicated in a single domain of activity. Discourse is, accordingly, a wider term than text; it refers to a verbal production in its situational social context.

Viewed in this light, discourse is employed by political persons, political parties, governments and even individuals in different sociopolitical contexts for the sake of expressing themselves, convincing or persuading their audience through language. Along with their discourse, a speaker communicates their intended message via texts which mirror their ideology. The speaker's adoption of a particular linguistic form is unlikely to be a live process. Instead, they replicate a previously learnt discourse by utilizing new texts. Texts are prudently selected systemized syntactic forms whose "content-structure" embodies and serves the speaker's ideology and agenda in the context of a previously approved discourse.

The term discourse, in this research work, is used to refer to language as a form of a social practice of which a text is just a part, in the context of a specific era. More specifically, this study examines political discourse, focusing on political speeches delivered by Presidents George W. Bush and Obama following the 9/11 attacks. Such an examination of political discourse falls within the umbrella of Discourse Analysis. The next section turns to political discourse and foreign policy discourse, examining how political narratives are crafted and contested, and exploring their influence on international relations.

1.7. Political Discourse and Foreign Policy Discourse

Having defined the terms of Discourse Analysis, text and discourse, it is also essential to draw a significant distinction between another pair of terms in relation to the subject of this thesis: political discourse and foreign policy discourse. The study of political discourse and foreign policy discourse is central to understanding how language shapes and reflects ideologies, power relations, and decision-making processes within the realms of governance and international relations. van Dijk (1997) broadly defined political discourse as the specific type of discourse that occurs in the domain of politics. He noted that "political discourse is identified by its actors or authors" such as professional politicians, members of government, parliament or political parties, and political institutions like presidents and prime ministers (van Dijk, 1997, p. 12). Besides, he stated that political discourse is also identified by its context and function as well. Political discourse is thus not determined by inherent structural features, but by its participants, settings, topics, and communicative purposes within the political field.

With a closer look, van Dijk (1997) viewed political discourse as "a form of political action, and as a part of political process" (p. 20). This definition aligns with dominant paradigms in social discourse studies, which recognize discourse as a form of social action and interaction. van Dijk (1997) emphasized that this characterization applies not only to spoken interaction but also to written texts and communication, which are equally forms of social and political action despite not being face-to-face exchanges. Accomplishing political action through text and talk extends beyond merely producing or perceiving discourse in political contexts; it involves substantive engagement in the political process itself. Political discourse is, thus, identified not simply by its participants (politicians, political institutions) or its settings, but by its functionality within the political process, whether discourse is directly or indirectly functional in activities such as governing, legislating, campaigning, opposing, or decision-making (van Dijk, 1997, pp. 20-21). In this framework, contextual conditions determine whether a particular

utterance or text constitutes genuine political discourse or merely conversation occurring in a political setting, a distinction van Dijk (1997) illustrated through the example of parliament, where discourse counts as political only when it contributes functionally to the parliamentary business at hand, such as debating a Bill.

Wilson (2001) argued that the meaning of political discourse is complex and ambiguous, with at least two possibilities. The first refers to discourse that is inherently political in nature, while the second treats political discourse as just one discourse type, analyzed without necessarily engaging with its political content or context. However, the situation becomes even less straightforward when considering that, according Shapiro (1981), almost any form of discourse can be classified as political (as cited in Wilson, 2001, p. 398). If this is the case, then every act of discourse analysis carries a political dimension, which implies that, on a certain level, all discourse analysis can be understood as political discourse (Wilson, 2001).

Wilson (2001) stated that this ambiguity largely stems from definitions of the political that revolve around broad concepts such as power, conflict, control, or domination. Because these notions can surface in almost any discourse, they make it easy to classify a wide range of communicative practices as political. For instance, Diamond (1995), in her research on a psychotherapeutic training institution, describes the discourse of staff meetings as "political" solely because issues of power and control are negotiated there (as cited in Wilson, 2001, p. 398). Yet these negotiations occur at different levels such as interpersonal, personal, institutional, and educational level, and through various strategic means. When all discourses are treated as political in this broad sense, this risks making the concept of political discourse too broad, reducing it to an overgeneralized concept (Wilson, 2001).

One way to avoid these complications is to define the field more narrowly as the study of formal and informal political contexts and political actors (Graber, 1981, as cited in Wilson, 2001). In other words, this includes, among others, politicians, political institutions,

governments, political media, and political supporters who operate within political settings to pursue political objectives. This initial delineation helps clarify the boundaries that might be set when conceptualizing political discourse, while still leaving room for further development. For instance, analysts who advance an explicitly political argument become political actors themselves, and their discourse accordingly becomes political. In this respect, much of what falls under critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis is closely connected to research on political discourse, not only because the data examined is frequently overtly political, but also because the analysts intentionally position themselves as political actors (Wilson, 2001).

Foreign policy discourse is a subset of political discourse (Chilton, 2004, p. 61). Chilton (2004) viewed foreign policy discourse as an extension of political discourse operating within the international arena, thus he referred to foreign policy discourse as "international political discourse" (p. 137). Unlike domestic political discourse, foreign policy discourse addresses relationships between sovereign states. This form of discourse emerges in contexts where leaders must justify military actions to multiple audiences, both domestic and international, navigating cultural presumptions and anxieties about engagement beyond national borders. The particular challenge of foreign policy discourse lies in the fact that speakers must construct representations of distant places and peoples about whom audiences may know very little, yet whose actions demand justification for potentially grave consequences such as military intervention (pp. 137-138).

A central characteristic of foreign policy discourse is the representational challenge it poses. Chilton (2004) stated that "in political discourse, especially foreign policy discourse, the reality or realities referred to cannot possibly be actually present for speaker and hearer" (p. 61). Foreign policy discourse requires the speaker to "do a lot of discursive work to enable, or induce the hearer to mentally establish a representation" of distant geographical locations, foreign actors, and international events that audiences cannot directly verify (Chilton, 2004, p.

61). Chilton (2004) developed a distinctive analytical model based on "spatial conceptualisation," arguing that foreign policy discourse relies on the deictic structuring of reality along three intersecting axes: space, time, and modality (pp. 57-61). The speaker (Self) occupies the deictic centre other entities are positioned at varying distances along these axes (p. 58). In foreign policy discourse, "the wider the arena, the greater the need to identify one's position" (p. 204), and this spatial-deictic organization serves to legitimize action against distant Others while reinforcing solidarity with the Self and its allies (Chilton, 2004).

Foreign policy discourse, thus, encompasses the communicative strategies through which states articulate their international positioning, strategic interests, and relationships with other nations. This discourse constructs national identity and security by positioning others along spatial, temporal, and moral axes relative to the speaker's centrality. In foreign policy discourse, politically relevant feelings such as territorial belonging, love of family, and fear of enemies are activated through linguistic use. In addition, Chilton (2004) asserted that justifying war requires extraordinary communicative efforts, wherein speakers establish causal relationships between actions and consequences, construct shared understandings of threat, and develop moral frameworks that render military intervention as both necessary and just. Through these discursive mechanisms, distant Others are transformed into legitimate targets of military action.

Foreign policy discourse focuses specifically on how states communicate their international strategies, alliances, and conflicts. It involves the rhetorical construction of national identity, security, and global positioning, often through the use of diplomatic language, official statements, and media narratives. Foreign policy discourse not only reflects a nation's strategic interests but also shapes how those interests are perceived both domestically and internationally. For instance, the framing of a military intervention as a

"humanitarian mission" rather than an act of aggression can significantly alter public and global perceptions.

Accordingly, both political and foreign policy discourses are deeply intertwined with power relations and ideological frameworks. Therefore, the study of foreign policy discourse through discourse analysis provides valuable insights into the ways language constructs and maintains power relations. By critically examining the narratives and representations employed by political actors, critics can better understand the ideological underpinnings of policy decisions and the impact of language on international relations.

Having examined some intricacies of political and foreign policy discourse, it becomes evident that narratives play a pivotal role in shaping political realities. Political actors craft stories that not only convey information but also construct identities, justify policies, and mobilize support. These narratives are instrumental in framing events, influencing public perception, and guiding policy decisions. Understanding the mechanisms of narrative construction and dissemination is essential for comprehending the dynamics of political power and public opinion formation. The subsequent section delves into the relationship between political discourse and narratives, exploring how storytelling serves as a fundamental tool in the political arena.

1.8. Political Discourse and Narrative

Studies of political discourse indicate that it makes heavy use of narrative. This is partly because humans naturally depend on narrative forms to comprehend the world and to assign meaning to them (White, 1980, as cited in Shenhav, 2006). The prominence of narrative in political discourse also stems from its crucial role in shaping and sustaining worldviews. Its ability to reduce complex situations into coherent sequences of events further enhances its appeal and effectiveness (Shenhav, 2006).

A political narrative, is a story told in a political setting or about clearly political matters (Shenhav, 2006). One way to identify it is to look at where it is produced. If the story is told in a parliament, cabinet meeting, party gathering, political demonstration, or by politicians and public officials as part of their official role, it counts as a political narrative. Another way is to look at what the story talks about. If it deals with issues such as power, collective decision-making, or political compromise, it can be seen as political even when it appears outside formal institutions. Shenhav (2006) noted that this content-based route can become very broad, so he suggested distinguishing "formal" political narratives, those tied to official political settings or created by political actors, from "informal" political narratives, stories about political topics told in everyday, non-official political contexts (pp. 247-248).

Moreover, Shenhav (2006) argued that every narrative is a product of a particular perspective because at any given moment there are countless events occurring, and as soon as a speaker chooses to tell about some of them and not others, a specific perspective is already established (p. 248). Shenhav (2006) then considered a hypothetical narrative that would weave together all possible perspectives, but argues that even if such a "super-text" could be produced, human readers would still experience it as moving from one perspective to another, rather than as a single unified view (p. 248). In the political field, a text that included all political perspectives on an event would force an almost endless shifting of consciousness between viewpoints and would break the temporal movement that characterizes narrative, so that, in the end, even political narratives that combine several voices necessarily remain dependent on one overall perspective (Shenhav, 2006).

Political narratives are also told in relation to what political actors and audiences perceive as political reality, and they try to make sense of that reality by arranging events into a story (Shenhav, 2006). Politicians speak as if there is a shared picture of "what really happened," and their narratives either support this picture or challenge it. When certain stories

are repeated again and again, they can harden into a common "paradigm of political reality" that guides how people interpret new events (Shenhav, 2006, p. 255).

It can be concluded that political narratives are stories crafted by political actors to persuade both domestic and international audiences of how they interpret global events and to advance and safeguard their interests and values on the world stage. In International Relations, political narratives function as instruments of persuasion and legitimation, enabling actors to construct and articulate their particular visions of the world. These narratives are not neutral; they are deliberately shaped to reflect and promote specific political perspectives and agendas. In this respect, the present study aims to demonstrate how the presidential discourse of Presidents Bush and Obama constructs narrative forms of civilizational discourse.

1.9. Conclusion

Chapter one explored the emergence and development of New Historicism, tracing its roots in key Post-Structuralist theoretical frameworks. This chapter examined the main tenets and key concepts of New Historicism, including the historicity of texts and the textuality of history, which emphasize the reciprocal relationship between cultural artifacts and their historical moments. While Foucault provided New Historicists with a framework for understanding how power operates through discourse and shapes historical narratives, Geertz's interpretive anthropology introduced a method for analyzing culture as a text. His concept of "thick description" enabled New Historicists to approach literary and historical works not as isolated artifacts but as elements situated within wider cultural systems of meaning. Althusser's theories on ideology and the role of art in sustaining social structures also exerted a significant influence on the development of New Historicism.

The twin New Historicist tenets of the historicity of texts and the textuality of history refer to the idea that literary works are not merely reflections of their historical moments, but

are also active participants in the construction of history. They asserted that texts are products of the culture in which they are created, influenced by the social, political, and ideological currents of their time. These texts, however, are not static or passive; rather, they help shape and reflect the conditions of their era.

Rather than treating historical events as fixed, objective realities, New Historicism perspective invites the recognition that history is always embedded in cultural texts, whether through literary texts, non-literary texts, or social practices. As a result, the boundaries between what constitutes "history" and "representation" become increasingly blurred, prompting a view of history not as a singular, unchangeable truth, but as a dynamic, interpretive process deeply entwined with the cultural texts of any historical epoch. The focus on discourse and power has revealed how language mediates ideological perspectives. Additionally, the dialectic of subversion and containment has illustrated how cultural texts both challenge and reinforce dominant power structures.

Chapter one also explored Discourse Analysis, emphasizing its role in uncovering the ideological orientations and power relations embedded in language. The distinction between text and discourse has further clarified how individual texts operate within broader discursive systems, shaping and being shaped by cultural and historical contexts. In the realms of political discourse and foreign policy discourse, language is used to construct, negotiate, and contest power, both domestically and internationally. Finally, the exploration of political discourse and narratives has demonstrated how storytelling shapes political realities, constructs identities, and influences policy decisions in international relations.

This study aims to apply the tenets and concepts of New Historicism to United States foreign policy discourse in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Having outlined the key principles of New Historicism, the following chapter proceeds to examine two contrasting theoretical frameworks of civilizational discourse, Clash of Civilizations and Dialogue among

Civilizations, which have played a significant role in shaping U.S. foreign policy discourse in the Post-Cold War era, particularly after 9/11.

Chapter Two

Civilizational Paradigms: The Clash and Dialogue Narratives

Chapter Two: Civilizational Paradigms: The Clash and Dialogue Narratives

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2.2. Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory

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Chapter Two Civilizational Paradigms: The Clash and Dialogue Narratives

2.1. Introduction

The concepts of the Clash of Civilizations and Dialogue among Civilizations represent two constructing perspectives on global political relations. Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory asserts that future conflicts, after the Cold War, will stem from civilizational and cultural differences rather than ideological or economic factors, claiming the division of the world into major civilizations. Huntington (1993) posited that religion, as a cornerstone of civilizational identity, plays a significant role in intensifying these divisions particularly between the Western and Islamic worlds. In contrast, Dialogue of Civilizations encourages cultural exchange, promotes understanding, cooperation and respect among diverse cultures in order to foster global harmony. Proponents of the Dialogue of Civilizations argue that civilizations are not isolated entities, destined for conflicts, but are interwoven through history, trade, migration, and shared values.

Chapter two, titled *Civilizational Paradigms: The Clash and Dialogue Narratives*, aims to examine two contrasting frameworks that have significantly influenced the discourse of the United States foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era. This chapter begins with an in-depth discussion of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, providing background on its origins and development, including its roots in Bernard Lewis's article, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, and Francis Fukuyama's vision in *The End of History*. It further delves into the core tenets and assumptions underpinning Huntington's thesis, and discusses the reception of the Clash of Civilization in the periods preceding and following the 9/11 attacks. This section examines how Huntington's argument generated widespread debate with critics scrutinizing the validity of his claims. Chapter two, then, shifts to the alternative paradigm of the Dialogue among Civilizations, providing a historical overview, defining the concept of Dialogue among Civilizations, and clarifying the key concepts of civilization, culture and dialogue. Finally, it

addresses how global dialogue initiatives challenge and counter Huntington's clash narrative, advocating for a more cooperative and inclusive global framework.

2.2. Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory

This research seeks to conduct a discourse analysis of Presidents Bush and Obama within the framework of civilisational narratives. To achieve this, it is essential to delve into the historical and intellectual roots of the Clash of Civilizations theory, providing a foundation for examining its influence on United States foreign policy discourse, especially in the context of the post-9/11 era.

2.2.1. Origins and Development

In tracing the genesis of the Clash of Civilizations theory, this section reviews major theses to which it is related, particularly those of Bernard Lewis and Francis Fukuyama. Lewis (1990) introduced the notion of an inherent cultural and ideological divide between the West and Islam. Fukuyama's thesis, on the other hand, celebrated the triumph of liberal democracy as an endpoint of ideological evolution, suggesting that major global conflicts will diminish. While Lewis (1990) laid the ground for cultural confrontational, Fukuyama (1989, 1992) projected a world moving towards consensus, thus, providing contrasting yet interconnected perspectives on global relations. Together, these ideas paved the way for Huntington's conceptualisation of civilisational clashes.

2.2.1.1. Bernard Lewis's Thesis: The Roots of Western-Muslim Tensions

The clash of civilizations argument was not first put forth by Samuel Huntington. The British-American Jewish historian Bernard Lewis, however, had claimed, in a speech at Johns Hopkins University in 1957, that there was a "clash of civilizations" (Haynes, 2019, p. 7). Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and at the dawn of identifying a new enemy of the United States, he evoked this theme again in an article in The Atlantic Monthly magazine.

Under the title of "*Roots of Muslim Rage: Why So Many Muslims Deeply Resent the West, and Why their Bitterness Will Not Be Easily Mollified*", Lewis (1990) originally coined the phrase of "clash of civilizations" (p. 56).

The concept of the "clash of civilizations" postulates that there is a clash between Islam and the West. Lewis (1990) asserted that the world is split into two opposing halves, the Muslim East and the Judeo-Christian West. He perceived the Muslim nations as being in antagonism towards the Westerners, and portrayed Islam as a religion with an adversarial worldview against the Judeo-Christian Western civilization. Lewis (1990) contended so because, according to him, the values of Islam and the West are different, and thus, they would be only resolved via confrontation (Haynes, 2018).

Additionally, notwithstanding all the positive aspects that Lewis (1990) stated about Islam, he maintained that there are times when Islam has caused its adherents to adopt "a mood of hatred and violence." (p. 48). He added that the entire Muslim world is going now through such a period emphasizing that this state of abhorrence as well as violence is being now directed against the West. Besides, he went on to say that Muslims' rejection to all Western civilization's customs and values is clear evidence of their loathing towards the West. He argued that the Muslims always view the Western civilization as "innately evil" and that Westerners are constantly portrayed as "enemies of God" (Lewis, 1990, p. 48). And it is out of this rage of the Arab Muslims over the West, Lewis (1990) posited, that a clash between the Islamic and Western civilizations will unavoidably occur.

As an explanation of his hypothesis of "clash of civilizations, Lewis (1990) asserted that the Western civilization has been superior to the Islamic civilization, and that the Muslims' reaction to it was "one of admiration and emulation –an immense respect for the achievements of the West, and a desire to imitate and adopt them" (p. 56). Furthermore, he emphasized that Muslims' admiration and respect for the West have stemmed from their "a keen and growing

awareness of the weakness, poverty, and backwardness of the Islamic world as compared with the advancing West" (Lewis, 1990, p. 56-57). However, according to him, Muslims no longer admire and respect the Western civilization; instead, they harbour "hostility and rejection" (Lewis, 1990, p. 57).

In his article, Lewis (1990) rejected all the obvious failures of American foreign policy and elucidates other reasons for hostility against the U.S. and the West in the Muslim world. The major reason according to Lewis (1990), apart from the rage and fury over the secular West's advancement and progress as opposed to the Muslim world, that is struggling with underdevelopment, illiteracy, overpopulation, and autocracy, is the violent interpretation of Islamic texts in the Muslim world. Moreover, throughout his article, Lewis (1990) amplified the claim that the United States is a purely innocent country which has never harboured any animosity or hatred against the Muslims. He further argued that being a democratic and civilized nation, the United States has countless times extended its hand to Muslims, particularly Arab Muslims, despite their antagonistic attitude towards it. In this regard, Suliman (2020) held that this argument is "a remarkable proof of Lewis's Orientalist desire in Arab Muslim nations" (p. 11).

This Orientalist outlook of Lewis's work is ascribed to have had a great influence on Samuel Huntington's attitude towards Islam (Errol & Tucker, 2001, as cited in Mohadi & Akhmetova, 2020). Furthermore, the concept of the Clash of Civilizations held by Huntington was elicited as an immediate response to the theory of Francis Fukuyama's end of history. It is another significant reference in search for the origins of the Clash of Civilizations theory.

2.2.1.2. Francis Fukuyama's End of History

Fukuyama, a former deputy director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff, an American political scientist specialized in foreign policy of the former Soviet Union

as well as in Middle-Eastern political-military affairs, published, in 1992, his book *The End of History and the Last Man* expanding on his 1989 article "The End of History?" (Oner, 2003, p. 94; Fukuyama, 1992)

Fukuyama's end of history theory, regarding the state of the world as well as human society, is summarized, in this work, in three main points. The first key point is related to the end of the ideological struggle. It is a central theme in his theory which is rooted in the context of the late twentieth century, particularly after the demise of the Socialist regimes, mainly of the Soviet Union, as symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the outset of his article, Fukuyama (1989) stated his main argument as follows:

> What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (p. 4)

To explain more, first, according to Fukuyama (1989) human history is perceived as a battle of ideologies, and second, for him, liberal democracy triumphed at the turn of the twentieth century defeating all of its rivals. That is, there was no real ideological political rival for the liberal democratic model of government. Fascism had been defeated in WWII, and communism, the only real rival left, was on the verge of collapse with the fall of the Soviet Union. This means that it is the end of history since the West had won the ideological battle of the Cold War. The Western system of capitalism and democracy is "the last political form of mankind" as well as "the end of the development of human ideology," and hence marks "the end of history" (Fukuyama, 2003, as cited in Zhang & Zhang, 2010, p. 631). From this perspective, Fukuyama (1989) did not mean that time is going to stop, or worldly events are going to come to a halt, but there will be still events, conflicts and turmoil to occur. However,

he argued that real substantial radical ideological political progress had basically reached its endpoint.

Furthermore, despite Fukuyama's claim that liberal democracy has emerged triumphant, he did dot contend that the end of history entails instant universal peace. The world, then, will be divided into two parts: one that is post-historical and one that is still steeped in history. In this respect, Fukuyama (1989) stated:

> Conflict between states still in history, and between those states and those at the end of history, would still be possible. There would still be a high and perhaps rising level of ethnic and nationalist violence, since those are impulses incompletely played out, even in parts of the post-historical world. (p. 18)

The absence of an ideological rival to liberal democracy is also coupled with Fukuyama's key contention of the exhaustion of viable alternatives. Fukuyama (1989) put it this way: "The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism" (p. 3). This means that liberalism has not only outlasted authoritarianism, absolutism, Fascism and communism, but there is no longer a viable alternative to it in any region of the world. Besides, Fukuyama argued that although authoritarian ideas may endure, nationalism continues to be a strong force as well as religious fundamentalism of many kinds is not going to fade way, none of the aforementioned forces offer "the kind of package for handling" human contradictions than liberalism provides (as cited in Brown, 1999, p. 51). Because there are no contradictions within the ideology of liberal democracy, no rival ideology is likely to emerge and hence the absence of any credible alternative. In this respect, Fukuyama reiterated that history is at an end (as cited in Knutsen, 1991, p. 78).

Fukuyama (1992) defended this argument on account of human nature. He contended that liberal democracy is the only regime which is most in accordance with human nature, i.e., with human kinds' needs, desires, passions, wants, abilities, virtues, and so on and so forth (p. 63). Leaning heavily on Hegel, Fukuyama (1992), more precisely, emphasized on the Hegelian idea of "the struggle for recognition" arguing that it is only through the liberal democratic state that humans' desire for recognition can be most successfully satisfied (p. 200). Other political ideologies and models, however, do not satisfy these needs as effectively, and hence, they fail (Fukuyama, 1989, p.14). To explain more, human kinds' desire for recognition of their essential humanities is mainly best exemplified by liberal democracies through the enshrining of human rights; one's right to free speech, to vote, the right to the security of one's person, the freedom of religion, etc., and all ways by which the liberal democratic regime recognizes "all human needs" and provides recognition of dignity as well (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 5). For that reason, liberal democracy as such emerged triumphant without any viable ideological alternative.

Moreover, Fukuyama's position, at that time, was supported by empirical data. He was able to demonstrate that liberal democracy was on the rise, with former socialist countries increasingly adopting it. In addition to Japan, he used the world's two largest communist countries, Russia and China, as instances. Besides, he contended that liberal democracy's victory was visible in the significant reform efforts that have started in the intellectual climates of both China and the Gorbachev era. For Fukuyama, it was also apparent in the spread of consumerist Western culture. He claimed that these countries are not truly liberal, however not all societies must ultimately succeed as liberal democracies (Fukuyama, 1989, p.3). Therefore, by making this claim, Fukuyama (1989) conceded that not all states can become liberal at the same level.

The second point of the end of history theory is linked to the idea of the evolution of human history. Fukuyama's theory draws from the French philosopher Alexandre Kojève's

interpretation of Hegel's notion of the end of history which is entirely philosophical. That is, Fukuyama derived his idea of the triumph of liberal democracy from the Hegelian dialectic of the evolution of history. History, according to Hegel, is a dialectical process having a beginning, middle and an end (Oner, 2003, p. 95; Zhang & Zhang, 2010). He considered history to be at an end in 1806 when Napoleon defeated the Prussian monarchy at the Battle of Jena, symbolising the victory of the French Revolution's principles of freedom and equality, and thus, realizing the "universal and homogeneous state," a free and democratic Western state (Zhang & Zhang, 2010, p. 643). Jena Battle, for Hegel, signalled the end of history since it was, at that point, the actualization of the ideals of the revolution by "the vanguard of humankind" even though certain governments in the real world may not fully apply these ideals (Fukuyama, 1989, pp. 4-5).

In the same vein, Kojève claimed that history evolves through a process of dialectical struggle in which opposing viewpoints and ideologies collide until a final synthesis is reached. He, on the other hand, linked the end of history to the post-World War II "American way of life" towards which the Soviet Union was moving (as cited in Fukuyama, 1989, 5). Hence, for Kojève, the so-called "universal and homogeneous state" is achieved in post-war Western European countries. Following these references of both Hegel and Kojève, Fukuyama (1989) presented his viewpoints. He posited that the state that arises at the end of history is liberal and democratic, and that it recognizes and preserves man's universal, fundamental right to freedom under the rule of law.

Fukuyama (1989) provided the following explanation as how history has evolved: history was founded on the existence of contradictions; as evidenced in the "primitive man's quest for mutual recognition, the dialectic of the master and slave, the transformation and mastery of nature, the struggle of the universal recognition of rights, and the dichotomy between proletarian and capitalist" (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 5). Yet, all earlier contradictions are resolved

as well as all human needs are satisfied. As a result, main contradictions of human history reach an end with the end of history, Fukuyama (1989) argued.

In addition to that and with the aforementioned factors, Fukuyama (1992) believed that there will be no rationale for war between democratic and liberal states. He stated that a "world made up of liberal democracies, then, should have much less incentive for war, since all nations would reciprocally recognize one another's legitimacy" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xx). At a time when Fukuyama perceived the end of the Cold War with the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy which settled all big questions and solved human contradictions leading to the end of all major conflicts, he affirmed that peace would be accomplished among liberal states. In this regard, Huntington (1989) mentioned that Fukuyama celebrated not only the end of the Cold War or the end of wars between liberal democratic nation states, but the end of history as such.

The third and last main point of Fukuyama's formulation of the end of history theory is connected to the notion of universal appeal of liberal democracy. First of all, Fukuyama (1922) asserted that liberal democracy has a universal appeal as a political ideology. In this regard, he stated that it "remains the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe" (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xiii). Fukuyama (1992) claimed that liberal democracy universally appeals to all people because it addresses their fundamental needs for recognition, dignity and freedom. He believed that people from all cultures and societies relate to these ideals. Liberal democracy, according to Fukuyama, has gained universal appeal because of its superiority and ultimate dominance of its Western values. His claim was that thanks to its superior values, the Western civilization has actually triumphed (Fukuyama, 1989). On the other hand, Fukuyama (1992) posited that liberal democracy has a universal aspiration as an economic system as well. He argued that liberal economic principles, "the free market", have gained traction and have been successful in generating unprecedented levels of material

affluence, both in industrialized nations and in countries that had been part of the Third World's underdeveloped region at the end of World War II (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xiii).

All in all, Fukuyama took advantage of Kojève's understanding of Hegel's the end of history extending it into a more political view, and attempted to defend the liberal economic and political democratic system of the West. In so doing, Fukuyama celebrated "the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy," which he argued marks the end of Marxist theory and practice as well as the evolution of human history (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3). His theory of endism, however, prompted feedback from a number of critics, most notably from Samuel Huntington.

2.2.2. Debating the End of History: Huntington's Critique

One critical response is related to the fact that Fukuyama's theory is a reformulation of the fundamental tenets of the nineteenth century. This means that his perception of history as being "unilinear historical progress," is a feature shared by a Hegelian and Marxist thought (Oner, 2003, p. 102). While Hegel ended history with the victory of one state, the universal homogenous state which symbolized the triumph of the ideals of the French Revolution, Marx also contended that history would come to an end with the realisation of a communist utopia which would finally resolve all previous contradictions. In the same vein, Fukuyama ended history with the victory of liberal democracy as a viable and final form of human government arguing that it marked the end of the ideological struggle following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

From the above perspective, Fukuyama's historicist approach is regarded reductionist and ethnocentric. Behind the Hegelian perspective of the article lies his identification of history with the history of Western civilization (Oner, 2003, p. 103). According to Oner (2003) Fukuyama sought to identify the world situation following the fall of communism, "with one-dimensional ethnocentric perspective" (p. 105). He did so most likely to establish the theoretical

framework of the New World Order. In other words, as a theory of endism, Fukuyama's the end of history tried to build a theoretical groundwork for the status quo that the United States sought to maintain its influence in the post-Cold War period. He ended world history with the victory of Western liberal democracy to demonstrate U.S. unwavering victory, and legitimize the role of the United Sates as the leader of the world (Oner, 2003). Anil Rajimwale (1994) also backed this point of view stating that Fukuyama's argument on the triumph of liberal democracy has been widely criticized as an effort to legitimize the Western political system, notably, the American one (as cited in Singh, 2006, p. 40).

In the same line of thought, Fukuyama's end of history is considered to have a monolithic ethnocentric viewpoint because it asserts U.S. triumph within the 1989 debate that signalled a revival of the United States. Fukuyama published his article "End of History?" in a time when the debate about the U.S. position in the international system had changed. In 1987 and 1988, the debate focused on the issue of American decline, however, in 1989, it heralded a different issue, the revival of the United States (Huntington, 1989; Knusten, 1991). Within this context, Samuel Huntington (1989) responded stating that the "theory of declinism has been displaced by the theory of endism. Its central element is that bad things are coming to an end" (p. 3). He further declared that while the "message of declinism for Americans is 'We're losing'; the message of endism is 'We've won!' (p. 4). Knutsen (1991) also explained that the two salient elements in Fukuyama's argument are that the U.S. position in the international system has not declined, and that what counts more is not the Unites States' relative position in terms of money or military force, yet the power of ideas. As long as the ideas of freedom and equality, which the United States has always stood for, triumphed globally in the 1980s, "the international position of the United States is now stronger than ever" (Knutsen, 1991, p. 79).

Additionally, critics of Fukuyama disagreed with his conclusion that no challenging ideology is likely to emerge since no contradictions exist within liberal democracy (Knutsen,

1991). They contended that there are alternatives to liberalism and that it does entail contradictions. Fukuyama's critics on the right accused him of being overly "optimistic" as "he underestimated man's drive for power and his capability for savagery and mischief" (Knutsen, 1991, p. 78). They thought that the unexpected consensus on the virtues of liberal democracy may be a transient phenomenon, and a period of peace that could vanish overnight. On the other hand, critics on Fukuyama's left claimed that liberal democracy is replete with contradictions, between man's needs and nature's resources, between freedom and equality, between labour and capital and so forth (Knutsen, 1991). Moreover, ideological conflicts, according to both the right and the left, cannot be brought into a halt. They argued that Fukuyama ignored challenges to liberalism posed by extreme religious beliefs as well as by ethnic and nationalist movements. They held that, in the Islamic world, religion has become a potent mobilizing force while nationalism has evolved in regions where Marxist-Leninist dictatorships have fallen (Knutsen, 1991).

In that respect, the escalation of ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) which culminated into a bloody ethnic cleansing with immense human fatalities and the Western powers' inactivity generated serious doubts about whether it was truly 'the end of history.' According to Davutoglu (1994) the idealistic aspirations of Fukuyama's endism were dashed by the ethnic war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as long as no liberal democratic state attempted to put an end to the Bosnian humanitarian crisis (as cited in Oner, 2003, p. 105). Besides, Oner (2003) stated that nothing has ended as seen by the incidents of Kosovo, and in particular, the events of 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Rather, the world history will likely witness significant "transformation processes in the future" (p. 105).

On top of that, for Samuel Huntington (1989), Fukuyama's theory of the end of history considered the triumph of one ideology, the end of ideology and the ideological struggle. He posited that it is erroneous to move from the demise of communism to the global victory of

liberalism in addition to the removal of ideology as a factor in international politics (Huntington, 1989). He supported his argument by presenting four reasons. Initially, according to Huntington (1989), an ideology or a set of ideas may disappear in one generation before making a strong comeback a generation or a couple of generations later. This means that ideological revivals are conceivable. In providing examples, Huntington (1989) stated that it was scarce to find support for "classical economic liberalism" from the 1940s through the 1960s because of four dominant currents in economic thought: Keynesianism, welfare statism, social democracy and planning (pp. 8-9). Nevertheless, classical economic liberalism had achieved an incredible revival by the late 1970s. Similarly, in the decades following WWII, social scientists assumed that economic development as well as modernity would eliminate religion, ethnic consciousness and nationalism. However, in the 1980s, these were, in many societies, the dominant grounds for political action. Besides, religious rebirth becomes a worldwide phenomenon and communism maybe on the decline for the time being, but it would be ill-considered to believe that it has been eradicated forever (Huntington, 1989).

Secondly, conflicts within liberal democracy are still possible despite its widespread acceptance, Huntington (1989) postulated. More than that, struggles between adherents of different versions of a shared ideology are frequently more heated and fiercer than struggles between adherents of completely distinct ideologies. For instance, in spite of the fact that there was an ideological agreement on Christianity in Europe in 1500, Catholics as well as Protestants continued to commit atrocities against each other for the next 150 years. Similar treatment has been shown to socialist and communist, Trotskyites and Leninists, Shiites and Sunnis (Huntington, 1989, p. 9). Accordingly, ideological struggles within liberal democracy cannot be precluded even though it is universally accepted as Huntington (1989) explained.

Thirdly, the victory of one ideology, for Huntington (1989), does not rule out the appearance of new ones. He assumed that nations and societies will continue to evolve, and that

new challenges will develop. As a result, human beings will devise new concepts, ideologies and theories in order to address those challenges. People will also develop belief systems which justify what they already have and their pursuit of more except if economic, political and social differences vanish. Historically, communism has served a variety of functions such as legitimising the authority of both intellectuals and bureaucrats. They will certainly construct new sets of ideas to justify their claims for wealth and power if communism permanently disappears (Huntington, 1989).

The last reason which Huntington (1989) stated to refute Fukuyama's assertion of the triumph of liberal democracy over communism is related to his idea that Fukuyama's theory itself indicated the pervasiveness of Marxism rather than its demise. Huntington (1989) posited that Fukuyama's image of the end of history is based on Marx's ideas. In other words, Fukuyama's reference to the "universal homogenous state" where "all prior contradictions are resolved and all human needs are satisfied" is exactly the Marxist depiction of "a society without class conflict or other contradictions" (Huntington, 1989, p. 9). Henceforth, while Fukuyama maintained that liberalism is the end of history, Marx said that communism "is the solution to the riddle of history" (as cited in Huntington, 1989, p. 9). From this perspective, Huntington (1989) claimed that both Fukuyama and Marx are essentially conveying the same thing, and more crucially, they share the same thoughts. On that account, Huntington (1989) affirmed that "Marxist ideology is alive and well in Fukuyama's arguments to refute it" (p. 10). In essence, Huntington refuted Fukuyama's vision of a single, universal ideology of a unified world under liberal democracy.

As stated above, moving from Bernard Lewis' concept of the clash of civilizations to Francis Fukuyama's theory of the end of history, it is conceivable to assume that both of them can be important resources in quest for the starting point of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. The concept of clash of civilizations was first formulated by Lewis, then theorised and

popularised by Samuel Huntington. On the other hand, Fukuyama prompted a response from Huntington who discredited his theory of the end of history which emerged as a new world order paradigm following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In contrast to Fukuyama's contention regarding the end of history paradigm, Huntington formulated the theory of the Clash of Civilizations which redefined the world order for the post-Cold War period. Core tenets and assumptions of the theory are further developed in the ensuing section.

2.2.3. Core Tenets and Assumptions of Huntington's Theory

In 1993, three years after Lewis's statements, another thesis appeared when Foreign Affairs published Samuel P. Huntington's article "The Clash of Civilizations?" Making a similar argument, Huntington, the former Harvard University professor and former director of security planning for the U.S. National Security Council in the 1970s, and a renowned political scientist, presented a vision of world politics of the post-Cold War period. In his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, published in 1996, he expanded upon and modified his initial arguments confined in his article. Huntington (1993) presented his Clash of Civilizations thesis as follows:

> It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be battle lines of the future. (p. 22)

The primary goal of Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis is to formulate a new paradigm of global politics in the post-Cold War era, for "interpreting the new global

alignments and problems emerging after the collapse of communism" (Erdem, 2002; Daniel, 2006, p. 512). In redefining the newly emerging post-Cold War world politics, Huntington, as indicated in the aforementioned quotation, urged for a paradigm shift; from the ideological Cold War bloc mentality into a cultural clash of civilizations, emphasizing the emergence of a conflictual world.

Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilizations, as outlined in this research, is defined by six main tenets: the end of ideological conflicts and the emergence of civilizational clashes, the primacy of civilizations in international relations, the identification of major world civilizations as primary actors in global politics and the forces of separation, the West versus the Rest paradigm, the necessity for the Other as an enemy, and Islam as a significant threat to Western civilization.

2.2.3.1. From Ideological Conflicts to Civilizational Clashes

According to Huntington (1993), the global political landscape underwent a substantial change in the years following the end of the Cold War. Before, the world was mainly split into two camps: the Western capitalist bloc under the leadership of the United States and the Eastern communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism was the main source of conflict and competition. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, Huntington (1993) posited that the ideological conflict was brought into a halt. He contended that ideological contests might still persist on a lesser scale, within individual states or regions, for example, but they would no longer be the dominant cause of international conflicts (Huntington, 1993).

Instead, Huntington (1993) assumed that cultural and civilizational differences would become the essential driving forces in international relations. This means that global conflicts will be primarily caused by civilizational differences which result from divergent cultural and

religious values, rather than ideological or economic factors. For Huntington (1993), the world is no longer divided into First, Second and Third Worlds as it was during the Cold War period. Those divisions that are based on grouping countries according to their level of economic growth or their political and economic systems are no longer meaningful. However, it is far more relevant to group countries "in terms of their culture and civilization" (Huntington, 1993, p. 23). That is, peoples and countries with similar culture and religious beliefs unite together while those with distinct cultures and religions drift away. Accordingly, while Huntington (1993) posited that the end of the Cold War marked the decline of ideological conflicts as dominant sources of global tension, he argued that cultural and civilizational differences will, instead, become the central fault lines of world politics.

2.2.3.2. The Primacy of Civilizations in International Relations

The second key point of the Clash of Civilizations theory is that the world is divided into distinct civilization identities which are the primary actors in international relations. Huntington (1993) argued that regional as well as global wars in the post-Cold War era would be waged among cultures and civilizations rather than countries and states. He claimed that conflicts between civilizations, in the modern world, would be the latest phase in the development of warfare. In this regard, he traced different clashes, in the Western world, based upon different reasons from the emergence of the modern international system until the end of the Cold War.

At one point, Huntington (1993) referred to conflicts primarily revolved around rulers among princes, emperors, monarchs, etc. These leaders strived to extend their armies, merchantile economic power and, most importantly, the territory under their control. This process resulted in the development of nation states, and starting with the French Revolution, the fundamental conflicts shifted from disputes among rulers to conflicts between nations. This pattern persisted throughout the nineteenth century until the end of World War I. Subsequently,

due to the Russian Revolution and the reactions it triggered, conflicts between nations gave way to different ideological conflicts. Initially involving communism, fascism-Nazism, and liberal democracy, these ideological conflicts later pitted communism against liberal democracy.

The ideological struggle of the Cold War was manifested as a contest between two world superpowers, neither of which adhered to the traditional European nation-state model; instead, they defined their identities based on their respective ideologies. For Huntington (1993), these clashes between the rulers, nation states and ideologies predominantly occurred within the Western civilization. However, with the end of the Cold War, global politics has departed from its Western-focused phase to the interaction between the Western and non-Western civilizations. Hence, in this new paradigm of civilizational politics, the peoples and governments of the non-Western civilizations no longer stand as passive subjects, as targeted by Western colonialism, but rather they actively participate alongside the Western civilization, contributing to and shaping the course of world history (Huntington, 1993, pp. 22-23). Accordingly, the question moving in the twenty first century is not that clashes can be overcome as it was elicited by Fukuyama's end of history argument, but what type of clashes will exist in the world of this juncture in history. The answer that Huntington (1993) yielded is what he called the "clash of civilizations".

Huntington (1993) argued that the clash of civilizations happens at two different levels: the micro and macro level. At the micro level, that is the local level, neighbouring groups residing along the boundaries between civilizations engage in conflicts, which sometimes escalate into violent struggles, as they vie for control of territory and each other. At the macro level, which means on a global scale, countries belonging to various civilizations compete for military and economic supremacy. They also engage in competitive struggles for control over international institutions and other parties, all the while actively promoting their political as well as religious values (Huntington, 1993, p. 29). In relation to this perspective, Huntington

(1996) believed that the major global conflicts will occur between nations of different civilizations even though the most powerful nation sates will dominate politics in world affairs.

2.2.3.3. Major Contemporary Civilizations and the Forces of Separation

Following his view of the world as divided into distinct civilizational identities, which are the primary actors in international relations, Huntington (1993) identified the major contemporary civilizations. He listed "seven or eight major civilizations" that shape world affairs (p. 25). These are as follows:

- Western civilization: encompassing the countries of Western Europe and North America, Australia and New Zealand.
- Confucian civilization (Sinic civilization): The shared culture of China and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, as well as in Vietnam and Korea.
- Japanese civilization: Japanese culture stands out as being notably distinct from the rest of Asia.
- Islamic civilization: Emerging from the Arabian Peninsula, extending through North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula and Central Asia.
- Hindu civilization: Identified as the heart of the Indian civilization.
- Slavic-Orthodox: Centred in Russia and culturally distinct from Western Christendom.
- Latin America: Central and South American nations with a history of a corporate authoritarian cultural background, many of which have predominantly Catholic Christian populations and growing Protestant minorities.
- And "possibly" African civilization.

According to Huntington (1993), the most significant conflicts in the future will take place at the cultural boundaries that separate these civilizations from each other for six reasons. First, these civilizations clash because of differences between them which are not only real but fundamental, and are more important than political ideologies. These differences stem from distinct historical backgrounds, languages, cultures, traditions and most notably religion. Second, civilizational clash occurs because the world is shrinking in size. This leads to increasing interactions between individuals from various civilizations which heighten people's awareness and consciousness of their own cultural identity, subsequently, intensifying historical disparities and long-standing animosities. The third reason is due to worldwide economic modernization and social change which are causing people to move away from their traditional local identities, in addition to diminishing the role of the nation-state as a source of identity. Religion in turn is often revived in the form of fundamentalist movements and becoming a major source of identity, transcending national boundaries and uniting civilizations Huntington (1993).

Fourth, civilizations clash because of the growth of civilization-consciousness in non-Western civilizations Huntington (1993). While the West is currently at its zenith of power, the non-Western civilizations are experiencing a resurgence of their cultural roots. This is evident in phenomena like "Asianization" in Japan, the "Hinduization" of India, the "re-Islamization" of the Middle East, etc. On the other hand, there is a shift in the roles of the elites and general population of the non-Western societies. In the past, the elites were often Western-educated and influenced whereas the populace retained indigenous cultural values. However, this dynamic is reversing, with the elites in many non-Western countries embracing de-Westernization and indigenization while Western cultures, especially American styles and habits, are gaining popularity among the general population.

In addition to that, economic regionalism is the fifth reason that reinforces civilization-consciousness Huntington (1993). Regional economic integration is on the rise and the success of which depends on a common cultural foundation. This is evident in the European Community and the North American Free Trade Area. The Economic Cooperation Organization, which comprises ten non-Arab Muslim countries –Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan– is founded partly due to the realization that they had no chance of admission to the EU. Besides, regional economic organizations like Caricom, the Central American Common Market and Mercosur are based on common cultural foundations. Similarly, the economic relations between China and its neighbouring regions, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and overseas Chinese communities, are rapidly expanding by cause of cultural commonality.

The sixth and last argument is due to the durability of cultural differences and characteristics compared to political and economic ones Huntington (1993). While individuals can change their political ideologies as well as economic statuses, they cannot change their cultural identities. In political or ideological conflicts, people can choose and switch sides, but in conflicts between civilizations, one's cultural identity is fixed. This is particularly true for religious identity, which can sharply differentiate individuals and is even defining than ethnicity (Huntington, 1993).

2.2.3.4. The West vs. the Rest Paradigm

The fourth key assumption of Huntington's theory pertains to the major clashes that will arise among civilizations. Huntington predicted (1993) an alliance between Islamic and Sinic cultures to work against a mutual enemy, the West. Hence, Huntington's theory separates the West from the rest. In this regard, Huntington (1996) identified four issues that distinguish the West from the rest. First, the West maintains its military superiority by preventing the proliferation of emerging powers. This ensures that the balance of power remains in favour of

Western nations. Second, the West actively promotes its political values, such as human rights and democracy, which it considers universal principles that should be adopted globally. Third, the West implements strict immigrations policies to limit the influx of non-Western immigrants and refugees, aiming to preserve its cultural and social structures. Finally, non-Western countries perceive the three aspects as deliberate strategies by the West to maintain its hegemonic status Huntington (1996).

2.2.3.5. The Need for the 'Other' as an Enemy

The fifth key tenet that Huntington (1996) emphasised, within his theory of the clash of civilization, is the West's perceived necessity of the 'Other' as an enemy. Huntington (1996) stated that "for peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enmities occur across the fault lines between the world's major civilizations" (p. 20). During the Cold War, the enemy of the United States was namely the communist 'Other'. In the post-Cold War period, with this menacing 'Other' gone, there has been "the eruption of a global identity crisis" which was even experienced by the United States as a result of the end of the ideological struggle between communism and capitalism (Huntington, 1996, pp. 125-126). In the same line of thought, John Esposito noted that the demise of communism has led to a "threat vacuum" prompting the quest for new enemies (as cited in Tarock, 1995, p. 14).

Within this context, and in his follow up article, *The Erosion of American National Interests*, Huntington (1997) underscored the significance of identifying an adversarial, hostile counterpart for the United States. He viewed that being an American involves a dedication to the values of freedom, democracy, individualism, and private property, questioning what it means being an American in the absence of an "evil empire" jeopardizing those principles (Huntington, 1997, pp. 29-30). Huntington (1996), as a foreign policy analyst, outlined the necessity of identifying an alternative adversary in the absence of the Soviet enemy. Hence,

for him, the absence of a definite ideological opponent leads to a search for a new source of identity, that is, a new enemy. Accordingly, portraying the 'Other' as an enemy constitutes another fundamental element in Huntington's theory. Huntington (1993, 1996) named Islam, in particular, as a serious enemy of the West, and thus of the United States of America.

2.2.3.6. Islam as a Significant Threat to the West

The last six core assumption of the Clash of Civilizations theory is related to the clash between the West and the East. One of the most prominent conflicts that Samuel Huntington (1993) anticipated is conflict "along the fault lines between Western and Islamic civilizations," (p. 31). However, it should be emphasized that even though he mentioned both of China and Japan on the side of Islam, the main focus of his work was on the potential conflict between the United States and Muslims. Huntington (1996) maintained that, in the post-Cold War, conflict between the West and the Islamic world would be a central feature of global politics. This clash arises from the fact that both civilizations have universalistic and missionary ambitions, yet are marked by fundamental cultural and religious differences. He contended that the central challenge for the West is not just Islamic fundamentalism, but Islam, representing a distinct civilization whose people firmly believe in the superiority of their culture while feeling a sense of inferiority in terms of power. During the Cold War, this conflict was somewhat concealed, however, the collapse of communism removed a common threat, making each side perceive the other as the main enemy (Huntington, 1996, pp. 211-217).

In identifying Islam as the enemy "Other" of the West, in particular of the United States, Huntington (1993, 1996) constructed the image of Islam by representing it in different facets. He placed particular emphasis on the use of terrorism in relation to the conflict between Islam and the West. He claimed that although individuals from various religious backgrounds have participated in various forms of violence and terrorism, Muslims have been significantly more engaged in these activities than people from other faiths. (Huntington, 2002, as cited in

Neumayer & Plumper, 2009, p. 715). Huntington (1996) depicted Islam as a "religion of the sword" glorifying "military virtues" and making it very difficult to peacefully coexist with other religions (p. 263). Accordingly, Huntington (1993, 1996) presented Islam as a violent religion that is the main cause of terrorism in the Western world.

Additionally, Huntington (1996) argued that conflicts within Islam (intra-civilizational conflicts) were more prevalent than those within any other civilization. He noted that in the early 1990s, Muslims were engaged in intergroup violence to a greater extent than non-Muslims. Huntington further claimed that while conflicts between civilizations (intercivilizational conflicts) differ in intensity and location, the most brutal and tense ones involve Muslims and non-Muslims. To support this point, Huntington cited numerous examples ranging from the tensions between Turks and Greeks to the wars in the Balkans, and Middle East, Caucasus, Southeast Aisa, and Africa. He referred to the historical and ongoing conflicts between Muslims and other various religious and ethnic groups, including Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croatians, Greek and Albanian populations, Hindu, Buddhist communities and Christian groups. Besides, Huntington (1996) relied heavily on statistical evidence to show that the Muslims have been the most. For instance, in 1993 alone, out of 59 ethnic conflicts, 31 occurred between groups from different civilization, and 21 of these inter-civilizational conflicts were between Muslims and non-Muslims (pp. 254-257). "In contrast to Islam," as Huntington (1996) put it, the West was involved in significantly fewer conflicts; with only two inter-civilizational and two intra-civilizational clashes (p. 257). On this ground, Huntington (1993, 1996) concluded that Islam has bloody borders, an assertion he reiterated in his works suggesting a pervasive pattern of violent conflicts involving Muslim populations across various regions and time periods.

Moreover, Huntington (1996) contrasted Islam against the modernity and secularism of the West. He noted that a religious "Resurgence" occurred in the late twentieth century,

intensifying religious differences and giving rise to fundamentalist movements (p. 109). He described it as a widespread intellectual, cultural, social, and political movement across the Islamic world. For Huntington (1996), the resurgence represents the latest stage in the adaptation of Islamic civilization to the West. It seeks solutions not in Western ideologies, but within Islam itself. This movement embraces modernity, rejects Western culture, and reaffirms Islam as the guide to life.

Huntington (1996) contended that this resurgence drives an assertive and confrontational attitude towards the West. It fuels conflicts because it rejects Western political systems seeking to restore Islamic governance. He also argued that the resurgence is not only a response to the influence of the West, but a reassertion of Islamic identity. Hence, for Huntington, the resurgence poses a challenge to the global dominance of Western civilization by advancing a different set of values, social and political frameworks.

The presumed emerging global clash which is the one between Islamic and Western civilizations constitutes the main thrust of Huntington's theory. Huntington, accordingly, believed that Islam is a significant threat to the Western civilization. This way, he is thought of to have grounded his theory on Lewis's claimed findings in terms of the ongoing conflict between Islam and Christianity. Having explored the core tenets and key assumptions of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, it is important to examine how these ideas have played out in world events. The following section explores how Huntington's theory was perceived and criticized before and after the events of September 11.

2.2.4. Clash of Civilizations Thesis: Before and after 9/11 Attacks

In his article "The Clash of Civilizations?" Huntington (1993) introduced his theory, which he later expanded and reinforced in his book. Both works generated widespread scholarly debate. Numerous critiques have emerged, challenging his theory and questioning the validity

of his arguments. Major criticism of the Clash of Civilizations theory is explored, in this research, in six types. First of all, Huntington has been criticized for his presentation of a "new paradigm." They argued that Huntington's "civilizational conflict paradigm" is reductionist and deterministic since there are causes of conflict, in which civilizational factors do not play a significant role (Hunter, 1998; Ajami, 1993, as cited in Erdem, 2002). They contended that "clash of interests" rather than "clash of civilizations" will continue to be real causes of conflicts. Shireen T. Hunter (1998) argued that problematic relations between the West and the Muslim world are hardly stemmed from civilizational differences as Huntington claimed but from structural-political and economic-inequalities between the two worlds of "have" and "have not." (as cited in Erdem, 2002, p. 88). By the same token, John Ikenberry (1997) argued that Huntington calls forth a new Cold War. Similarly, Rubenstein and Crocker (1994) asserted that Huntington proclaims "long live the Cold War" (as cited in Erdem, 2002, p. 89).

Chomsky (1998, 2012) also questioned the validity of Huntington's paradigm by examining weather ethnic conflicts increased in the post-Cold War era. He contended that many-large scale conflicts, such as the massacres in Rwanda in the 1970s, were overlooked because they were less significant and did not align with broader geopolitical interests. Furthermore, Chomsky (1998, 2012) stated that the conflicts within the former Soviet Union, including those in Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, cannot be easily categorized as civilizational clashes. He postulated that such conflicts are typical of what occurs when authoritarian systems collapse, resulting in eternal strife. Thus, Chomsky argued that Huntington's factual basis is weak, and his thesis does not constitute a genuinely new paradigm (as cited in Chomsky's Philosophy, 2015).

In this same context, other critics came up with other strong arguments to rebut the theory of the Clash of Civilizations, relying on empirical studies within the field of international relations. Fox (2001), in his quantitative study, argued that the proportion of civilization-based

conflicts globally slightly changed during and after the Cold War. He noted that in both periods 38 percent of ethnic conflicts were to civilizational divides. He indicated that only 5.6 percent of ethnic conflicts worldwide involved Islam and the West during the Cold War, compared to 6.7 percent after the Cold War. According to Fox (2001), this difference is not substantial and thus contradicts Huntington's claim that this is a new phenomenon specific to the Cold War (p. 463).

While Huntington received criticism on the basis of his paradigm, other critics disconfirmed his theory for his monolithic conception of civilizations, particularly of the West and Islam. Scholars such as John Esposito, Shireen Hunter, Amit Gupta, Robert Marks, Manochehrr Doraj, Edward Said, Sato Seizaburo, Chandra Muzaffar, John Raines, and Razi Abidi claimed that Huntington considered civilizations monolithic deliberately ignoring intra-civilizational conflicts that would weaken his thesis (as cited in Algeriani & Mohadi, 2018; Erdem, 2002). Another line of critique addressed the diversity within civilizations. Critics pointed out that Huntington overlooked the internal pluralism and complexities of the Muslim world, which does not consist of a single Islamic culture as Huntington suggested. Additionally, they pointed to the tension between multiculturalism and Americanization in the United States, which James Kurth identified as the "real clash" (as cited in Erdem, 2002, p. 89). Accordingly, these critics maintained that no civilization, including the West and Islam can be reduced to a single monolithic entity.

Huntington has been also criticized for a whole slew of methodological flaws. For instance, Edward Said (1998) argued that Huntington's ideas are misleading both in their formulation and in the way he presents them. A great deal of his argument depends on second and third hand opinion that scants the enormous advances in our concrete understanding and theoretical understanding of how cultures work, change and how they can best be grasped or apprehended. Huntington's main sources are peoples' quotations from journalism and popular

demagoguery rather than serious scholarship and theory (Edward Said, 1998). Similarly, Robert Marks argued that Huntington mostly uses secondary sources in his book and he has weak scholarship of Islam, China and Japan. He also suggested that Huntington's theory is methodologically flawed because of his frequent generalizations in the analysis of civilizations (as cited in Erdem, 2002). Many critics have criticized the cases which Huntington uses to support his thesis. For example, Fouad Ajami (1993) contended that the Gulf War is a case for a clash of state interests par excellence not a case for a clash of civilizations, identifying it as a war between the West and Islam (as cited in Erdem, 2002, p. 90). However, for Ajami (1993), Huntington probably should know that the coalition that was formed against Sadam Hussein was composed of several Muslim states including Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Saoudi Arabia. In the same way as to the Gulf War case, both of Ajami (1993) and Hunter criticized Huntington's use of Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict as civilizational clash arguing that Muslim Iranians had more friendly relations with Christian Armenians than Muslim Azerbaijanis (as cited in Erdem, 2002).

Additionally, the Clash of Vivilizations theory has attracted considerable amount of criticism on the basis of its epistemology of Othering. Critics hold that Huntington's understanding of the West-Islam relationship is fundamentally based on orientalist scholarship of Islam. Dorraj (1998) argued that Huntington's thesis reifies, distorts, and de-humanizes the Muslims (as cited in Erdem, 2002). Edward Said, a well-known critic of Orientalism, contends that Huntington's theory has orientalist backdrop. Said (1998) stressed that Huntington assumed the unchanging character of the duality between us and them. According to him, Huntington, like Lewis, does not write neutral, descriptive and objective prose. Huntington is a partisan, an advocate of one civilization over all the others. Like Lewis, he defines Islamic civilization reductively as anti-Western thinking only about how to bomb, destroy the West and the whole World (p.8). Islam is, therefore, perceived as a threat to the West.

Another category of criticism is about Huntington's policy recommendations. Huntington's theory is perceived to be an ideological and strategic theory that aims at influencing United States foreign and defence policy. Battistella contended that Huntington looked for a new enemy, which replaces the adversary of the Cold War (as cited in Erdem, 2002). Likewise, Haynes (2018) depicted Huntington as being compelled to create a new enemy and disguise it in the same villain role that U.S. realists had used to portray the Soviet Union from the onset of the Cold War in the late 1940s, shifting the traits of conflict to a new "actor": Islamic Fundamentalism (p. 2). Besides, Hans Kung noted that Huntington's thesis was gaining widespread popularity globally while he served as an advisor to the Pentagon in 1994, assuming that the Clash of Civilizations theory seems particularly well-suited to the interests of the military and arms industry (as cited in Erdem, 2002). In this context, the Clash of Civilizations is regarded as a strategic framework crafted to shape U.S. foreign and security policy.

Finally, the Clash of Civilizations theory has been criticized for being dangerous as it is believed to provoke and exacerbate future conflicts. Ikenberry (2009) argued that Huntington's theory mirrors a civilizational form of "security dilemma" wherein misunderstanding of the other intensifies tensions and eventually results in conflict. Additionally, both Mahbubani and Sato stated that implementing Huntington's policy recommendations would be highly dangerous and could lead to a catastrophe for international peace and security (as cited in Erdem, 2002, p. 93). Being the most scathing of all, Edward Said (1998) held that Huntington wrote as "a crisis manager, not as a student of culture and civilizations, nor as a reconciler between them" (p. 4).

Furthermore, Edward Said (1998) claimed that the weakest point about Huntington's Clash of Civilizations is its rigid assumption of clear divisions between cultures and civilizations, despite the clear evidence that the world is marked by mixtures, migrations, and the crossings of boundaries. According to Said (1998), no culture or civilization exists in

isolation. Any effort to separate them, as Huntington suggested, does undermine their diversity, richness and inherent complexity.

The six aforementioned types of criticism presented a significant challenge to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. In response, Huntington addressed some of these critiques in his article "If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World" and later in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. However, the debate has persisted, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, which brought the theory into focus and scrutiny.

The 9/11 attacks on the United States were a turning point in discussions about the role of cultural and religious differences in international conflict. For many scholars, analysts and policymakers, especially in the U.S.A., 9/11 was perceived as the tangible beginning of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, framing a conflict between the Christen West and the Islamic world, with specific focus on Islamic fundamentalism and radical terrorism.

The September 11 attacks, along with numerous subsequent terrorist attacks, which often resulted in significant casualties, were carried out by al-Qaeda or its supporters, all of whom were extremist Muslims targeting the West. The U.S. response, embodied in the Bush administration's War on Terror, sometimes viewed indiscriminately, focused on Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq and other regions. Some have argued that these events validate Huntington's thesis. In this respect, the 9/11 attacks and the U.S. response made Huntington's prophecy about a clash of civilizations seems more credible than when it was first proposed in the early 1990s (Haynes, 2018).

However, Huntington's thesis has not been universally accepted. Several critics viewed that 9/11 attacks did not signify the start of a clash of civilizations. For example, Edward Said, 2001; Aga Khan, 2002; Al-Nahayan, 2005; Ferrero Waldner, 2006; Tauran, 2012, etc. argued

that the Clash of Civilizations thesis is not an effective framework for analysing the conflict between parts of Western and Muslim civilizations. They propose that these conflicts are more likely the result of ignorance rather than the unavoidable and inherent consequences of cultural or religious differences. Their argument challenges the Clash of Civilizations paradigm, which asserts that the divisions between the West and Islam are so profound that reconciliation is impossible. They are concerned that Huntington's framework discourages efforts to explore opportunities for peacemaking. They advocate the perspective that conflict between the Self and the Other is not inevitable, but they do not claim that it is entirely preventable (Karim & Eid, 2012).

In his article "Clash of Ignorance," published six weeks following the 9/11 attacks, Edward Said (2001), who coined the terms "clash of ignorance", addressed several issues, including the underlying motivations behind promoting the Clash of Civilizations thesis. He stated that the thesis oversimplifies complex entities, especially the West and Islam by portraying them as monolithic (as cited in Karim & Eid, 2012). Said (2001) also confirmed that Huntington's inevitable clash paradigm gained widespread acceptance within Western government circles in the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks (as cited in Karim & Eid, 2012).

Noam Chomsky (2001), during his lecture at the Delhi School of Economics, shared his vision on the Clash of Civilizations theory. He criticized Huntington by contextualizing it within post-Cold War global politics. He maintained that the theory dismissed economic factors and the reality of power relations, stating, "the major confrontation remains what it has always been: small concentrated sectors of wealth and power versus everybody else" Chomsky (2001). In this respect, according to Chomsky (2001), Huntington's framework serves as a convenient pretext for continued U.S. policies of domination and interventionism. He emphasized that control over oil, particularly in the Middle East, is a central motive behind United States foreign policy, rather than a genuine clash of civilizations. He pointed out the contradiction in U.S.

support of Islamic fundamentalist states like Saoudi Arabia while claiming to oppose them, questioning the very premise of a civilizational clash.

In contradiction to the Clash of Civilizations theory, Fethullah Gulen argued that no religion has ever been founded on conflict (as cited in Wani, 2019). Both Islam and Christianity are rooted in peace, harmony and security. Gulen reinforced the idea that Islam seeks to promote goodness and make humanity peaceful, a perspective that sharply contrasts with Huntington's theory. Besides, Gulen noted that groups like Al-Qaeda manipulate the Quran to serve their own interests. He asserted that Islam should be understood through its authentic sources and true representatives throughout history, rather than through the actions of a small minority who distorted its teachings (as cited in Wani, 2019).

Along these lines of thought, another perspective can be considered in regard to the principle of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. Huntington misrepresented Islam as a religion, deliberately portraying it negatively while considering it a threat to the West. In so doing, he contributed to the creation of a new enemy, providing the United States with a new pretext for its post-Cold War foreign policy. The U.S. government, hence, would be able to convince its people in justifying military interventionism both before and after the September 11 attacks. In contrast, Islam is a religion of peace and mercy, not one of war or violence. Islam never calls for division and conflict, but advocates unity, tolerance, understanding of diverse cultures and coexistence, for the whole humanity has been addressed: "O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqua. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (The Quran, Suraa Al-Hujuraat, 13: 517, Abdur-Rahman Mubarakfuri). By distorting the true nature of Islam, Huntington, as a representative of the West, should be assumed the adversary of Islam, rather than the other way around.

Moreover, Haynes (2018) noted that Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory resurged after the 9/11 attacks alongside what is referred to as "the return of religion to international relations" (p. 3). Religious growing prominence was evident in its increased presence at the United Nations. Following the September 11, the UN significantly expanded its focus on religion, creating the Alliance of Civilizations in 2005 as a direct counter to Huntington's claim of inevitable civilizational conflicts in the post-Cold War era. Haynes (2018) further argued that this does not suggest that the UN abruptly embraced religion after decades of secular focus, nor that it now serves as a unified voice for faith.

As demonstrated, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis has faced significant criticism before and after the events of September 11, primarily for oversimplifying complex global relations, and neglecting political and economic interests. These critiques pointed out the limitations of viewing global affairs solely through the lens of a civilizational clash. In contrast, the concept of Dialogue among Civilizations offers an alternative framework that promotes engagement, cooperation and understanding among diverse cultures. The next section explores the framework of Dialogue among Civilizations.

2.3. Dialogue among Civilizations Framework

The idea of fostering dialogue among civilizations has gained increasing significance, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which underscored the urgent need for intercultural understanding. This part explains the meaning of Dialogue among Civilizations and explores the historical development of the concept, tracing its evolution in the context of global interactions. Then, it moves to conceptual clarifications, providing definitions and insights into key terms. Finally, it examines how Dialogue among Civilizations serves as a counter narrative to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations.

2.3.1. Defining Dialogue among Civilizations

In defining the meaning of Dialogue among Civilizations, Dallmayr (2009) provided a philosophical foundation of the term dialogue by grounding it in relational, epistemological and ethical principles. First, drawing on Martin Heidegger's view of human existence as inherently tied to others through language and care, Dallymar (2009) explained that human existence is fundamentally relational. That is individuals are tied to others through interaction and communication which are reflected via dialogue. Second, he juxtaposed it to its contrast to the term monologue, which represents a situation where only one voice dominates and silences others. In a political context, monologue aligns with unilateralism and absolutism of a hegemonic power which disregards other voices. In contrast, dialogue fosters collaborative exploration of truth and meaning through shared reasoning. It embodies communicative interaction among multiple parties, where no one claims exclusive authority. Dialogue among Civilizations, thus, implies multilateralism and cooperation which are prerequisite for achieving world peace and justice. This encapsulates the ethical principle of dialogue as a moral commitment to justice, peace, and mutual respect, ensuring meaningful and inclusive interactions. (Dallmayr, 2009, pp. 29-34).

Fabio Petito (2016; 2009; 2004) also defined the concept of Dialogue among Civilizations as a framework for world order aimed at fostering understanding and cooperation among different cultural groups. He argued that such a framework challenges the dominance of Western-centric international relations paradigms, mainly Fukuyama's End of History and Huntington's Clash of Civilizations. Petito (2009) explained that that while both Fukuyama and Huntington promote a Western-centric and predominantly liberal international society, Dialogue among Civilizations advocates for examining the core Western-centric and liberal principles upon which the normative structure of the international society is based (pp. 50-51).

In this context, Petito (2009) outlined three key principles of Dialogue among Civilizations: multipolarity, a new cross-cultural j*us gentium* (law of nations), and peace. He framed multipolarity within Dialogue among Civilizations as a critique of the unipolar of the U.S.-centred Western liberal world order, and as a way to a more balanced, inclusive world system. Petito's vision emphasised multilateralism and regional integration as counterparts to hegemonic dominance (pp. 52-55). He advocated for embedding multipolarity within a framework guided by intercivilizational dialogue, which would establish a cross-cultural *jus gentium*. The latter is the second normative structure grounded in the principles of the Dialogue among Civilizations. Inspired by thinkers like Dallmayr, Johrn Rawls, Bhikhu Parekh and Taylor, Petito (2009) argued for an intercultural framework for global norms and international law that transcends the Western-centred foundations of the current international system. Petito's cross-cultural *jus gentium* aims to address the ethical and political crises by integrating diverse cultural, religious and philosophical traditions into the creation of shared global principles (pp. 56-58). Finally, Petito (2009) contended that Dialogue among Civilizations is crucial for achieving global peace in an increasingly multicultural and multipolar world. He emphasized that peace requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses justice, reconciliation, and multicultural cooperation. In this regard, along with Riccardi, Petito envisioned a "preventive peace" strategy based on mutual respect and cross-cultural engagement as an alternative to conflict-driven paradigms (p.61).

In short, both Dallmayr (2009) and Petito (2009) offered insights into the concept of the Dialogue among Civilizations as a means to world peace and justice. While Dallmayr (2009) focused on its philosophical foundation, Petito (2009) outlined three normative principles. Together, their perspectives present Dialogue of Civilizations as an alternative framework for an inclusive multicultural world order. The following section provides a historical overview of the Dialogue among Civilizations.

2.3.2. Historical Overview

The historical development of the Dialogue among Civilizations goes through four distinct phases. The first phase began in 1970s and 1980s, spearheaded by the French philosopher Roger Garaudy, who is regarded as a pioneer for introducing the term "dialogue among civilization" in his 1977 book, *Pour un dialogue des civilisations*. Garaudy (1977) sought to challenge Western perceptions of other civilizations by advocating for mutual recognition and understanding. He suggested that the West should revise its worldview and form alliances with other civilizations for a prosperous future (as cited in Mohamad, Yusof, Salleh, & Hisham, 2017).

However, Garaudy's proposals were largely overlooked as they were perceived as sharp criticism of the Western world. This lack of acknowledgement became evident when Garaudy's endeavours to establish an international institution for "dialogue among civilizations" in 1976, and later his attempts to revitalized a project that aimed at making Cordova a centre for Western Civilization, were unsuccessful. Once again in the 1980s, Garaudy criticized the West for being egoistic and cultivating animosity. Hence, according to him, the West bore responsibility for fostering egotism within civilizations, the rise of which in other civilizations was, therefore, merely a response as well as a challenge to the Western egotism (Mohamad, et al., 2017).

Even though Graraudy's appeal for a dialogue among civilizations was ignored, there were several rounds of meetings and discussions, culminating in conferences held in Barcelona in 1977 and 1986. They were attended by participants from various religious backgrounds. Following these, *Mu'assassat Al-Bayt* organized a conference in Jordan that was attended by representatives from religious bodies including the Independent Committee for Christian-Islamic Relations from the UK, the Orthodox Centre from Switzerland, and the Papal Council for Interreligious Dialogue from the Vatican. In December 1989, the Vatican hosted the Religious Education for the Contemporary Society seminar which was followed by another

conference on religion and war in France in 1990 (Mohamad, et al., 2017). Despite not being widely recognized, these dialogues reflected efforts to strengthen civilizational relationships.

The second phase of the Dialogue among Civilizations occurred in the 1990s, signalling a revival of the concept in a Euro-Arab context. This phase was marked by the first Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (ICSCM), held in Spain in 1992, which brought together representatives from Mediterranean countries. The conference's "Final Document" highlighted the importance of dialogue in uniting Arab and European communities, and emphasized mutual values like respect for human life, spiritual principles and solidarity as the foundation for such dialogue (Selim, 2009, p.49). The ICSCM's focus was overshadowed by Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations theory, which, nonetheless, sparked global controversy and inspired numerous proposals for dialogue among civilizations. In reality, the Clash of Civilizations thesis revived interest in the concept, leading to its re-awakening.

In the Islamic world, the Islamic Education, Science and Culture Organization (IESCO) played a key role in fostering dialogue among civilizations. Appointed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), IESCO was tasked with ensuring the initiative's success. As a result, efforts to support this dialogue became more widespread and inclusive, with conferences covering a broad range of topics. Notable international conferences organized during this period include: the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1999, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in 1999, Islamic Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations in Tehran, Iran in 1999, Francophonie and Arabic World: Dialogue of Cultures in Paris, France in 2000, Dialogue and Coexistence among Civilizations and Cultures in Berlin, Germany in 2000, the Islamic Summit Conference in Doha, Qatar in 2000, and the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 (Selim, 2009; Mohamad, et al., 2017).

One of the most notable initiatives came from former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami in 1997, which was formalized in the Tehran Declaration issued by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In September 1998, Khatami proposed the concept of Dialogue among Civilizations during his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), bringing the idea to the forefront of global discourse. He called on the UN to declare 2001 as the year of Dialogue among Civilizations. By November 1998, the UNGA passed a resolution endorsing Khatami's proposal, marking the beginning of the third phase (Selim, 2009).

The early twenty first century signalled the start of the third phase of the Dialogue among Civilizations. In January 2001, during its 55th session, the UNGA passes a resolution emphasizing its commitment to promoting global dialogue. This move reinforced the importance of civilizational dialogue and sparked extensive discussions on the international stage. Among these were the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Mali 2001, and the Dialogue among Civilizations in a Changing World in Morocco 2001 (Mohamad, et al., 2017). Many non-governmental organizations also championed the cause such as the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Institute for Interreligious Dialogue.

Several key points underpinned the UN resolution mentioned above. There was a recognized need for collective efforts to eliminate threats to peace, and support global recognition of basic human rights and freedoms. Second, civilizations are viewed as a source of inspiration and progress. Third, tolerance was identified as a critical value for shaping international relations in the twenty first century, fostering well-being and promoting dialogue among civilizations. Differences in beliefs, cultures and languages should be embraced as unique aspects of civilizations, rather than causes for conflicts. Fourth, globalization should go beyond profit and focus on consolidating cooperation and mutual respect among cultures. Finally, organizations such as UNESCO, and NGOs were made responsible for planning

appropriate programmes related to culture, society and education to foster the concept of dialogue among civilizations (Mohamad, et al., 2017).

The decision of the UN to designate 2001 as the "Year of Dialogue among Civilization" was symbolic. It reflected the transition from the twentieth to the twenty first century. It was also driven by a global desire to foster better relationships between societies, based on mutual trust, optimism and a shared goal of achieving peace and stability. The aim was to avoid a repetition of the wars and conflicts that define the twentieth century, including the WWI, the WWII and, Cold War and other crises. This initiative brought the concept of the dialogue among civilizations to the global stage, positioning it as a key for the recognition of human differences as an inevitable reality of life, rather than being a source of conflicts as Huntington posited (Mohamad, et al., 2017).

However, the tragic events of September 11, which occurred shortly after the year of dialogue was announced, disrupted the program's plans, but, gave the dialogue among civilization greater importance and meaning. The post-9/11 period, then, marked the fourth and final phase of the concept. The attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in the U.S.A. had both negative and positive impacts. On one hand, they fuelled Islamophobia, creating a negative perception of Islam and Muslims. On the other hand, they made the global community more aware of the deep divisions in world politics at the time. Hence, it heightened the call for a dialogue among civilizations to prevent such events from recurring (Mohamad, et al., 2017).

The Dialogue among Civilizations gained momentum after the 9/11 attacks as the number of international conferences increased compared to the previous phases. Notable among these were: "The Dialogue among Civilizations: Cooperation, not Conflict," hosted by The League of the Arab States in November 2001, "Dialogue among Civilizations: Theory and Practice in Tunisia in November 2001, "Dialogue among Civilizations for Coexistence in Syria in May 2002, "Dialogue Among Civilizations: Diversity within Complementarity" in Germany

in 2003. UN Secretary General Kofi Anan proclaimed the launch of the "United Nations Alliance of Civilizations" in UN Headquarters in 2005, this was followed by "African Regional Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples" in Nigeria in 2006, and "Summary of the High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures" in 1010, the Headquarters of UNESCO, etc.

In conclusion, the Dialogue among Civilizations has evolved through four distinct phases over time. These phases encompass its origin, political recognition and institutionalization. Understanding this progression provides the context for exploring conceptual foundations. To better understand the clash and dialogue narratives, it is important to clarify the key concepts of civilization, culture and dialogue, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3.3. Conceptual Clarifications of Civilization, Culture and Dialogue

The term "civilization" carries a complex and often ambiguous meaning. It is sometimes regarded as the opposite of the word "barbarism," denoting a specific stage of human evolution characterized by advanced social and cultural developments. It can also refer to the process by which such a stage is achieved. However, both definitions are, according to Violatti (2014), vague and subjective (as cited in Moshirzadeh, 2020).

A broader definition of civilization equates it with culture. Edward Tylor is often credited with formulating the first definition of culture in his 1871 work, *Primitive Culture*. He wrote: "Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Accordingly, for Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) Tylor connected the concept of culture to a "whole way of life" (as cited in Reeves,

2004, p. 64). In this sense, civilizations are viewed from an anthropological perspective which highlights their diversity and plurality.

Edward Sapir (1924) explained that culture "may be briefly defined as civilization in so far as it embodies the national genius" (as cited in Lottick, 1950, p. 240). Sapir viewed culture as having three different meanings: a) culture represents any socially inherited aspect of human life, whether material or spiritual, b) it also refers to a conventional notion of individual refinement, and c) culture highlights the collective spiritual possessions of a group.

Similar to Sapir's definition of culture, Carl Brinkmann (1930) defined civilization as having three distinct meanings, which encompass both spiritual and material values, and have evolved historically. Brinkmann traced the evolution of the term "civilization" over time as follows: a) Originally, civilization stemmed from the Latin words *civilis* and *civilitas*, referring to the qualities that superiors, such as Roman Emperors, demonstrated towards their inferiors, b) during the Middle Ages, the meaning of civilization broadened to denote the largest and most comprehensive social entity, c) the modern understanding of civilization was shaped by eighteenth century rationalists who contrasted it with feudalism and the Dark Ages (as cited in Lottick, 1950). The above definitions pertain to the more abstract dimensions of civilization and culture. Consequently, two levels of reality are outlined; the first influenced by the concept of social inheritance, and the second confined by the term progress.

On the other hand, although the terms civilization and culture are used interchangeably, they have different definitions. According to Webster's Encyclopaedic Dictionary, civilization is described as "an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government have been reached." This definition considers culture a single aspect of civilization, instead of its other side. The same source defined culture as "the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another." This indicates that culture encompasses intangible elements as languages, belief

systems, traditions, customs, literature, skills, values, attitudes, laws, worldviews, ways of thinking, relationships, etc. By the same token, Constantine Zurayk characterized culture as "the sum of the creative achievements of the human spirit in society" (as cited in Rabie, 2022, p. 1).

Rabie (2022) stated that culture, as a product and attribute of civilization, focuses on the quality rather than the quantity of what a society has cultivated over time. It encompasses intangible elements such as languages, belief systems, traditions, customs, literature, skills, values, attitudes, laws, worldviews, ways of thinking, and relationships, all developed by a community and passed down through generations. Consequently, culture should be viewed as an outcome of a specific group of people living and interacting together within one society. In contrast, Rabie (2022) described civilization as the culmination of human achievements in various fields like culture, science, industry and governance. It is the result of human interaction with one another, as well as with nature and technology, over long periods and across different regions. Therefore, civilization emphasizes both the material and non-material aspects of human life.

Huntington (1993) further stated that a civilization is delineated by shared objective elements like language, history, religion, traditions and institutions, as well as the way individuals personally identify themselves. That is, people possess multiple levels of identity. For example, a person residing in Rome may identify himself to different extents as a Roman, an Italian, a Christian, a European, or a Westerner. The civilization he aligns with most intensely represents the broadest level of identification. Individuals have the capacity to redefine their identities, leading thereby to a change in the composition and boundaries of civilizations over time (Huntington, 1993, p. 24). All in all, in Huntington's point of view, individuals identify themselves on the basis of their civilizational identity; their primary loyalty

will be increasingly to their civilization –their cultural and religious backgrounds– rather than to their nation state.

Additionally, Huntington (1993) mentioned that a civilization may encompass a wide spectrum of population sizes, ranging from the vast, such as China, to the relatively small, like the Anglophone Caribbean. Besides, a civilization may comprise multiple nation states as seen in instances of Western, Latin American, and Arab civilizations, or it may consist of only one like Japanese civilization. Furthermore, according to Huntington, civilizations naturally intermingle and overlap, often containing sub-civilizations. For example, Western civilization exhibits two major variants, European and North American, while Islam encompasses Arab, Turkic, and Malay subdivisions (Huntington, 1993, p. 24). He also held that even though the boundaries between civilizations are rarely well defined, they nonetheless exist and have significance. Civilizations change over time; they experience divisions and amalgamations, rises and declines; and they eventually fade away and are "buried in the sands of time" (p. 24).

Moreover, Moshirzadeh (2020) viewed civilizations as social constructs shaped by collective human intention, serving as areas where people define their own and others identities and narrate their histories. They are fluid and constantly evolving, influenced by internal and external forces. As a result, civilizational identities are not clearly defined. In this respect Moshirzadeh noted that individuals or groups may not necessarily belong to just one civilization. For instance, determining the civilizational identity of a Turk or an Iranian can be complex. While both may be considered part of the Islamic civilization, a Turk might also identify with the Eastern Roman civilization, and an Iranian with the Persian civilization. This dual sense of civilizational identity complicates the idea of representing a single civilization and has significant implications for the dialogue among civilizations.

While dialogue is not a modern concept, it has deep historical roots. It is derived from the Greek words "dia" (meaning "through") and "logos" (meaning "word" or "coming

together") signifying "a flow of meaning." In ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle practiced it. Galileo used it in his scientific enquiries in Italy. Leaders, like Ashoka and Akbar in medieval India, embraced dialogue in their inclusive societies. Similarly, it was woven in the hospitality and storytelling traditions of African tribes and Native Americans. Historic figures, like Cyrus of Persia, who showed compassion after conquests, and the Christian King of Abyssinia, who sheltered Muslims, early followers of Prophet Mohamed PBUH fleeing persecution, also exemplified dialogue in action. In modern times, it is practiced by world leaders, business experts, religious communities, and poets alike (Tinker, 2001).

Dialogue refers to an exchange of ideas grounded in mutual respect and a shared desire for understanding. Unlike attempts to persuade or promote one viewpoint over another, dialogue aims to foster a collective understanding of fundamental issues that affect individuals and societies. It serves as a crucial process in governance within large institutions, organizations, or governments, where diverse groups or individuals participate. Dialogue is not to be confused with tolerance of wrongdoing or harm in the name of "anything goes," rather, dialogue is a principled commitment to uphold shared values and safeguard one another for the well-being of the entire group, organization, or global community (Tinker, 2001, p. 990).

In the context of international relations, according to Tinker (2001), dialogue is the act of engaging in conversation with honesty and genuine intent to understand each other. It stands in contrast to realpolitik, which focuses on advancing state interests regardless of the means. In the process of dialogue, the potential for an "overlap of self and other" should be acknowledged. This enables the states to consider shared interests even if there are differences (Moshirzadeh, 2020).

Furthermore, the concept of a dialogue between civilizations assumes that differences exist among people from various historical and cultural background, and emphasizes the importance of respecting those differences. Timothy Weiss (1993) noted that in any

civilizational dialogue, it is important to recognize that culture is always changing, and instead of viewing cultures and civilizations as monolithic entities, they should be understood as a mixture of multiple different cultures (as cited in Moshirzadeh, 2020).

The recognition of diverse cultural and civilizational identities, as highlighted in Weiss's observation, forms the foundation for meaningful dialogue among civilizations. By emphasizing mutual understanding and respect for differences, Dialogue among Civilizations challenges the notion of inevitable conflict between civilizations and fosters a more collaborative and peaceful coexistence. This perspective aligns with the need to promote dialogue as a vital paradigm for addressing conflicts, serving as a counter discourse to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory.

2.3.4. Countering the Clash of Civilizations through Global Dialogue

The concept of Dialogue among Civilizations is not originally linked to the Clash thesis but it gained prominence as a counter narrative to it. In the aftermath of the Cold War, it emerged as a significant global political discourse. In response to Huntington's theory, various political statements and theoretical frameworks regarding the Dialogue among Civilizations have developed. In the public political sphere, Mohammad Khatami's Dialogue among Civilizations is a political and philosophical response to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations and Fukuyama's End of History. He criticized the Western-centric model of globalization, arguing that global peace depends on mutual recognition of diversity rather than cultural hegemony or conflict. Khatami asserted that the West must listen to other civilizations' narratives, stating that "the Cartesian-Faustian narrative of Western civilizations should give way and begin to listen to other narratives proposed by other human cultures" (as cited in Petito, 2004, p. 23). In addition, Khatami stated that true dialogue is an open-ended process, arguing that "dialogue is a bi-lateral or even multi-lateral process in which the end result is not manifest from the beginning" (as cited in Petito, 2004, p. 23). Unlike Huntington's deterministic model,

which assumes the inevitability of civilizational conflict, Khatami envisioned dialogue as a dynamic, transformative process of mutual discovery. He also criticized both Western hegemony and Eastern isolationism, urging for a reconceptualization of the East-West relationship based on mutual respect and interdependence (Petito, 2004).

As a result of Khatami's initiative, the United Nations proclaimed 2001 as the "Year of Dialogue among Civilizations," positioning dialogue as a diplomatic tool for preventing cultural and political conflicts. Khatami argued that dialogue should be institutionalized within global organizations to resist imperialistic tendencies and ensure cultural plurality. Therefore, he presented Dialogue among Civilizations as a global political discourse that challenges power-driven international relations and promotes multicultural world order (Petito, 2004).

The support of the United Nations has been marked in strengthening Dialogue among Civilizations as a counter discourse to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis through United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) which emerged as an international initiative in 2005 under the leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General and co-sponsored by the Spanish Prime Minister José Zapatéro and the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyib Erdogan. Through its every two-year convening forum, the UNAOC assembles governments, international organization, faith-based organizations, local authorities, lawmakers, non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, individuals, etc., committed to promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation (http://unaoc.org/; accessed September 10, 2024). The UNAOC evolved from Dialogue among Civilization, as a response to the Clash of Civilizations thesis. It operates on principles of replacing narratives of divisions particularly in response to post-9/11 tensions and the rise of Islamophobia. Its primary mission is to improve cross-cultural cooperation, prevent conflicts, combat extremism, and promote a world based on dialogue and mutual respect (http://unaoc.org/; accessed September 10, 2024).

In academia, Fred Dallmayr (2002; 2009), Fabio Petito (2004; 2009) and Hans Kochler (2004) provided a theoretical groundwork for Dialogue among Civilizations. In his book *Dialogue among Civilizations: Some Exemplary* Voices, Dallmayr (2009) advocated for Dialogue among Civilizations as a global discourse countering Huntington's Clash of Civilizations. He argued that Huntington's model fosters division by framing global interactions in adversarial terms, while dialogue offers a constructive alternative based on mutual understanding, cooperation and respect for cultural diversity. Dallmayr explained that the clash thesis constructed a West vs. the Rest narrative that legitimizes Western hegemony while portraying non-Western civilizations as inherently antagonistic. He noted that Huntington's portrayal of global politics exaggerates cultural differences and overlooks historical examples of civilizational exchange and cooperation. Drawing on Habermas's communicative rationality in his dialogue framework, Dallmayr (2009) argued that Huntington's power-centric model should be replaced by a dialogue-oriented world order that prioritizes democratic discourse over hegemonic control (p. 36). In this respect, while Dallmayr (2009) stressed the role of dialogue as an ethical and political imperative, viewing the United Nations as a potential platform for fostering Dialogue among Civilizations, he criticized the Western dominance of the UNSC, which often results in decisions favouring Western powers rather than truly global cooperation. In essence, Dallmayr (2009) promoted Dialogue among Civilizations as an ethical and practical necessity to move beyond the limitations of the Clash of Civilizations paradigm. He stressed the importance of recognizing cultural differences, promoting-cross cultural understanding, and fostering equality and reciprocity in global interactions.

Similarly, Hans Kochler (2004) viewed Dialogue among Civilizations as a crucial necessity to prevent Huntington's Clash of Civilizations from becoming a reality. He emphasized that the perception of a clash of civilization is as dangerous as an actual clash.

Kochler believed that the perception of civilizational conflict, if left unchecked, can become a reality leading to increased tensions and violence. He stated that "perception creates reality, i.e. a perceived clash among civilizations becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy" (p. 7). Furthermore, Kochler argued that the Clash of Civilizations has been used as a post-ideological justification for international conflicts, filling the void left by the decline of the ideological rivalry between the West and the East. He suggested that while culture and civilization are often not the primary cause of conflict, they are being used as a "vehicle" or "magnifying glass" for existing disputes (p. 12). However, dialogue can help to expose the political and economic agendas that underlie civilizational conflicts. Hence, Kochler advocated for Dialogue among Civilizations as a countermeasure against the Clash of Civilizations.

In the same line of thought, Petito (2004; 2009, 2016) considered the emergence of the Dialogue among Civilizations as an international political theory and a global political vision to contest against the discourses of both Huntington's Clash of Civilizations and Fukuyama's End of History. In this context, Petito (2016) called for the reconsideration of the Western-centric and liberal assumptions that underpin the normative structure of contemporary international society (p. 79). Petito (2016) argued for a shift away from a civilizational fault-line world towards a multicivilizational-multiplex world order, in which civilizations interact through structured dialogue rather than rivalry (p. 80). In other words, Petito advocated for a hybrid world order combining multipolarity where no single power dominates, dialogue-based regional integration to promote mutual understanding, and cross-cultural legal and institutional frameworks. Petito (2016) posited that Dialogue among Civilizations should be institutionalized at all levels of governance, from regional organizations to international institutions like the UN. As such, he considered Dialogue among Civilizations as an "alternative conceptualization of a world order beyond its Western-centric matrix" (p. 88).

Overall, Dialogue among Civilizations emerged as a significant counter narrative to Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, advocating for intercultural cooperation over adversarial divisions. Spearheaded by Khatami's vision, this discourse gained global prominence leading to its institutionalization notably via the UN declaring 2001 the "Year of Dialogue among Civilizations," and the establishment of the UNAOC. Academically, scholars like Dallyamr (2009), Kochler (2004) and Petito (2004, 2009, 2016) have reinforced the theoretical foundation of dialogue, critiquing Huntington's theoretical framework and envisioning a multicivilizational world order.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter offered an extended review of the theoretical underpinnings relevant to this thesis. As a first step, it examined the theoretical foundations of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, demonstrating how the works of Bernard Lewis and Francis Fukuyama significantly shaped his argument. Lewis's notion of an inherent cultural and ideological divide between the West and Islam laid the ground work for the civilizational conflict thesis, while Fukuyama provided a contrasting yet complementary perspective by envisioning a world progressing towards liberal democracy. This chapter traced these intellectual influences, shedding light on how Huntington synthesized existing ideas to redefine global relations in the post-Cold War period. Huntington's theory is defined, in this research, by six core tenets, including the primacy of civilizations in international relations, the West versus the Rest paradigm, and the portrayal of Islam as a significant threat to the Western civilization. However, his thesis has faced substantial criticism, mainly following the events of September 11, which further intensified the debate around its assumptions.

As a second step, the second chapter introduced Dialogue among Civilizations as a counter framework. This alternative perspective, championed by scholars such as Dallmayr and Petito offers a transformative vision for global interactions, emphasizing the importance of

intercultural dialogue. Unlike Huntington's deterministic view of civilizational clashes, the Dialogue among Civilizations provides a more inclusive approach to understanding global relations, one that prioritizes cooperation over conflict and celebrates cultural diversity as a strength rather than a source of division. Together these two theoretical frameworks, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations, offer contrasting perspectives on the complexities of the world order in the post-Cold War era. The subsequent chapters provide a comprehensive analysis of United States foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 attacks from the lenses of the theoretical framework of New Historicism, beginning with speeches of the former President George W. Bush.

Chapter Three

George W. Bush's Discourse:

Embracing the Clash of Civilizations

Narrative

Chapter Three: George W. Bush's Discourse: Embracing the Clash of Civilizations Narrative

3.1. Introduction

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Chapter Three George W. Bush's Discourse: Embracing the Clash of Civilizations Narrative

3.1. Introduction

Chapter three presents a detailed analysis of President Bush's speeches by applying the principles of New Historicism. This approach foregrounds the idea that texts are not merely reflections of historical events, but active participants in shaping historical narratives. The chapter's primary aim is to demonstrate that Bush's discourse echoes the Clash of Civilizations narrative, revealing the inherent interplay of representations, ideology, and power relations. This analysis unfolds through a series of four interconnected sections.

First, this chapter delves into the historical contextualization of Bush's speech. By exploring the impact of the 9/11 attacks, it illuminates how national security imperatives and foreign policy transformations, particularly shifts influenced by neoconservatism and unilateralism, reshaped public discourse. This historical backdrop is further enriched by a critical examination of the socio-cultural ramifications of 9/11, including the collective trauma, the surge in patriotism, and the simultaneous rise of discrimination and Islamophobia. Additionally, the role of American exceptionalism is scrutinized to understand how moral and exceptionalist narratives have been mobilized. The second part of the chapter shifts focus to the textual analysis of the speeches themselves. At this stage, the intricate ways in which language constructs meaning and reinforces power relations are unpacked, shedding light on the discursive strategies that underpin these influential texts. Following this, an exploration of the New Historicist concepts of representations, ideology, and power relations is presented. This section examines how these elements are intricately woven into the speeches, functioning both as mirrors of and drivers behind foreign policy actions. Finally, this chapter investigates the relationship between subversion and containment within George W. Bush's discourse. It analyzes how Bush's speeches function to neutralize dissent and constrain opposition, while

simultaneously framing the United States as the defender of Western values in a world perceived to be under threat.

Collectively, this chapter offers an analysis of the multifaceted dimensions of the speech texts. It lays the groundwork for understanding how historical events, cultural narratives, the complex interaction of representations, ideology, power relations, and the dialect of subversion and containment converge to shape United States foreign policy discourse in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

3.2. Historicity of Bush's Speeches: A Reflection of the Post-9/11 Era

The New Historicist tenet of historicity of the text emphasizes that texts are not isolated artifacts, but are embedded within the historical, social, political and cultural contexts of their time. Drawing on this tenet, this study views Bush's speeches as historical artifacts shaped by their historical moment. In other words, the first step of the analysis situates Bush's speeches, *2002 State of the Union Address* and *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, within their historical, political, social and cultural contexts. To this end, this section starts by identifying the historical and political contexts, second the social as well as the cultural contexts, and finally examines how both speeches reflect these contexts of their periods.

3.2.1. Historical and Political Contexts: The Impact of 9/11 Attacks

On the tranquil morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a series of coordinated hijacked of four U.S. commercial airplanes and suicide attacks unfolded across the United States. Two aircrafts were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, leading to their collapse. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, causing significant damage. Passengers on the fourth plane, after learning of the other attacks, attempted to regain control from the hijackers; the struggle resulted in the aircraft crashing into a field in western Pennsylvania, preventing further casualties on the ground. These tragic events

resulted in the loss of nearly 3000 lives and marked the beginning of America's War on Terror (Watson, 2009, p. 1).

In analyzing George W. Bush's speeches, a New Historicist perspective offers another lens through which to understand their meaning and significance. Central to this approach is the understanding that texts cannot be separated from the historical and political contexts in which they were produced. The aftermath of the September 11 attacks played a crucial role in shaping the language of these speeches, as President Bush sought to address the nation's new security concerns and redefine the United States' position on the global stage. The subsequent sections delve into the historical and political contexts that influenced these addresses. First, the light is shed on U.S. national security policies in the wake of 9/11, which reshaped the nation's approach to combating terrorism. This is followed by an examination of the major shifts in U.S. foreign policy, particularly the rise of neoconservatism and its profound influence on the nation's international actions, alongside the growing tendency toward unilateralism. By situating Bush's speeches within this broader context, one can gain a deeper understanding of how these addresses reflect, reinforce, and challenge the prevailing political narratives of the post-9/11 era.

3.2.1.1. United States National Security in the Post-9/11 Era

In response to 9/11, President Bush declared a "War on Terror," a global campaign to combat terrorism and eliminate terrorist networks, adopting counterterrorism as a foreign policy option (Hayden, 2009). Counterterrorism is defined by Hayden (2009) as involving the use of military force by both official armed forces and specialized government agencies like the CIA. The core objective is to deploy military resources, tactics, and technology specifically aimed at dismantling terrorist networks and eliminating their leaders. Actions in counterterrorism can range from targeting individuals through assassinations to carrying out raids, bombings, and

even capturing suspects. It also includes declaring war on terrorist groups, nations that harbour them, or those that actively support terrorism (Hayden, 2009, p. 56). In this context, the U.S. War on Terror can be understood as a comprehensive set of military actions and counterterrorist strategies designed to presumably address global terrorism and protect civilian populations from its harm.

The first phase of this campaign was the invasion of Afghanistan which began with Operation Enduring Freedom on Octobre 7, 2001. It aimed at dismantling al-Qaeda and removing the Taliban regime that harboured them. The Bush administration, nevertheless, emphasized that the War on Terror is an ongoing campaign, which may lead to the involvement of U.S. military forces in various counterterrorism efforts in other countries, potentially lasting for an unpredictable period. Besides, the U.S. intention behind its invasion of Afghanistan was, according to Hayden (2009), primarily driven by self-defence and security concerns. In this context, he mentioned a number of reasons. He also states that some critics, however, argued that the true motive behind the military intervention was to deflect attention from the potential role U.S. policy during the Cold War played in fostering the Taliban and al-Qaeda threat, or to gain control over key oil reserves in Central Asia. But Hayden found that these claims unlikely, and they appear far less plausible than the stated goal of preventing future terrorist attacks as the United States has few national interests in Afghanistan (Hayden, 2009, pp. 56-58).

The decision to invade Afghanistan marked the beginning of a new era in U.S. national security policy. One of the most significant institutional changes following 9/11 attacks was the creation of the Department Homeland Security (DHS) on November 25, 2002 as an antiterrorist measure, following President Bush's signing of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 into law (Hayden, 2009, p. 56). In contrast to counterterrorism, antiterrorism involves the use of administrative, law enforcement, judicial, penal, political, and security resources, tactics, and

tools by the government to prevent terrorist activities. These measures are also aimed at capturing and prosecuting suspected terrorists, as well as punishing those convicted, serving as a deterrent against future attacks. The DHS marked the first of several efforts that demonstrated President Bush's commitment to protecting the United States from future terrorist threats. Alongside government efforts, the private sector also implements security measures at locations such as airports, train stations, industries, and corporations to prevent and deter terrorism (Hayden, 2009, p. 56). Besides, the President established a dedicated military command, US Northern Command, with the primary mission of ensuring the military security and defence of America. These two initiatives formed the core domestic elements of a comprehensive and focused strategy aimed at defeating al-Qaeda (Hayden, 2009, pp. 114-115). Antiterrorism strategies are typically nonviolent, as they function through domestic and international regulatory, legislative, judicial, and security agencies, rather than relying on military forces.

Furthermore, the terrorist attacks of September 11 led to a fundamental alteration in U.S. national security, encapsulated in what is called the "Bush doctrine." The doctrine holds that the U.S. has the right to take military action against potential threats before they could materialize (Gupta, 2008, p. 183). It outlined a new phase in U.S. foreign policy, emphasizing military preemption, superiority, unilateral action, and a commitment to promoting democracy, liberty and security globally. This approach marked a significant departure from the previous strategies of deterrence and containment that had defined American foreign policy since the Cold War. Later, it served as the policy framework for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and shaped U.S. military strategy for years to come (Gupta, 2008).

Following the attacks of September 11, U.S. national security policies experienced a dramatic change, driven by the urgent need to address new and unforeseen threats. These attacks exposed significant vulnerabilities in the nation's defence strategy, leading to a shift towards

more aggressive and proactive measures. The Bush administration, in particular, adopted the doctrine of preemptive strikes as a central pillar of national security, focusing on eliminating potential threats before they could fully develop. These changes laid the foundation for significant transformations in U.S. foreign policy, reshaping its approach on the global stage.

3.2.1.2. Transformations in United States Foreign Policy

The 9/11 terrorist attacks transformed American foreign policy; however, this transformation did not necessarily result in the creation of a completely new approach by President Bush (Allen, 2009, p. 45). While the post-9/11 era marked a significant turning point, it was during this period that a new ideological framework began to shape the nation's global strategy. Central to this transformation was the rise of neoconservatism, an influential political ideology that prioritized the promotion of democracy and the projection of American power abroad, often through military intervention. This transformation was further marked by an increasing emphasis on unilateralism, where the United States began to prioritize its own strategic interests over multilateral collaboration. Together, these forces redefined U.S. foreign policy, steering it towards aggressive interventions and a more assertive role on the world stage. The following part explores the impact of neoconservative thought on the shaping of U.S. foreign policy and how it prompted a shift towards unilateral actions, setting the stage for a new era of American global engagement.

3.2.1.2.1. Neoconservatism's Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy

Neoconservatism is a political movement which has played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, especially in the post-Cold War era (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, p. 91). The term "neoconservatism" does not refer to a cohesive set of doctrines but rather to a political-philosophical phenomenon that emerged out of the complex intellectual and political currents of the mid-20th century. Originally, it was shaped by a group of former leftists who,

disillusioned by the totalitarian excesses of Soviet Communism, migrated towards the political right. These thinkers, who had once been committed to democratic and socialist ideologies, became ardent advocates for a more assertive, interventionist approach to U.S. foreign policy (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, p. 91). In this context, the label "neoconservative" was coined by Michael Harrington, a founding member of Democratic Socialists of America, to name Irving Kristol and other figures who had distanced themselves from democratic socialism. They represented the first generation of neoconservatism who supported the U.S. military involvement the in Vietnam War. They viewed themselves as liberals who believed that America had a responsibility to promote good in the world, maintain global stability, and take military action when necessary (Kumar, 2021, p. 137).

Accordingly, the rise of neoconservatism in the U.S. can be traced back to the Cold War period. Dusanic and Penev (2009) argued that without the Cold War, neoconservatism would not have emerged as a significant political force in U.S. politics. The end of the Cold War, however, did not mark the end of the neoconservative movement. Instead, after a period of "semi-exile" during the Clinton administration, particularly as President Clinton supported the use of military force for humanitarian interventions, neoconservatives found a new purpose in advocating for military interventionism and coercive regime change as part of their broader vision for U.S. foreign policy. The events of September 11, however, provided a "window of opportunity" for the neoconservatives to implement their foreign policy agenda, particularly in Iraq (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, pp. 92-93).

Neoconservatism is significantly shaped by a number of central foreign policy ideas and policies which are: democracy and human rights promotion, empire building, exceptionalism, militarism, and unilateralism. A central idea in neoconservative thought is the belief in the moral duty of the U.S. to promote democracy. After the Cold War, the United States was seen

as the world's sole superpower, with neoconservatives believing that this unipolar moment was an opportunity to spread democracy and reshape global politics. Influenced by Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, the neoconservatives argued that it became the responsibility of modern Western democracies, particularly the United States, to promote democracy worldwide. Fukuyama believed in the spread of democracy as a natural progression of human development (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, p 93). The neoconservative movement, especially under President George W. Bush, advocated for regime change in countries perceived to be a threat to U.S. interests. They saw the removal of authoritarian regimes and the establishment of democratic governments as the best means to promote peace and stability in the world. The war in Iraq, as an example, was framed not just as a military operation but as part of a "grand vision" to transform the Middle East. In other words, the intervention in Iraq was not only about security but also about reshaping the Middle East into a democratic region, with Iraq serving as a model (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, pp. 92-97). In this regard, Dusanic and Penev (2009) stated that Fukuyama emphasized that many readers had misinterpreted his book. Fukuyama argued that the primary issue was modernization. From the beginning, the universal aspiration was not the pursuit of liberal democracy, but the desire to live in a post-modern society with its technological advancements, high standard of living, and quality healthcare. However, neoconservative proponents failed to recognize this, as they never addressed such concerns, like social engineering or nation-building, in their political agendas (p. 94).

Furthermore, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory has influenced neoconservative philosophy, fostering the belief that "the clash of civilizations is looming over the horizon", with an aggressively hostile Islam playing a central role (Dusanic & Penev, 2009, pp. 92-97). Kumar (2021) also wrote that the neoconservatives developed the idea of the "terrorist" as a threat to democracy and civilization (p. 141). Accordingly, the second generation

of neoconservatives' ideological narrative integrated the perspectives of both Fukuyama and Huntington as well. Their ideas formed the basis of the neoconservative mindset in the post-Cold War era.

Another cornerstone of neoconservative thought, particularly in the post-Cold War period, is the endorsement of liberal imperialism. The neoconservatives advocate for the establishment of a wide-reaching American sphere of influence, or empire, in the Middle East. In this respect, Adib-Moghaddam (2015) referred to neoconservatism as "an unashamedly imperial ideology espoused by influential strategists and decision makers in Washington, DC" (p.226). The neoconservative view of imperialism is based on the belief in American exceptionalism: a deep conviction in the uniqueness, permanence, and superiority of the nation's founding liberal ideals, coupled with the belief that the United States has a unique destiny among the nations of the world (Kumar, 2021, p. 138). This perspective of the United States as a distinct "beacon for other nations" due to its liberal values is, for Kumar, widely accepted and unquestioned within the broader policy establishment as a whole. What sets the neoconservatives apart, nevertheless, is their strong dedication militarism and unipolarism (Kumar, 2021, p. 138).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the next generation of neoconservatives developed a vision for the post–Cold War world, which centered on U.S. dominance in a unipolar world. Charles Krauthammer, in his 1990 article "The Unipolar Moment" published in *Foreign Affairs*, argued that the end of the Cold War had created a single superpower, the United States, which could intervene globally and set the terms of international politics (Kumar, 2021, p. 139). This view was further developed in a Pentagon report, The Defense Planning Guidance, by Paul Wolfowitz, a prominent neoconservative, at the request of Dick Cheney and with assistance from Scooter Libby, Richard Perle, and Zalmay Khalilzad. It stated that the U.S.

primary goal should be to prevent the emergence of new rivals. The report called for establishing and protecting a new world order where other nations would not seek to challenge the U.S. politically or economically. It suggested that the United States could act unilaterally, without international approval, advocating for preemptive strikes against threats to U.S. interests, naming several states, including Iraq, North Korea, India, Japan and Russia, as potential aggressors. In that moment, the report was widely criticized, especially by the foreign policy establishment, and ended up being a significant political setback for George H. W. Bush. The 1990s, thus, were not the time for the neoconservatives; that period was marked by "humanitarian" interventionism led by Clinton and the liberal imperialists (Kumar, 2021, pp. 139-140).

The concept of "terrorism" was not a primary focus during the 1990s; it was named alongside a number of other diverse enemies such as the spread of WMD and ballistic missiles, threats to U.S. citizens from terrorism or regional conflicts; and dangers to American society from drug trafficking. In this context, terrorism was mentioned as just one of many challenges facing the United States. The confrontational stance towards Islamists was not embraced by either the Bush Sr. or Clinton administrations. Nevertheless, terrorism became a central theme, particularly after the events of 9/11. Neoconservatives began to view "Islamic terrorism" as the new post-Cold War threat, replacing the Soviet Union as the United States' primary enemy. This new enemy, often framed as "Islamofascism," was linked to the neoconservative right-wing Zionist perspectives, as many neoconservatives who served in the Bush administration had Jewish origins. (Kumar, 2021, pp. 140-152). While the impact of neoconservatives on Bush's foreign policy remains acknowledged, the following section examines the Bush administration's move from multilateralism to unilateralism.

3.2.1.2.2. The Shift Towards Unilateralism

Unilateralism is a term used in foreign policy analysis and the study of international relations to describe a state's foreign policy when it is pursued independently, without consulting, aligning with, or considering the foreign policies of other states or international norms. In essence, unilateralism occurs when a state acts on its own, without the approval or recognition of other states (Brown, McLean & McMillan, 2018, p. 1252). On the other hand, multilateralism is defined as an approach to international trade, the monetary system, disarmament and security, or environmental issues that relies on the principle that effective international cooperative regimes for managing conflicts of interest must be based on broad and sustainable consensus among states. This approach is particularly suited to situations where shared interests within the international community can be clearly identified. It is best understood in contrast to strictly unilateral or bilateral actions (Brown, McLean & McMillan, 2018, p. 1252).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States underwent a significant shift in foreign policy, moving away from multilateralism towards unilateralism. The Bush administration's decisions in the years following the attacks reflected a firm belief that the U.S. could and should act independently, often without seeking the approval or cooperation of other nations or international institutions. One of the clearest manifestations of this shift was the War on Terror, which placed military action at the forefront of U.S. policy. After the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration quickly, as seen before, adopted a strategy that prioritized national security through unilateral military interventions. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, while initially supported by NATO allies, marked the beginning of this aggressive stance. However, the most significant example of unilateralism was the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Despite significant international opposition and skepticism about the evidence linking Iraq to weapons

of mass destruction or the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration pressed ahead with military action. The invasion occurred without obtaining the explicit approval of the United Nations Security Council, a clear example of the U.S. acting independently of multilateral institutions (Zaborowski, 2008).

Alongside military interventions, the Bush administration made decisions that further reflected its preference for unilateralism. In March 2001, President Bush withdrew the United States from the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement, which was designed to address global warming by requiring countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (Zaborowski, 2008, p. 25; Allen, 2009, p. 45). Both President Bush and Condoleezza Rice, who was his National Security Advisor at the time, did not make much of an effort to provide a diplomatic explanation for their rejection of the treaty. They simply asserted that the Protocol was not aligned with the interests of the United States, and that, in their view, was the only factor that mattered (Zaborowski, 2008, p. 26). Similarly, in December 2001, the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, a 1972 agreement that limited the deployment of missile defense systems (Van Evra, 2008, p. 19). Additionally, in 2002, the Bush administration applied a similar logic and formally rejected the International Criminal Court (ICC), to ensure that U.S. forces would not be subject to trial before the tribunal (Zaborowski, 2008, p. 26). These decisions underscored the Bush administration's reluctance to engage in multilateral treaties that it believed undermined U.S. sovereignty and security.

The most defining aspect of the Bush administration's unilateralism, however, was the Bush Doctrine, that became the framework for U.S. foreign policy after 9/11. The Bush Doctrine, which enshrined neoconservative principles, was formally articulated in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) document released in September 2002 (Kumar, 2021, p. 155). The central tenet of the Bush Doctrine was its assertion of the United

States' unilateral right to initiate preemptive war; that is attacking a sovereign nation not due to an immediate threat, but because of the potential risk it posed. This policy granted the President the authority to define what constituted a threat. As a result, countries that harboured terrorists, developed weapons of mass destruction, or acted in opposition to U.S. interests could be subject to military action and invasion. Another crucial element of the Bush Doctrine was the necessity to suppress any rising power that could challenge U.S. hegemony. The NSS document asserts: "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buil-dup in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States" (White House, 2002, p. 30). This policy led to a significant U.S. military presence in the Middle East and Central Asia, regions considered "hot spots" due to their oil and natural gas reserves, as well as their proximity to potential rivals such as China, India, and Russia (Kumar, 2021, p. 155-156). In brief, the Bush Doctrine, outlined in the aims and strategies of neoconservatism, asserted that the United States would solidify its status as the world's sole military superpower, claiming the right to launch preemptive strikes against any perceived threat, regardless of UN approval or international legal restrictions.

The revolutionary aspect of the Bush doctrine lies in its authorization of America's unilateral authority to launch military strikes against sovereign nations even without evidence of an immediate danger. Gupta (2008) wrote that the official national security strategy formally endorsed the concept of preemptive strikes, establishing this approach as a foundational element of U.S. defense policy. Disregarding international norms, the Bush strategy, further, maintains that "the United States should be exempt from the rules we expect other nations to obey" (Congressional Research Service, 2002, as cited in Gupta, 2008, p. 183). This doctrine was used by the Bush administration to justify the invasion of Iraq, with the argument that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction that could be used against the United States or given to terrorist

groups like al-Qaeda. Nevertheless, the U.S. military attacks raised serious doubts regarding its legitimacy under international law, and triggered heated debates within American political circles concerning both the constitutional authority and moral justification for applying such a doctrine. This strategic orientation represented a profound transformation from the international engagement principles that had guided U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War period (Gupta, 2008).

In conclusion, applying a New Historicist approach to George W. Bush's speeches requires an understanding of the historical and political contexts in which they were delivered. This section has laid the groundwork for such an analysis by examining the changes in U.S. national security policies following the 9/11 attacks, the rise of neoconservatism, and the growing trend toward unilateralism. By placing Bush's speeches within these broader developments, it sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how these addresses both reflected and shaped the political climate of the post-9/11 era. Moving forward, the next section turns to the social and cultural contexts in which these speeches were framed, providing insight into the societal and cultural factors that influenced the discourse of President Bush during this period.

3.2.2. Social and Cultural Contexts in the Aftermath of 9/11

In order to explore the social as well as the cultural context surrounding President Bush's speeches of *2002 State of the Union Address* and *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, it is essential to examine the social attitudes and the prevailing cultural beliefs in the United States during that period, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This examination considers the collective trauma experienced by the nation, the heightened emphasis on national security, the rise of discrimination and Islamophobia, and the influence of religion alongside the discourse of American exceptionalism.

3.2.2.1. Collective Trauma and the Rise of National Unity

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, triggered a profound collective trauma in the United States, profoundly altering the nation's emotional and psychological state. In the immediate aftermath, a surge of emotional reactions swept through the American public, fostering a shared sense of national trauma. This emotional climate influenced not only how Americans perceived the attacks but also how they responded politically. President George W. Bush's speeches during this period must be understood within this context, as they sought to channel the nation's emotional responses into a unifying force.

Roza (2009) pointed out that this trauma manifested in widespread feelings of vulnerability, fear, and grief, all of which were intensified by the public's reaction to the attacks. She explained that the events created a profound sense of humiliation among Americans, particularly given the nature of the attack, where American soil was used against the nation itself. The phrase "America is under attack," uttered by White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, was immediately picked up by the media and became emblematic of the national sentiment (p. 105). Besides, the constant replaying of the attacks on television transformed the event into a highly symbolic moment, in which Americans from all walks of life saw themselves as victims and survivors, contributing to the emotional unity. This emotional unity, as Roza (2009) noted, was pivotal in fostering a surge in patriotism and national solidarity. The shared sense of vulnerability and outrage created a space where public expressions of solidarity became widespread. Acts like flag-waving and public memorials, alongside the production of symbols such as T-shirts and bumper stickers, became widespread indicators of national pride and unity. This patriotic surge was a direct response to trauma, serving not only as a method of public mourning but also as a means of asserting strength and cohesion in the face of perceived vulnerability (Roza, 2009, p. 105). Additionally, Roza (2009) stated that the spontaneous

production of poetry following 9/11 represented another way to express collective grief, illustrating the societal need to channel emotions through a shared cultural medium. This mass production of poems, many of which were posted in public spaces and on the internet, reflected a democratic inclusivity where everyone was granted the authority to express their emotions about the tragedy (p. 106). This collective trauma was not just a psychological experience but became a public performance, reinforcing the nation's shared victimhood (Roza, 2009).

Expanding on this, Eisen (2003) offered a framework for understanding how trauma leads to "post-traumatic societal adaptation" (p. 502). He suggested that large-scale traumatic events like 9/11 do not only lead to emotional upheaval but also significantly alter public consciousness and societal norms. Besides, he emphasized that societal adaptation to trauma often involves a reconfiguration of national priorities, particularly in response to heightened fear and vulnerability. In the case of 9/11, the desire for security became a central concern, and this fear prompted widespread public support for new policies aimed at safeguarding the nation. Eisen (2003) noted that public responses to trauma often involve a collective yearning for security and resolution, which leads to the adoption of policies designed to restore a sense of control and stability (p. 505).

Eisen (2003) further suggested that societal changes following trauma are not only emotional but they also impact the structural and institutional aspects of society. He posted that in response to trauma, societies often experience substantial changes in governance, as the desire for safety and normalcy leads to the adoption of measures that were previously unthinkable or deemed unnecessary (p. 505). In the context of 9/11, this societal shift led to the acceptance of more stringent security measures, surveillance programs, and national defense strategies, which were framed as necessary to ensure national resilience in the face of the perceived threat of terrorism. Moreover, this rise in patriotism and national unity, then, can be

viewed not simply as an emotional response but as an integral part of the broader societal adaptation to the trauma of 9/11. The emotional and symbolic acts of solidarity and pride were not only expressions of grief but also a means of reaffirming national identity and strength. As Eisen (2003) explains, trauma creates a desire for societal resolution, and the patriotic fervour that followed 9/11 served to reassert the nation's moral clarity and unity in the face of external threats (Eisen, p. 505). This adaptation, in turn, led to the acceptance of policies that aligned with national security priorities, further solidifying the connection between trauma, patriotism, and political action.

In conclusion, both Roza (2009) and Eisen (2003) provided critical insights into the ways in which collective trauma shaped the American public's emotional state and political responses following 9/11. While Roza (2009) focused on the emotional unity and symbolic expressions of national grief, Eisen's (2003) framework of post-traumatic societal adaptation adds an important dimension by showing how trauma induced societal change, particularly in terms of priorities and policies. The rise of patriotism and national unity was not merely a symbolic expression but a political adaptation to the trauma, reinforcing national resilience and supporting new governance measures aimed at restoring security. These responses were integral to the reorganization of national identity and security in the aftermath of the attacks. While the collective trauma of 9/11 fostered a surge of national unity and solidarity, it also set the stage for a more troubling social shift. As the nation grappled with its wounds, the increasing association of terrorism with Islam would soon give rise to an escalation of discrimination and Islamophobia, which would have lasting effects on marginalized communities.

3.2.2.2. Escalation of Discrimination and Islamophobia

According to Kumar (2021), the roots of Islamophobia are linked to the legacies of empire and colonialism. It emerged not as a sudden or isolated occurrence but as a continuation

of historical racial formations, beginning with early modern Spain's imposition of racialized exclusion on Muslim populations, and evolving through British Orientalism and European colonial practices. In the context of this thesis, this legacy has been intensified and reconfigured within U.S. imperialism, particularly following the events of 9/11, which accelerated and institutionalized the "racialization" of Muslims as an existential threat to U.S. national and global security (pp. 22-27).

Islamophobia is commonly defined as "prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination" (Kumar, 2021, p. 26). However, Kumar (2021) contended that this limited understanding fails to capture the full complexity of the phenomenon. She offered a more comprehensive analysis, asserting that Islamophobia extends beyond simple religious prejudice to constitute a systemic form of "anti-Muslim racism" embedded within historical and contemporary imperial frameworks (p. 26). This phenomenon represents a structural system of oppression that racializes Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, including diverse groups such as Arab Christians and Sikhs. Hence, while Islamophobia is widely employed to denote hostility towards Islam and Muslims, often risks being narrowly interpreted as religious intolerance. Kumar (2021) cautioned against this reduction, emphasizing that Islamophobia manifests as a comprehensive regime of racial discrimination sustained by the structures and practices of state and society.

Islamophobia in the United States is deeply embedded within political, legal, and social institutions, where it functions as a systemic form of racialized control over Muslim communities (Kumar, 2021). Politically, institutions such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and National Security Agency (NSA) are central actors in producing and enforcing Islamophobic policies. These agencies have institutionalized the categorization of Muslims as a homogeneous security threat,

facilitating pervasive surveillance programs, arbitrary arrests, detentions, and deportations, often justified under broad counterterrorism mandates. This securitization process extends to funding local community institutions to encourage racial profiling and reporting on "suspicious" Muslim behaviour, thereby deepening community surveillance and control (Kumar, 2021). Moreover, Islamophobia in political institutions transcends partisan lines, as liberal and centrist politicians adopt "liberal Islamophobia" by endorsing conditional acceptance of "good Muslims" who support U.S. imperial policies, while excluding or criminalizing dissenting Muslims (p. 33).

In legal institutions, Islamophobia is institutionalized through laws and judicial rulings that undermine civil liberties and disproportionately target Muslim communities (Kumar, 2021). Post-9/11 legislation, particularly the Patriot Act, granted sweeping powers to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, enabling racial profiling, mass registration, and indefinite detention of Muslims without due process. Courts have often upheld these laws, reinforcing a legal environment where Muslims are presumed suspect or guilty based on racialized markers rather than concrete evidence. Legal Islamophobia also manifests in the securitization of Islam as an inherently violent ideology, which legitimizes extraordinary legal measures, including secret evidence and harsh immigration enforcement, that erode traditional protections under U.S. law. These practices embed Islamophobia within the legal system, making discrimination and exclusion structural components of judicial and immigration processes (Kumar, 2021, pp. 75-83).

Furthermore, social institutions reproduced and reinforced Islamophobia through cultural, educational, and law enforcement practices that normalize the marginalization of Muslims (Kumar, 2021). The media played a significant role by disseminating stereotypes that portray Muslims as violent, anti-modern, or culturally backward, shaping public perception and

fuelling social exclusion. Educational institutions contributed to Islamophobia by embedding biases in curricula and disciplinary policies, which stigmatize Muslim students and alienate them from the broader school community. Local law enforcement agencies collaborated with federal security apparatuses to extend surveillance and policing into Muslim neighbourhoods, creating an environment of fear and limiting civic engagement (Kumar, 2021, pp. 85-88). Collectively, these political, legal, and social institutional practices operated as interconnected systems that uphold and perpetuate Islamophobia as a structural phenomenon rather than isolated incidents of bias or prejudice.

Overall, the persistence of Islamophobia in the United States is deeply rooted in historical imperial legacies and sustained through interconnected political, legal, and social institutions. This systemic racialization manifests in state surveillance, discriminatory laws enforcement, and migration control which support policies of violence, detention, torture, and denial of basic rights of Muslim communities and those perceived to be Muslims. Islamophobia is also justified within broader national narratives. One of the most influential of these narratives is the discourse of American exceptionalism, which frames U.S. actions as inherently righteous and necessary.

3.2.2.3. Religion and the Discourse of American Exceptionalism

Central to the cultural context of Bush's speeches are the role of religion in public discourse and the concept of American exceptionalism. In the immediate aftermath, there was a notable resurgence of religious sentiment and expression among the American populace. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in December 2001 revealed that 78% of respondents perceived an increased role of religion in American life, a significant rise from 37% earlier that year. The events of September marked a significant shift in the prominence of religion within American public life. This tragic event prompted a national introspection where religious

language and motifs became central to public and political narratives. Approximately 61% of individuals reported that religion played a very important role in their lives, a figure consistent with pre-9/11 statistics. However, there was a notable increase in personal religious activities, such as prayer, with many individuals turning to faith as a source of comfort during this period of crisis. This shift was characterized by an increased public engagement with religious concepts, as both policymakers and citizens sought meaning and solace in the aftermath of the attacks (Pew Research Center, 2001).

American exceptionalism, the belief that the United States holds a unique place and role in human history, has been a recurring theme in the nation's political discourse. Religion has been a critical component of this exceptionalist narrative, where the United States is often portrayed as a divinely ordained nation, set apart for a special mission in the world. This concept suggests that America is distinct due to its foundational principles of liberty, democracy, and individualism. American exceptionalism serves as a foundational myth for the United States, providing a framework through which events and actions are understood and interpreted (Barnett, 2016). The belief in America's superiority and distinctiveness has been a prevailing notion even before the nation's founding, evolving and being redefined over time. Furthermore, the myth of American exceptionalism has deeply influenced U.S. foreign policy, shaping its perceptions of threats and the strategies developed in response.

The concept "American exceptionalism" traces its origins to the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), who used it in *Democracy in America* to describe the absence of a noble class in the United States. However, Tocqueville also acknowledged the distinct religious character of Anglo-American civilization. Similarly, Puritan leader John Winthrop's 1630 sermon "City upon a Hill" (*A Model of Christian Charity*) provided key ideological content that contributed to the formation of this myth. The Puritan roots of the nation embedded a strong

moral and religious dimension in the idea of exceptionalism, intertwining religious meaning with Enlightenment principles such as reason, individualism, and liberty (Barnett, 2016, p. 8). Winthrop's vision of America as a "city upon a hill" became a symbolic cornerstone of the belief in a divine purpose for the nation, reinforcing the view that the U.S. was destined to play a unique role in the world.

Over time, the myth of American exceptionalism has, as Barnett (2016) noted, come to rest on three interconnected ideas regarding the U.S. and its people. First, it portrays America as a nation chosen by God, often envisioned as a "new Jerusalem" on Earth. This divine chosenness is a fundamental religious element in the discourse of exceptionalism. Second, as this divinely chosen nation, America is believed to have a mission to spread its values of democracy and freedom beyond its borders. Third, the country is framed as a unique force for good, standing against evil in the world. These ideas, deeply intertwined with religious narratives, have significantly influenced U.S. foreign policy since the nation's founding, shaping both its isolationist and interventionist approaches (p. 3).

In its early years, the U.S. embraced "exemplary exceptionalism," favouring an isolationist stance in foreign affairs. However, as the country grew in power, its foreign policy shifted toward "missionary exceptionalism," leading to a more interventionist role in global politics (Barnett, 2016, p. 8). This transformation was driven by a perceived religious duty, where America saw itself as a moral authority, deploying its military forces to uphold its ideals against perceived threats of evil and barbarism. Today, the myth of exceptionalism frames American values as synonymous with universal values, positioning the U.S. as a selfless and heroic defender of these ideals on the world stage (Barnett, 2016, p. 9).

In short, American exceptionalism serves as a foundational national narrative for the United States, providing a framework through which events and actions are interpreted. This

concept posits that the U.S. is inherently different from other nations, often emphasizing its unique origins, historical evolution, and distinctive political and religious institutions. As a result, American exceptionalism functions as a lens that shapes the nation's self-perception and influences its interpretation of historical and contemporary events. In the post-9/11 context, the narrative of American exceptionalism gained renewed prominence, often infused with religious discourse to justify military action and foreign policy strategies aimed at combating perceived threats to American values.

Having examined the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts that shaped President George W. Bush's speeches, which itself constitutes a fundamental application of the New Historicist tenet of the historicity of the text, this section proceeds to analyze how the speeches explicitly reflect and respond to their times. Through this lens, the speeches are revealed not merely as discursive artifacts but as historically embedded texts deeply connected to their moment, actively engaging with and embracing the Clash of Civilizations narrative. This civilizational framework, which gained prominence in the post-9/11 era, is thus central to understanding the speeches' ideological and cultural significance within the broader discourse of early twenty-first-century geopolitics.

Delivered on January 29, 2002, only four months after the September 11 attacks, Bush's *2002 State of the Union Address* opens by acknowledging the nation's collective trauma: "We last met in an hour of shock and suffering." This phrase captures the profound national trauma following the 9/11 attacks. While it marks the collective grief experienced by Americans, it situates the American public within a narrative of existential crisis that requires unification against a common enemy. It serves as an emotional point of departure from which the speech later develops more complex ideological civilizational narratives.

Moreover, another moment in Bush's address is when he evokes the nation's deep emotional wounds through personal stories of loss. He states: "For many Americans, these four months have brought sorrow, and pain that will never completely go away" (Bush, 2002). This line introduces a carefully constructed sequence of personal anecdotes of a retired firefighter, returning to Ground Zero to be near his sons; a child offering a football to his deceased father; a widow of a CIA officer bidding farewell at her husband's grave. These narratives serve not only to personalize the national tragedy but also to universalize grief, creating a shared emotional framework that binds the public in a collective experience of mourning. Within a New Historicist reading, this language reflects how the speech is embedded in its historical moment; one defined by unprecedented vulnerability, psychological dislocation, and the urgent need for national cohesion. Rather than immediately invoking civilizational binaries, this passage operates as a discursive preparation, grounding the speech in trauma and emotional legitimacy. It constructs a moral foundation for what follows, a discursive change from personal sorrow to national justification. When President Bush (2002) assures the grieving, "our cause is just, and our country will never forget the debt we owe Michael and all who gave their lives for freedom," he subtly transitions from personal loss to a universal moral imperative, thus legitimizing political and military action as redemptive responses to trauma. In this way, the speech reflects a post-9/11 cultural landscape in which national pain becomes a powerful ideological resource, laying the groundwork for subsequent civilizational framings that portray America as both victim and moral agent.

This crisis moment prepares the speech to invoke a civilizational dichotomy, framing "us" as the civilized, freedom-loving West and "them" as the threatening Other, implicitly tied to Islamic extremism. Throughout the address, President Bush reinforces this binary opposition, stating, for example, that "Our enemies send other people's children on missions of suicide and

murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed. We stand for a different choice… We choose freedom and the dignity of every life" (Bush, 2002). This passage clearly delineates a moral and civilizational contrast, casting the United States and its allies as bearers of life and liberty, and the terrorists and their supporters as embodiments of death and oppression. Such language mirrors Huntington's conceptualization of a clash between Western and Islamic civilizations.

The speech's invocation of the "axis of evil" further demonstrates the historicity of the text in relation to the clash narrative. By grouping North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as part of a coalition threatening global peace, President Bush frames these regimes not only as political adversaries but as representations of distinct civilizations in conflict with the West. While North Korea's inclusion broadens the coalition beyond the Islamic world, the emphasis in Bush's discourse centres on Iran and Iraq as emblematic of a civilizational opposition rooted in cultural, religious, and ideological differences. This designation serves as a strategic discursive device that reflects and reinforces a civilizational bloc opposed to Western liberal democratic values. Besides, Bush's (2002) explicit defense of American values as universal and non-negotiable by asserting that "the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance" positions the West as morally and culturally superior. This assertion closely aligns with Huntington's thesis, which frames Western liberal democracy as the pinnacle of civilization, standing in opposition to what are perceived as authoritarian and repressive tendencies within the Islamic civilization. Through this civilizational framing, the speech not only justifies U.S. foreign policy objectives but also situates global conflict within a broader narrative of cultural clash.

Furthermore, the political context of early 2002 was marked by the administration's vigorous push for a "War on Terror." Bush's discourse strategically employed militaristic and

dichotomous language that captured this period's prevailing discourse. The mention of an "axis of evil," for instance, was emblematic of a worldview where potential adversaries were pre-emptively categorized as threats based on cultural and ideological differences. This language not only reflected the political urgency of the time but also the broader societal commitment to a defense of Western values. By echoing the intense security concerns and moral imperatives of the era, Bush's speech reflects the foreign policy plans advocated by neoconservative think tanks, and thus, it embodies the historical conditions under which it was produced, serving as a text that is deeply interwoven with its time-specific concerns.

Overall, Bush's 2002 speech is rooted in a historical moment defined by shock and the rapid mobilization of American resolve for national security concerns, where the threat of terrorism was framed as a direct assault on the very values of Western civilization. Bush's invocation of phrases such as "our way of life" and his categorization of certain regimes as an "axis of evil" echoes Samuel Huntington's thesis that conflicts are essentially driven by cultural and civilizational differences. This discourse not only reflects the prevailing historical conditions but also reinforces a binary worldview in which the United States positions itself as the defender of a unique, morally superior civilization.

By the time President Bush delivered his *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11* on September 11, 2006, the American social and political landscape had evolved while still being haunted by the legacy of that tragic day. In this address, Bush's language reflects a period marked by both commemoration and ongoing conflict. His discourse draws upon the collective memory of 9/11 as a defining moment in American history, using reflective language that seeks to honour the sacrifices made and to reassert national unity. At the same time, the speech acknowledges the prolonged nature of the "War on Terror," particularly the extended engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq. The discourse of remembrance

is imbued with an understanding of a changed world; one where the initial shock of the attacks has given way to the pragmatic realities of prolonged military conflict and shifting global alliances. This evolution in language reflects a society that is attempting to reconcile its past trauma with the demands of an uncertain present.

In addition, the 2006 address reveals how the political and social contexts of the time had begun to incorporate a more complex narrative than that of immediate post-9/11 unity. While the earlier discourse was characterized by a clear binary for defining the enemy, the language in 2006 becomes more complex. Nonetheless, Bush's discourse still mirrors a historical context steeped in the aftermath of 9/11, where national security and the continuation of U.S. military interventions remained paramount. The speech reflects the enduring influence of a socio-cultural context that despites evolving circumstances, continues to prioritize defense and a clear sense of national identity shaped by the events of 9/11. This is indicative of a historical condition where the legacy of the attacks, and the policies that followed, had become integral to American political discourse.

The historicity of Bush's speeches, when examined through a New Historicist lens, reveals an interplay between the immediate historical conditions and the Clash of Civilizations narrative. On one hand, his discourse reflects the intense national trauma and security concerns that arose after 9/11, capturing a moment in which Western civilization was actively reasserting itself in opposition to perceived external threats. On the other hand, by continuously framing these threats within a binary opposition, where the United States is cast as the guardian of Western values against a culturally distinct and hostile "Other," Bush's speeches also contribute to the construction of a historical narrative that legitimizes the clash discourse. This dual function underscores how the texts are not only products of their time but are also instrumental in perpetuating a specific framework. In doing so, they reinforce the belief in an inevitable

cultural conflict, a cornerstone of the Clash of Civilizations thesis, thus embedding this narrative within the American foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 era. Building on this understanding, the next section explores the concept of textuality of history, another key tenet of New Historicism, which examines how historical narratives themselves are reconstructed and represented through discourse.

3.3. Textuality of History in Bush's Speeches: Reconstructing History as a Narrative of Civilizational Conflict

The New Historicist tenet of textuality of history posits that history is not merely a collection of objective facts but is continually interpreted and reinterpreted through discourse. Applying this tenet to President Bush's *2002 State of the Union Address and his Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11* involves examining how these speeches not only reflect historical events but also how they actively construct and shape the narrative of 9/11 events. Meanwhile, this analysis seeks to demonstrate how Bush's speeches actively echo and propagate the Clash of Civilizations narrative.

George W. Bush's speeches stand as fundamental texts in the post-9/11 era, serving not merely to report on events but to reconstruct history through a distinct civilizational lens as well. Delivered less than five months after the attacks, *2002 State of the Union Address* operates as a historical narrative which constructs history that closely aligns with the framework of Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis, through specific textual practices. Textual practices refer to the methods, techniques, devices, or processes involved in producing and shaping texts. In this analysis, they encompass how Bush's speeches are constructed through the use of narrative framing within metaphors and intertextuality.

President Bush employs metaphors to crystallize the geopolitical order into a moral binary. The metaphors "axis of evil," "terror training camps," "ticking time bombs," "war on

terror," and "terrorist underworld" (Bush, 2002) serve as key discursive devices that not only capture the urgency of the situation but also emphasize the moral and ideological divide between the West and its adversaries. The phrase "axis of evil" (Bush, 2002) illustrates a strong metaphor, uniting Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as a singular global villainous force, threating global peace. This metaphor aligns with Huntington's thesis by positioning these states as embodiments of evil in direct opposition to the "civilized world".

Likewise, the metaphor "terror training camps" (Bush, 2002) depicts terrorist organizations as factories or breeding grounds, where violence and extremism are systematically manufactured. This metaphor simplifies the complex network of terrorist cells into organized, purposeful operations that can be dismantled. By equating these camps to factories, Bush conveys the idea that terrorism is not an occurrence but a systematic process; one that threatens the safety and stability of the "civilized world". This directly supports the Clash of Civilizations narrative, which presents a clear divide between the Western ideals of democracy and the organized, methodical nature of extremist movements. The United States, as the self-declared defender of civilization, must engage in a moral struggle to eradicate these factories of terror.

Similarly, the metaphor of "ticking time bombs" (Bush, 2002) captures the urgency and unpredictability of the terrorist threat. By likening terrorists to bombs that could explode at any moment, Bush emphasizes the existential danger posed by these adversaries. The imagery of time running out builds a sense of impending doom and justifies preemptive action, framing the United States as the proactive agent in a conflict with clear moral stakes. The Clash of Civilizations framework relies heavily on such metaphors to construct a narrative where the West is constantly under threat from a radical, violent Other. The idea of an enemy that is ready

to strike at any moment reinforces the perception of a civilization on the brink of complete destruction, urging action to preserve freedom and peace.

The phrase "war on terror" (Bush, 2002) itself serves as both a metaphor and a structural element of the speech, rendering the global fight as an ongoing battle against an enemy that transcends traditional warfare. By positioning terrorism as a war, Bush amplifies the moral dimensions of the conflict, turning it into an ideological struggle. The "war on terror" metaphor supports the Clash of Civilizations narrative by casting the terrorist threat as an existential battle between civilization and barbarism. In this framing, the fight is not just about military strategy but about the survival of values such as democracy, freedom, and justice. The metaphor makes the struggle seem inevitable, constructing it as a civilizational mission for the West to preserve its cultural and moral integrity.

Lastly, the "terrorist underworld" (Bush, 2002) metaphor evokes the image of a hidden, criminal society operating beneath the surface of civilized life. This metaphor demonstrates the secretive, insidious nature of terrorism, presenting it as a pervasive force that exists in the shadows, waiting to destabilize established societies. It aligns with the Clash of Civilizations narrative by suggesting that terrorists are not just isolated actors but part of a larger, shadowy force working against the West's political and cultural order. The metaphor of an "underworld" evokes fear and distrust, framing the fight as one that requires vigilance and an ongoing struggle to uncover and eliminate the hidden forces threatening the Western civilization.

In George W. Bush's *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, metaphor also functions as a powerful textual practice that actively constructs and reinforces the Clash of Civilizations narrative. The metaphor "In truth, it is a struggle for civilization" (Bush, 2006) explicitly elevates the conflict beyond a conventional military engagement to a fundamental contest over the future of global culture and values. This metaphor positions the

United States and its allies as defenders of civilization itself, tasked with protecting ideals such as freedom, democracy, and human dignity against forces of extremism and repression. Through this framing, Bush's speech transforms history into a moral drama, emphasizing the existential stakes involved. The metaphor powerfully aligns with the Clash of Civilizations framework by articulating the conflict as not merely political but civilizational, thereby legitimizing continued intervention and vigilance.

Bush's contrasting metaphors "desert of despotism" and "fertile gardens of liberty" (Bush, 2006) further develop this civilizational narrative by depicting the Middle East as a region caught between starkly opposed futures. The "desert of despotism" evokes barrenness, stagnation, and oppression; images that bring to mind a lifeless and inhospitable environment under tyranny. In contrast, the "fertile gardens of liberty" metaphor suggests growth, prosperity, and hope, signifying the transformative potential of democracy and freedom. These metaphors function as discursive tools that simplify and dramatize the geopolitical context, revealing the crucial divide between repression and liberty that shapes the future of civilization. This reinforces the narrative of a global struggle where the West champions liberation and progress, in opposition to forces seeking to maintain despotism.

Furthermore, the metaphor "We will lead the 21st century into a shining age of human liberty" exemplifies the discourse of American exceptionalism within George W. Bush's 2006 address. This future-oriented metaphor projects not merely hope or optimism but asserts a uniquely American role as the indispensable leader and architect of global freedom and progress. By promising to "lead" the century, the United States is positioned at the forefront of a civilizational mission, implying a singular moral authority and responsibility to shape the world's course. This aligns closely with the traditional concept of American exceptionalism, which holds that the U.S. is inherently distinct, both morally and historically, from other

nations, endowed with a divine mandate to spread democracy and liberty. The imagery of a "shining age" situates the U.S. as a beacon or guiding light, illuminating the path out of darkness and chaos. The metaphor thus reinforces the exceptionalist narrative that the American model is both superior and universally applicable, and that the nation's leadership is vital to the realization of global peace and prosperity. Importantly, this exceptionalist metaphor also serves to deepen the Clash of Civilizations narrative by casting the United States as the civilizational bearer confronting forces of disorder and extremism. The speech constructs a binary where American leadership embodies order, freedom, and progress, set against a threatening "Other" characterized by chaos, repression, and radicalism. This dichotomy not only legitimizes U.S. foreign policy but also naturalizes the notion of a civilizational conflict. Through this metaphor, Bush's discourse asserts that America's destiny is to lead the world into a new era defined by liberty, thereby validating interventionist policies as part of a historic mission. The metaphor of a "shining age" thus functions as a discursive cornerstone for exceptionalism, reinforcing both the moral imperative and inevitability of American leadership within the Clash of Civilizations framework.

Together, these metaphors, in George W. Bush's 2002 and 2006 speeches, work cohesively to shape Bush's speeches into a textual practice that emphasizes the urgency, moral clarity, and existential nature of the conflict. In short, these metaphors function as key textual practices that make of the 9/11 event a battle between good and evil civilizations. By employing such a vivid and evocative language, Bush's discourse constructs a historical narrative that aligns perfectly with the Clash of Civilizations framework. The West, under the divine leadership of the United States, is depicted as being under constant threat from a malevolent, organized, and unpredictable enemy.

Moreover, intertextuality, understood as the shaping of a text's meaning through its relationship with other texts, serves as another important textual practice in George W. Bush's post-9/11 speeches. This practice involves the strategic invocation and integration of historical, political, cultural, and ideological narratives that resonate with collective memory and shared values. Through intertextuality, Bush's discourse draws upon authoritative discourses to legitimize its moral legitimacy and strengthen its persuasive power, embedding the post-9/11 conflict within well-established frameworks that the audience recognizes and responds to. Bush's speeches are rich in intertextual practices through selective integration and repetition of prior discourses.

One of the most prominent intertextual techniques in Bush's discourse is the allusion to World War II through the phrase "axis of evil" in the 2002 speech. This term deliberately echoes the "Axis Powers" of Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Fascist Italy, thereby casting Iran, Iraq, and North Korea not just as contemporary threats but as reincarnations of historically demonized regimes. This is more than a metaphor, it is an intertextual incorporation that positions America once again as the moral protagonist against the dangers posed by regimes for "seeking weapons of mass distraction" (Bush, 2002). By drawing on the memory of World War II, Bush mobilizes a deep narrative of justified military interventions, existential threat, and global security.

Similarly, in the 2006 speech, President Bush deliberately evokes the legacy of American wartime leadership by referencing the discourse of former U.S. presidents such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman. In doing so, Bush recalls the U.S. commitment to defeating fascism and communism. These allusions function to connect the contemporary "war on terror" to previous "enemies" of previous wars, notably World War II and the Cold War, moments in which the United States positioned itself as the defender of "liberty" against

tyranny. They cast the War on Terror as a continuation of the American legacy of defeating ideological enemies. This intertextual link not only invokes a sense of historical continuity but also mobilizes collective emotions associated with patriotism, resilience, and morality. It frames the post-9/11 conflict as a natural extension of America's historical mission, situating it within a narrative of inevitable confrontation between "good" and "evil."

Intertextuality also emerges through Cold War discourse. Phrases such as "evil," (Bush, 2002; 2006) "freedom," (Bush, 2002; 2006), "totalitarian ideology," (Bush, 2006) and "decisive ideological struggle" (Bush, 2006) closely mirror Ronald Reagan's 1983 "Evil Empire" speech. Bush's 2006 statement that "it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century" directly invokes Reagan's claim that the Cold War was a moral conflict between the free world and totalitarianism. This repetition fulfils a dual function: it constructs al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups as ideological successors to communism, and it adapts Cold War dichotomies for a post-9/11 world. The moral binaries of the Cold War, democracy vs. tyranny, liberty vs. oppression, are thus redeployed to frame a civilizational war between the West and the East.

Another crucial intertextual layer is the use of biblical language, which permeates both speeches. Bush uses phrases such as "spirit" (Bush, 2002; 2006), "the face of evil" (Bush, 2006), "faith in a loving God who made us to be free" (Bush, 2006), and "America united in prayer" (Bush, 2006) drawing heavily on Christian moral vocabulary to infuse political narrative with sacred significance. These quotations do not merely embellish the language but function to frame the post-9/11 conflict as a holy battle between good and evil, infusing it with a transcendent moral purpose. Besides, in the 2006 speech, Bush recounts how passengers on Flight 93 recited the 23rd Psalm; a biblical text traditionally associated with divine protection and comfort in the face of death. By inserting this scriptural reference, Bush elevates a historical moment into a religious resonance. This religious resonance comforts a grieving nation and

legitimizes the military and political response as part of a divinely ordained mission. Through these explicit biblical allusions, the speeches mobilize faith as a source of collective strength and moral certainty, reinforcing the ideological framing of the War on Terror as a righteous struggle.

In reinforcing this exceptionalist sense of mission, Bush uses statements like "we've been called to the unique role in human events," "my hope is that all nations will need our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own," "history has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight" (Bush, 2002). In these textual practices of intertextuality, Bush explicitly refers to and reinforces the discourse of American exceptionalism, positioning the United States as a chosen nation with a providential mission. They also invoke a vision of history that casts America not merely as a nation among others, but as a divinely or historically ordained actor with a moral mandate to lead the world. This language not only justifies unilateral security measures but also situates the post-9/11 conflict within a civilizational framework where America assumes the role of a defender of the "free world."

Most importantly, Bush's speeches are intertextually tied to Orientalist discourses as defined by Edward Said. His depiction of the Middle East as a place where "women are prisoners in their homes, men are beaten for missing prayer meetings, and terrorists have a save heaven to plan and launch attacks on America and other civilized nations," (Bush, 2006) and a place where radicals seek to create a " radical Islamic empire" (Bush, 2006) taps into a long-standing Western narrative of the East as despotic, backward, threatening, and uncivilized. This language does not simply refer to particular political actors; it invokes an intertextual field in which Islam is historically and essentially associated with violence, repression, and anti-

modernity. This Orientalist discourse has circulated since the colonial period and is here subtly revived and legitimized in a post-9/11 context.

Intertextuality in 2002 and 2006 speeches, thus, operates on multiple levels: it connects the post-9/11 conflict with historical precedents, situates it within the cultural and religious tradition of Western political thought. This complex layering of references enhances the speeches' persuasive appeal by grounding them in familiar narratives that convey legitimacy and urgency. It complements the other textual practice of metaphor by constructing the post-9/11 world as a civilizational battleground, demanding vigilant and decisive American leadership. These intertextual references, ranging from World War II and Cold War memory to biblical motifs and Western civilizational myths, form the discursive structure upon which President Bush builds a binary vision of global conflict. In doing so, his speeches do not simply reflect history but recreate it through a web of textual allusions that contribute to the construction of 9/11 event as a turning point in a larger, civilizational struggle.

Together, the metaphors and intertextual references in Bush's 2002 and 2006 speeches serve not merely as stylistic embellishments but as textual strategies that shape how the events of 9/11 and its aftermath are reconstructed. By invoking emotionally charged images, drawing on historically resonant discourses, and directly referencing the Clash of Civilizations discourse, Bush constructs a narrative of conflict that appears coherent, urgent, and moral. While this section has focused on how Bush's discourse actively constructs historical meaning through such textual practices, the broader ideological and political implications of these constructions require further attention. The following section, therefore, shifts from the level of textual practices to that of representation, analyzing how these discursive choices participate in the production of identity, the justification of power, and the establishment of a civilizational binary between the West and its perceived adversaries.

3.4. Representations as Sites of Ideology and Power in Bush's Speeches

George W. Bush's *2002 State of the Union Address* and his 2006 *Address on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11* serve as critical texts through which dominant ideologies and power relations are constructed and enacted. From a New Historicist perspective, as articulated by Stephen Greenblatt, texts function as sites of negotiation where culture, power, and history intersect, producing meanings that serve specific social and political interests. Bush's speeches are not neutral communications but are embedded within and productive of power relations that legitimize political ideologies and policies. Central to these is the deployment of the Clash of Civilizations narrative, which frames global conflict along cultural and civilizational lines.

Building on the analysis of how Bush's speeches construct historical meaning through narrative framing within metaphor, and intertextuality, this section explores the ideological and political functions of those constructions. Specifically, it explores how the speeches construct representations that shape perceptions of identity and global conflict, while contributing to the justification and naturalization of power. Drawing on Stephen Greenblatt's (2000) and Montrose's (1986) conception of representation as a cultural act implicated in systems of power, this analysis treats Bush's language not merely as descriptive but as a means of constructing and legitimizing ideological authority.

According to Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), representations are about what is being represented or depicted in the text. They are the content or subjects of the text as they appear through language. Representations can be groups, places, concepts, ideas, identities, events, or social realities which the text constructs or portrays. This reinforces Greenblatt's assertion that texts do not just reflect reality but actively construct it. Accordingly, Bush's speeches are analyzed as ideological artifacts that perform influential cultural representations of the "self"

(America/the West), the "Other" (terrorists/the Islamic world), and the world order, serving to justify the use of military power and naturalize the discourse of the Clash of Civilizations.

First, central to Bush's discourse is the ideology of American exceptionalism. One of the most salient ideological strategies in Bush's post-9/11 discourse is the representation of the United States as a morally exceptional and divinely guided nation. This representation is rooted in the ideology of American exceptionalism, which posits the U.S. as uniquely virtuous, historically destined to lead the world in defense of freedom and democracy. This is clearly declared in the 2002 *State of the Union Address* where Bush proclaims, "We have been called to a unique role in human events, and we will accept that role" (Bush, 2002). The 2006 *Address on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11* reinforces this exceptionalism with the claim, "America is a nation that stands for liberty and justice, a nation that respects human dignity" (Bush, 2006). While earlier textual analysis identified such statements, the focus, here, is on how such imagery functions representationally to naturalize America's leadership as both a historical and moral imperative. Additionally, Bush's discourse extends beyond mere declaration. In his 2002 address, he reinforces this ideology by stating, "America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere." Such discursive statements construct America's identity as not only politically powerful but morally sacred, exceptional, and ordained; a guardian of civilization itself. As Greenblatt (1980) emphasized, representation is an act of self-fashioning. In this regard, Bush fashions his nation as divinely sanctioned and historically justified in its leadership.

This ideological self-positioning naturalizes American leadership, consolidates national unity, and justifies military interventionist policies as both necessary and righteous measures in defense of the Western civilization. Besides, Bush's commitment to spread democracy, freedom and make the world peaceful place functions as a subtle reminder that American

identity is inherently linked with a mission to combat forces that are portrayed as antithetical to democratic values. This ideological construction not only legitimizes his foreign policy but also reconfigures power relations by portraying any deviation from this path as a threat to the civilizational order.

Second, alongside this self-representation is Bush's essentialized representation of the enemy. The previous intertextual echoes do not merely describe the Islamic world, they construct it as a monolithic Other, reinforcing the civilizational dichotomy that lies at the heart of Huntington's thesis. In his works, Huntington (1993; 1996) argued that future global conflicts will be rooted not in ideology or economics, but in cultural and religious divisions, with Islam positioned as the most significant and enduring threat to the Western civilization. Bush's post-9/11 discourse resonates deeply with this framework through its selective religious, historical, and ideological discourses that cast the Islamic world as inherently opposed to Western values. This discursive representation collapses cultural diversity into a singular, threatening identity. By drawing on an Orientalist discourse, Bush's speeches establish Islam not as a multifaceted religion with internal diversity and complexity, but as a homogenous civilizational adversary. Such representations align precisely with Huntington's assumption that "Islam has bloody borders," thereby situating the War on Terror as not merely a security imperative but a civilizational defense.

Third, at the core of Bush's discourse is the Clash of Civilizations ideology, which frames the contemporary world order as a fundamental struggle between "the West" and "radical Islam." Bush explicitly invokes this framework when he states, "This struggle has been called a clash of civilizations. In truth, it is a struggle for civilization" (2006). This declaration naturalizes cultural and civilizational difference as the primary source of conflict, reducing complex geopolitical realities into a binary opposition between "civilization" and "barbarism."

By doing so, the speeches deploy discourse as a tool of power, producing a clear ideological division that legitimates the United States' role as the defender of Western values and global order. Intertextuality here functions ideologically: it anchors contemporary conflict in preexisting narratives that normalize confrontation between Islam and the West, recasting history as destiny and legitimizing sustained political, military, and cultural opposition. In adopting the Clash of Civilizations ideology, Bush's discourse echoes and reinforces the clash narrative, shaping public perceptions and legitimizing controversial policies by presenting them as inevitable responses to an existential threat.

Building on these ideological underpinnings, Bush's discourse also functions to legitimize and consolidate American hegemony on the global stage. Through the ideology of American exceptionalism, the United States is discursively positioned not merely as a moral leader but as a political and military hegemon authorized to reshape global power relations. Statements such as "America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere" (Bush, 2002) reflect a claim to universal authority that transcends national boundaries. This ideological claim naturalizes the expansion of American influence and justifies interventionist policies as both a moral duty and a necessary measure to protect civilization. The speeches further frame military intervention as a righteous and necessary act in this civilizational struggle. The depiction of "terrorist networks" and "terrorist states" (Bush, 2006) representations as fundamental threats enables the normalization of sustained military engagements, casting such interventions as indispensable to global security. Bush's asserted warning that "all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security" (Bush, 2002) signals a readiness to deploy force preemptively and justifiably. This discourse consolidates domestic and international support by framing military action as a firm resolve and readiness to act for national security.

From a New Historicist perspective, these ideological discourses illustrate how power is exercised through language to produce consent and shape historical reality. The interwoven nature of representations and ideology in Bush's speeches sustains American hegemony by constructing a compelling narrative of moral duty, security necessity, and global leadership. This narrative reconfigures power relations by positioning the United States as the central actor in a civilizational struggle, legitimizing interventions and dominance as integral to maintaining Western stability and order in the international system.

While the previous section has shown how Bush's discourse employs ideological representations and power relations to articulate a Clash of Civilizations narrative, it is crucial to delve further into underlying mechanisms through which this dominant discourse manages dissent and alternative perspectives. The New Historicist concept of subversion and containment provides a critical lens to examine how Bush's discourse not only asserts hegemonic power but also strategically neutralizes, absorbs, or marginalizes counter-narratives that might challenge the official civilizational framework.

3.5. Subversion and Containment in Bush's Discourse: Reinforcing the Clash Narrative

The concept of subversion and containment, as theorized by Stephen Greenblatt (1988) within the framework of New Historicism, refers to the dialectical interplay between forces that appear to challenge or destabilize dominant ideologies (subversion) and those that simultaneously work to neutralize or reintegrate such challenges within the prevailing structures of power (containment). Greenblatt (1988) argued that these oppositional elements are not simply external threats to authority but are often generated by the dominant discourse itself, only to be absorbed and managed in ways that reaffirm its legitimacy. This interplay is especially clear in political speeches, where leaders often use language that seems to welcome

different opinions or groups. But this may only create the impression of fairness, while actually helping to keep the main ideologies and power firmly in place.

In applying these concepts to the political discourse of President George W. Bush, specifically his *2002 State of the Union Address* and his *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, this section adopts a three-part analytical structure. First, it examines internal subversion, where contradictions and tensions within Bush's discourse reveal potential fractures in the ideological coherence of the War on Terror narrative. Second, it considers external subversion, exploring how dissenting voices, such as those from the international community or critical domestic actors, pose challenges to the dominant discourse. Finally, it investigates the discursive strategy of containment through which these subversive forces are managed and contained to reinforce the broader framework of civilizational conflict. Although the analytical structure of internal and external subversion is not explicitly articulated in Greenblatt's original formulation and practice, they serve as tools that enable a more precise mapping of the multifaceted ways in which dissent is both manifested and suppressed within political texts.

The contradictions in Bush's assertion of dominant power become apparent when considering the tension between his public declarations of respect for human dignity and the realpolitik guiding the of U.S. policies after post-9/11. In Bush's 2002 and 2006 speeches, the discourse of American moral leadership is presented with unwavering confidence, positioning the United States as the guardian of freedom and justice in a dangerous world. Yet, a New Historicist reading reveals inherent contradictions and hypocrisies that undermine these dominant power claims. President Bush repeatedly asserts that America fights for "freedom" and "liberty," however, the policies and actions he justifies through this language often contradict these very principles. For example, in the 2002 address, while Bush asserts that

America stands for "freedom and the dignity of every life," he simultaneously states that "we will deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack," (Bush, 2002), thereby endorsing military preemptive interventions that result in civilian casualties and destabilization, raising questions about the consistency of America's commitment to universal human rights.

The contradictions embedded in Bush's claims to dominant power likewise emerge in the context of security considerations. In his *2002 State of the Union Address*, Bush asserts that "America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons," framing U.S. action as a defensive and principled stance. Yet, this moral framing clashes with democratic principles of transparency. The contradiction here lies in the simultaneous promotion of democratic ideals and the endorsement of policies that undermine those very ideals in the name of protecting them. By revealing these contradictions, Bush's speeches enact an internal subversion of their own claims to moral authority. Such contradictions call for a closer look at the limits of U.S. power claims in the post-9/11 context.

Further contradiction arises in the domestic sphere, where Bush's language about protecting "our homeland" and securing "the safety of our people" justifies policies that have been widely criticized for eroding civil liberties. In the 2006 *Address on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11,* Bush praises the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and new intelligence-sharing measures as necessary safeguards. Yet these same policies have sparked debates about the violation of constitutional rights, racial profiling, and excessive surveillance. The public framing of these security measures as protective of American freedoms ironically exposes a paradox wherein freedom is curtailed to preserve it. Bush's discourse thus both asserts the primacy of liberty and simultaneously condones its limitation, revealing a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the post-9/11 security policy. Viewed through a New

Historicist perspective, these internal contradictions do not simply reflect realistic political decisions but actively subvert the dominant narrative by showing that power claims based on absolute morals are unstable and open to question.

President Bush's speeches not only subvert alternative narratives but also actively contain dissent emanating externally by reframing criticism as moral, thus, reinforcing the Clash of Civilizations ideology. While acknowledging international resistance to U.S. military actions, such as the lack of U.N. support for the Iraq War, Bush neutralizes this dissent by positioning American military intervention as a moral imperative. Furthermore, his discourse constructs a binary in which nations are divided, a framing that dismisses geopolitical objections as cowardly or complicit. By emphasizing that the U.S. will build a "coalition" but will act alone, if necessary, Bush (2002) acknowledges global resistance but simultaneously asserts American autonomy and moral authority. the Bush administration's dismissal of international institutions, such as the United Nations, as when Bush insists that "America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security" (Bush, 2002) even if other nations hesitate, exposes a contradiction between the discourse of multilateralism and the practice of unilateralism. His remark, "while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay," (Bush, 2002) serves to contain any criticism by portraying the United States as the protector of freedom, thereby presenting those who resist American action as either morally misguided or actively complicit in undermining global security. The narrative of the Clash of Civilizations is contained within this framing, as Bush positions the U.S. not as an imperial power but as a defender of universal freedom a moral force determined to save the world from the forces of evil.

The speeches further contain dissent by equating skepticism with moral weakness. For instance, Bush's (2002) remark that "some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And

make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will," reduces complex geopolitical reservations to mere fear, dismissing their valid concern. Accordingly, President Bush acknowledges global skepticism but simultaneously undermines its legitimacy. Similarly, his insistence on preemptive action and the readiness to act alone demonstrates a willingness to sideline international law. This strategy effectively contains dissent by portraying the U.S. not as an imperial aggressor but as a moral force determined to save the world from the forces of evil, a narrative that aligns with Huntington's thesis by casting opposition as an ideological betrayal of "civilized" values. Again, Bush's language transforms dissent into evidence of the Clash itself; those who question U.S. policy are, by default, aligned with the forces of terror. Thus, this strategy of containment mirrors New Historicist observations about how power structures absorb and neutralize challenges by redefining them within the dominant ideology.

All in all, Bush's discourse in both speeches demonstrates how subversion and containment work in tandem. By acknowledging the existence of resistance, Bush is able to neutralize these challenges through a combination of moral discourse, the reinforcement of American power, and the framing of the conflict as part of a larger battle for civilization itself. His speeches reflect the broader Clash of Civilizations narrative, positioning the U.S. as the defender of Western values in a world under threat from barbaric forces. This framing allows Bush to contain any subversion by casting the war as not just a political or military struggle but as a moral imperative.

3.6. Conclusion

Chapter three demonstrated that President Bush's speeches, when analyzed through the lens of New Historicism, serve as both products and producers of their historical moment. After exploring the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts that influenced President Bush's speeches, an essential application of New Historicism's tenet of the historicity of the text, this

section turned to a detailed analysis of how these speeches are shaped by their contemporary circumstances. By examining the interplay between immediate historical events and enduring cultural narratives, this chapter revealed how Bush's discourse reflects the national trauma and heightened security concerns following 9/11. Viewed through the historicity of the text, the speeches emerge not simply as discursive constructions but as historically situated texts that are intricately linked to their specific moment, actively engaging with and reinforcing the Clash of Civilizations discourse.

On the other hand, the texts of Bush's speeches are much more than records of events; they are performative texts that actively construct historical narratives. Here, history is not a fixed archive but a changing text, continually reworked by political discourse to serve ideological ends. Bush's discourse, when examined through the new historicist tenet of the textuality of history, reveals a pattern of constructing history that mirrors Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. In so doing, President Bush employed a number of textual practices, including narrative framing within metaphors and intertextuality. Collectively, the metaphors and intertextual references in Bush's speeches serve not merely as stylistic embellishments but as discursive strategies that shape how the events of 9/11 and its aftermath are reconstructed. By invoking emotionally charged images, and explicitly referencing the Clash of Civilizations framework, President Bush crafts a narrative of conflict that appears coherent, urgent, and moral.

Furthermore, the analysis of Bush's discourse relied on the application of the New Historicist concepts of representation, ideology and power relations. Building on the ideological underpinnings of American exceptionalism as well as the Clash of Civilizations ideology, Bush's speeches illustrate how power is exercised through language to produce consent and shape historical reality. The interwoven nature of representations and ideology in Bush's

speeches sustains American hegemony by constructing a compelling narrative of moral duty, security necessity, and global leadership. This narrative reconfigures power relations by positioning the United States as the central actor in a civilizational struggle, legitimizing interventions and dominance as integral to maintaining Western stability and order in the international system.

Finally, a New Historicist reading grounded in the concept of subversion and containment demonstrated that hypocrisies and contradictions undermine dominant power claims that the United States champions freedom and democracy. Indeed, the policies and actions justified by President Bush through this discourse frequently contradict the very principles they purport to uphold. Central to this framing is the Clash of Civilizations narrative, which Bush employs to characterize the conflict in both speeches. By articulating the war within this framework, Bush not only justifies American intervention but also ensures that any subversive resistance is viewed as morally and ideologically untenable. This ideological framing serves to neutralize any subversive challenges by presenting the U.S. as the unequivocal force for good in the world. The subversion is, thus, quickly contained by reaffirming the necessity and righteousness of the war. Bush contracted the War on Terror as part of the larger struggle to protect civilization from the forces of evil, positioning the United States as a force for good rather than a hegemonic power.

The analysis of Bush's speeches, form a New Historicist perspective, revealed that they are not merely historical artifacts, but active texts that both encapsulate and propagate a narrative of civilizational conflict. This New Historicist examination established a foundation for a comparative study in the following chapter. Chapter four turns attention to the discourse of President Obama. By juxtaposing Obama's discursive strategies with those of Bush, the forthcoming analysis further illuminates the evolution of political discourse in the post-9/11

era, demonstrating how different administrations navigate and reshape the narratives of conflict and dialogue in response to changing historical and cultural contexts.

Chapter Four

Barak Obama's Discourse: Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations

Chapter Four: Barak Obama's Discourse: Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations

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4.6. Conclusion

Chapter Four Barak Obama's Discourse: Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations

4.1. Introduction

Chapter four shifts the focus to the analysis of President Obama's discourse, contrasting it with the Clash of Civilizations narrative identified in the previous chapter. Instead, this chapter explores how Obama advances a counter-narrative grounded in Dialogue among Civilizations. Using the same New Historicist framework, it emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between text and context, viewing political discourse not merely as reflective but as constitutive of historical and ideological realities.

This chapter begins by situating Obama's discourse within the historical and political conditions of the post-Bush era, drawing attention to efforts to redefine U.S. national security, embrace liberal internationalism, and respond to an emerging multipolar world. It then examines the socio-cultural context of the Obama presidency, marked by persistent Islamophobia, cultural polarization, and tensions between globalization and multiculturalism.

The textual analysis that follows explores how Obama's language, through specific textual practices, reconfigures national identity and historical memory, positioning the United States within a renewed global narrative. Attention is given to how his discourse is not neutral, but constructs representations of both the national self and the global other, embeds ideology, and mediates power relations.

Finally, the fourth chapter examines how Obama's discourse engages with the New Historicist dialectic of subversion and containment, revealing how expressions of cooperation and dialogue often coexist with the reinforcement of dominant ideological frameworks. By articulating American leadership in conciliatory and dialogic terms, Obama reconfigures hegemony through the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative. Taken together, this chapter demonstrates that Obama's speeches function as cultural artifacts; sites where historical

memory, ideological orientation, and strategic diplomacy intersect to redefine the role of the United States on the world stage.

4.2. Historicity of Obama's Speeches: A Reflection of the Post-9/11 Period

According to the New Historicist tenet of historicity of the text, texts are not standalone entities; rather, they are woven in the historical, political, social, and cultural fabrics of their time. In this analysis, Obama's speeches are approached as living historical documents, moulded by the specific conditions under which they were delivered. Consequently, the initial phase of the study situates his *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood* within their specific historical and political environments, as well as the prevailing social and cultural contexts. It demonstrates how these multifaceted contexts are reflected in the text of Obamas' speeches.

4.2.1. Historical and Political Contexts: Post-Bush Era

The post-Bush era represented a pivotal moment in United States politics, marked by shifts in national security priorities, foreign policy strategies, the role of liberalism, and the rise of multipolarity. This period laid the groundwork for President Obama's transformative approach, which sought to balance military power with diplomatic engagement while embracing broader liberal internationalist and multipolar influences.

4.2.1.1. United States National Security Redefined

The redefinition of United States national security under President Obama witnessed a broad change in policy and strategic direction (Rajaee & Miller, 2012). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, U.S. national security policy had largely depended on unilateral military interventions as a means of countering terrorism. However, the Obama administration recognized that such an approach was not only costly but also unsustainable in a complex global environment.

Instead, the administration adopted a "smart power" strategy; a comprehensive framework that blended limited military action with robust diplomatic initiatives, economic leverage, and cultural outreach (Rajaee & Miller, 2012, pp. 21-23). This shift signalled a departure from the Bush-era paradigm by acknowledging that military might alone could not effectively address the multifaceted threats of the 21st century. The new strategy aimed to achieve security goals through a balanced mix of hard and soft power, thereby reducing reliance on unilateral force and fostering more sustainable international outcomes (Rajaee & Miller, 2012).

One important aspect of Obama's approach was changing the way the United States used its power. Instead of relying only on military strength, his strategy recognized that lasting global stability depended just as much on building relationships and shaping international norms. In other words, the administration realized that diplomacy, economic incentives, and cultural exchange were just as critical as military might. By putting more emphasis on these "softer" tools, the Obama team aimed to create strong, lasting partnerships and support an international system based on rules and mutual respect. This shift was not just about keeping adversaries in check, it was also about addressing the deeper issues that cause instability, by encouraging understanding and cooperation among nations (Rajaee & Miller, 2012, pp. 21-23).

Finally, the redefinition of national security under the Obama administration extended the concept beyond the traditional confines of territorial defense. Rajaee and Miller (2012) noted that the new approach recognized that American security is deeply interconnected with global stability. This broader vision entailed not only protecting the homeland but also actively engaging in efforts to resolve conflicts and promote stability internationally. Through strategic dialogue and partnership, the U.S. aimed to address transnational challenges, from terrorism and cyber threats to economic and environmental concerns, in a manner that reinforced global norms and cooperative relationships. By integrating these dimensions into its national security

framework, the administration underscored the importance of a proactive, multilateral strategy that secures both domestic interests and the broader international community (Rajaee & Miller, 2012, pp. 24-28).

4.2.1.2. Obama's Efforts to Reframe U.S. Foreign Policy

Barack Obama's foreign policy was defined by a strategic approach to U.S. global engagement, emphasizing alliances, diplomacy, and a reduced military presence. Bentley and Holland (2014) stated that Obama sought to move away from the unilateralism of the Bush era, instead prioritizing multilateralism and partnership-building (p. 23). This was evident in his administration's efforts to strengthen NATO and other international institutions, as well as its focus on repairing relationships with traditional allies in Europe and Asia. For example, Obama's "reset" with Russia early in his presidency aimed to reduce tensions and foster cooperation on issues like nuclear disarmament, though this effort ultimately faltered due to geopolitical disagreements. Similarly, his administration worked to deepen ties with emerging powers like India and Brazil, reflecting a broader strategy of diversifying U.S. alliances to address global challenges collectively (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 45-47).

Diplomacy was a cornerstone of Obama's foreign policy, particularly in addressing nuclear proliferation and climate change. Bentley and Holland (2014) viewed the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA) as a landmark achievement, showcasing Obama's commitment to diplomatic solutions over military confrontation. The deal, negotiated with Iran and five other world powers, aimed to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, and it exemplified Obama's belief in the power of sustained dialogue (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 89-92). Similarly, the Paris Climate Agreement (2015) underscored his administration's emphasis on global cooperation to tackle transnational issues.

On military presence, Obama pursued a strategy of "leading from behind," which sought to minimize direct U.S. involvement in conflicts while supporting allies and partners to take the lead. This was evident in Libya (2011), where the U.S. provided air support and intelligence to NATO-led operations but avoided ground troops (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 67-69). This strategy aimed to reduce the costs and risks of U.S. military engagement while maintaining influence. However, this approach had mixed results. In Syria, for instance, Obama's reluctance to intervene militarily, despite the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, was criticized as indecisive and emboldened adversaries like Russia and Iran (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 112-114). Similarly, the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011, while fulfilling a campaign promise, created a power vacuum that contributed to the rise of ISIS, necessitating a renewed military commitment later in his presidency (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 102-104). Bentley and Holland (2014) argued that the Iraq withdrawal reflected Obama's broader desire to end prolonged U.S. military engagements, but it also highlighted the challenges of balancing strategic disengagement with regional stability.

One of the most significant moments of Obama's presidency was the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, an operation that Bentley and Holland (2014) described as a defining achievement of his foreign policy. The successful raid by U.S. Navy SEALs in Abbottabad, Pakistan, demonstrated Obama's willingness to take decisive military action, when necessary, while also showcasing his preference for precision and intelligence-driven operations over large-scale deployments. This operation strengthened Obama's credibility as a commander-in-chief and symbolized a measure of closure for the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks. (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 75-80).

4.2.1.3. The Role of Liberal Internationalism

Liberal internationalism is a doctrine in international relations that urges states to rely on diplomacy, multilateral institutions, open markets, and the rule of law rather than unilateral use of force. It champions the belief that global cooperation, through bodies like the United Nations, NATO, and other multilateral frameworks, can prevent conflict and advance democratic principles (Franceschet, 1999). Intellectually rooted in Wilsonian idealism, liberal internationalism fuses moral commitments to human rights and democracy with instruments of international governance. It posits that trade and economic interdependence can restrain conflict, while democracies are statistically less likely to go to war with one another, a principle often referred to as the democratic peace theory. Its ethical foundations also hinge on transforming anarchy through international cooperation, thereby promoting freedom in a secure global environment (Franceschet, 1999).

The Obama administration represented a marked departure from the neoconservative foreign policy framework that had dominated U.S. international engagement during the Bush presidency (Ikenberry, 2009). Neoconservatism, as articulated by its intellectual architects and political advocates, emphasized the moral imperative of spreading democracy, often through unilateral military intervention and the assertion of American primacy. In contrast, President Obama explicitly rejected the use of force as a first resort and critiqued what he saw as the overreach of previous administrations. Ikenberry (2009) noted that Obama reframed American exceptionalism in terms of international legitimacy rather than unilateral leadership aligning himself with a liberal internationalist approach rather than neoconservative assertiveness.

One of the clearest distinctions between Obama's approach and neoconservatism lies in the use of multilateral institutions and diplomatic channels. While neoconservatives frequently expressed skepticism towards the efficacy of the United Nations and often bypassed

international consensus as seen in the 2003 Iraq War, President Obama actively worked to rebuild U.S. credibility within such bodies. His administration pursued the Iran nuclear deal, which aimed to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions, in close cooperation with the P5+1 countries (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany), relying on negotiation and international law rather than coercive regime change. This reliance on diplomacy over force was emblematic of what was called a "smart power" strategy; an effort to combine the strengths of hard and soft power within a rules-based international order (Nye & Goldsmith, 2011). By engaging global institutions and allies, Obama repositioned the U.S. as a cooperative leader rather than an unbound hegemon, in stark contrast to the neoconservative belief in America's unilateral right to reshape the global order.

Moreover, the ideological distinction is further underscored by Obama's caution towards democracy promotion via military means. While both neoconservatives and liberal internationalists rhetorically champion democracy, Obama approached its promotion with significant restraint, aware of the unintended consequences of interventionism. His reluctance to engage militarily in Syria, despite significant humanitarian concerns, was informed by a clear-eyed realism about the limits of U.S. power and the lessons of Iraq. Scholars such as Colin Dueck have observed that Obama's foreign policy reflected liberal goals constrained by realist means (Rohde, 2012). This liberal-realist synthesis diverged sharply from the normative assertiveness of neoconservatism, which often prioritized ideological outcomes over strategic caution. In this sense, Obama's administration re-centred U.S. foreign policy on legitimacy, multilateralism, and measured engagement, marking a decisive turn away from the neoconservative project.

4.2.1.4. The Rise of Multipolarity

During President Barack Obama's presidency (2009-2017), global geopolitical environment underwent transformations, marked by the emergence of a multipolar world order. The early twenty first century witnessed a shift from unipolarity, dominated by the United States, to a more multipolar global structure. Nations such as China and Russia expanded their economic and military capabilities, challenging traditional U.S. hegemony. This transition required the United States to reassess its global strategy to address the complexities of a multipolar environment. Bomassi (2025) explained that the post-Cold War era of U.S. dominance began to wane during this period, as emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil asserted themselves on the global stage. Hence, Obama's foreign policy sought to adapt to this changing landscape by emphasizing multilateralism and strategic partnerships, reflecting a recognition that the U.S. could no longer unilaterally dictate global outcomes. For example, the administration's "pivot to Asia" was a response to China's growing economic and military influence, aiming to reinforce U.S. leadership in the region through diplomatic and economic engagement (Bomassi, 2025, p. 3).

Moreover, the rise of multipolarity was particularly evident in the shifting dynamics of global economic governance. The 2008 financial crisis accelerated the decline of Western economic dominance and highlighted the growing influence of emerging economies Obama's administration responded by advocating for reforms to international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, seeking to give greater voice to countries like China and India (Ashford, Brands, Castillo, Kizer, Lissner, Shapiro & Shifrinson, 2019). Accordingly, this approach reflected a recognition of the need to accommodate rising powers within the existing liberal international order (Ashford, et al., 2019, p. 5).

Obama's *A New Beginning" speech at Cairo University* was delivered in June 4, 2009**,** in a historical and political context defined by the strained relationship between the United States and the Muslim world. The speech came after nearly a decade of tension following the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and the broader global War on Terror, which had fuelled both hatred towards the Muslims, particularly the Arabs, and Islamophobia all over the world. It also triggered anti-American sentiment across many Muslim-majority nations. The Bush administration's approach to the Middle East, characterized by unilateral military interventions and the promotion of democracy through force, had led to deep scepticism about U.S. intentions in the region. Obama, recognizing the urgent need to rebuild trust, used this speech to signal a shift toward diplomacy, mutual respect, and engagement based on common interests. The election of Obama himself, as the first African American U.S. president with Muslim family ties, also played a symbolic role in reinforcing his message of reconciliation and dialogue. His references to Islamic contributions to civilization and his acknowledgment of past U.S. missteps, such as the 1953 CIA-backed coup in Iran, reflected an effort to reframe the U.S.-Muslim world relationship within a historical context of mutual influence rather than conflict (Bentley & Holland, 2014, p 23).

Obama's *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*, delivered on September 21, 2011, took place during a critical period in Middle Eastern politics, particularly concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The speech was delivered in the wake of the 2011 Palestinian bid for full UN membership, led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who sought international recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state within the 1967 borders. This diplomatic move came after years of stalled negotiations and increasing frustration among Palestinians over the lack of progress toward a two-state solution. The broader regional context was also shaped by the Arab Spring, which had begun in late 2010 and

led to widespread political upheavals across the Middle East and North Africa. With authoritarian regimes collapsing in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, there was growing international pressure on the U.S. to reassess its Middle East policy (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 102-105).

President Obama was balancing competing pressures from domestic and international audiences. While he had previously stated that a Palestinian state was in America's interest, his administration faced significant opposition from Israel and its allies in the U.S. Congress, who rejected any recognition of Palestinian statehood outside of a negotiated peace agreement. At the same time, his administration was deeply invested in maintaining strong U.S.-Israel relations, particularly as he sought reelection in 2012. The failure of the Palestinian statehood bid at the UN and the subsequent stagnation of the peace process underscored the limitations of Obama's diplomatic approach, as regional realities and political constraints in both the U.S. and Israel made a two-state solution increasingly difficult to achieve (Bentley & Holland, 2014, pp. 102-105). Having established the historical and political contexts of these speeches, the following section explores their social and cultural contexts.

4.2.2. Social and Cultural Contexts

Informed by the New Historicist tenet of historicity of the text, this section situates Obama's discourse within the social and cultural conditions of its production. His calls for dialogue and mutual respect emerged in response to rising Islamophobia and deepening cultural divides, as well as the broader forces of globalization and multiculturalism.

4.2.2.1. Rising Divides: Islamophobia and Cultural Polarization in the Obama Era

The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks fundamentally altered public perceptions in the West, setting a precedent for widespread fear, mistrust, and the rise of Islamophobic sentiment. In the years following 9/11, intensified government surveillance, strict counterterrorism measures,

and media portrayals often linked Islam with terrorism, creating a cultural climate steeped in anxiety and polarization. This environment laid the groundwork for the later emergence of a Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, as critics of the prevailing discourse called for a more respectful engagement with the Muslim world (Kumar, 2021, p. 160).

The eruption of the Arab Spring in 2011 further intensified global debates about democracy, governance, and cultural identity in the Muslim world. As popular uprisings swept across North Africa and the Middle East, these events exposed the shortcomings of policies that relied solely on military intervention and underscored the need for new forms of engagement based on dialogue and shared interests. The transformative impact of the Arab Spring not only challenged authoritarian regimes but also highlighted the demand for political and cultural reform, prompting Western policymakers to reconsider long-held assumptions about the nature of international relations (Kumar, 2021, p. 159).

Domestically, the increasing cultural diversity in the United States, coupled with the rise of social media as a platform for alternative voices, contributed to a shifting public discourse around Islam and multiculturalism. As more Americans recognized the deep historical and cultural contributions of Islamic civilization, an emerging counter-narrative began to contest the dominant Clash of Civilizations thesis. This evolving social context, characterized by both a legacy of trauma and the empowerment of diverse digital communities, helped to shape a new perspective in which dialogue and mutual respect became central to addressing cultural divides. These conditions ultimately influenced policymakers to articulate a vision that sought to bridge cultural gaps rather than exacerbate them (Kumar, 2021, p. 168).

4.2.2.2. Globalization and Multiculturalism

Globalization has reshaped the very fabric of modern society by intensifying connections between diverse cultures and economies across national borders. This global

interdependence has not only accelerated the exchange of ideas and values but also redefined the way identities are formed and negotiated. Globalization creates a context in which the boundaries between "us" and "them" are increasingly blurred. This is evident in the social backdrop against which President Obama delivered his speeches, where an interconnected world demanded new approaches to diplomacy that acknowledged shared human experiences and common challenges.

At the same time, multiculturalism, an inevitable byproduct of globalization, played a role in shaping public discourse during Obama's presidency (Singer, 2010, p. 10). The United States, enriched by diverse immigrant populations and the blending of global cultures, witnessed a gradual shift in the national narrative. Singer (2010) asserted that the evolving American identity in a multicultural society provided a fertile ground for Obama's message of inclusivity and unity. His discourse, which often pinpointed the contributions of various cultural and religious groups to the nation's strength, resonated with a domestic audience that was increasingly aware of and engaged with its diverse heritage. This multicultural context not only influenced domestic debates but also served as a powerful signal to global audiences about the U.S. commitment to pluralism and shared values (Singer, 2010, p. 17).

Having examined the historical, political and socio-cultural contexts that influenced President Barack Obama's speeches, which itself constitutes a fundamental application of the New Historicist tenet of the historicity of the text, this section proceeds to analyze how the speeches directly engage with and respond to the specific circumstances of their era. Viewed through this perspective, Barack Obama's speeches at Cairo University in 2009 and at the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 are more than discursive artifacts; they are texts deeply embedded in their historical moment, each reflecting crucial moments in early twenty-first-century U.S. foreign policy. Both texts articulate and embody a significant shift from the

unilateral, militarized approaches of the Bush administration towards a renewed commitment to core ideals of the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative.

Delivered in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and amid the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the 2009 Cairo speech explicitly confronts the legacy of mistrust and tension between the United States and Muslim-majority countries. The passage, "We meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world, tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars," (Obama, 2009) situates Obama's speech within a historical context. Obama directly addresses the strained state of U.S.-Muslim relations in the wake of the post-9/11 world. This acknowledgment is significant as it situates the speech firmly within a context marked by years of conflict, suspicion, and misunderstanding that had defined much of the Bush administration's foreign policy. The phrase "great tension" encapsulates a legacy of confrontation from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to widespread mistrust fuelled by stereotypes and fear. Moreover, by explicitly acknowledging that the tensions extend beyond immediate political disputes and are deeply "rooted in historical forces," Obama recognizes that current challenges cannot be fully understood or addressed without considering a long and multifaceted history of interaction between Islam and the West. This historical framing reflects the post-9/11 geopolitical climate marked by heightened mistrust, but also counters this narrative by emphasizing both coexistence and cooperation across centuries.

The continuation of this framing is also found in another passage: "So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. And this cycle of suspicion and discord must end" (Obama,

2009). Here, Obama draws attention to the consequences of maintaining a relationship structured around division, linking such framing to the empowerment of extremists and the perpetuation of conflict. This articulation suggests that conflict is not inevitable but is often constructed and sustained through the framing of "us versus them." By emphasizing that defining relations through difference fuels hatred and conflict, Obama critiques the past confrontational policy and discourse that had deepened divisions, implicitly referring to the failures of unilateral, militarized approaches that dominated the Bush administration. This critique reflects an emerging consensus within U.S. foreign policy that sustainable security and peace require more than military might. This passage also contains a call to break the cycle of mistrust. It echoes the emerging policy of the Obama administration that emphasized multilateralism, dialogue and mutual respect as necessary to overcome persistent hostilities.

Furthermore, Obama renewed global engagement, especially with the Muslim world, marking a turning point in U.S. foreign policy. He frames the relationship between America and Muslim communities as interdependent rather than adversarial. By calling for a "new beginning," Obama explicitly acknowledges the troubled past marked by suspicion, conflict, and misunderstanding, signalling a desire to move beyond long-standing hostilities and the adversarial discourse that had dominated the post-9/11 era. He states: "I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and the Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition" (Obama, 2009). This passage frames the relationship not in terms of antagonism or incompatibility but through the lens of mutual interest and respect. The emphasis on mutuality conveys a vision of partnership. By asserting that "America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition," Obama challenges narratives that depict Islam and the West, or more specifically America, as fundamentally

opposed and irreconcilable. Accordingly, this language reflects the context of its time when the United States was seeking to recover from the strategic and reputational costs of the Iraq War, address rising anti-American sentiment in Muslim-majority countries, and counter extremist ideologies that thrived on perceived civilizational conflict. The 2009 speech attempts to reorient U.S. foreign policy away from confrontational stances towards a model of engagement grounded in dialogue and respect. It signals a strategic effort to build bridges at a time when international cooperation was essential to confronting transnational challenges such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and global economic instability.

While the previous passages implicitly mirror U.S. shift in foreign policy from unilateralism and militarism, the following excerpts overtly recognize Obama's strategic shift in U.S. foreign policy away from the unilateral, militarized approaches characteristic of the previous administration, moving instead towards multilateral engagement, diplomacy, and a recognition of interdependence; core aspects of the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative. In addressing the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama (2009) explicitly acknowledges the limits of military power alone to resolve complex regional problems declaring: "Now, make no mistake. We do not want to keep our troops in Afghanistan. We see no military-- We seek no military bases there," and "we also know that military power alone is not going to solve the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan." These statements reflect the historical context of extended military engagements that had proven costly, both materially and politically, underscoring the need for a more measured approach. His emphasis on partnerships and reconstruction efforts, including investing "1.5 billion dollars" annually to build "schools and hospitals, roads and businesses," (Obama, 2009) signals a broader vision of engagement that goes beyond warfare to address the root causes of instability.

Turning to Iraq, Obama openly reflects on the controversial nature of the war, describing it as a "war of choice" that provoked deep divisions domestically and internationally. He uses this reflection to advocate for a return to diplomacy and international consensus-building, believing that "events in Iraq have reminded America of the need to use diplomacy and build international consensus to resolve our problems whenever possible" (Obama, 2009). Besides, Obama's promise to respect Iraqi sovereignty and to withdraw combat troops reflects a concrete policy shift towards partnership rather than occupation. He confirms to the Iraqi people that the United States will "pursue no bases, and no claim on their territory or resources. Iraq's sovereignty is its own," and that they "will support a secure and united Iraq as a partner, and never as a patron" (Obama, 2009).

Moreover, the passage where Obama (2009) declares that "faith should bring us together" and emphasizes efforts to "bring together Christians, Muslims, and Jews" directly reflects and is shaped by the historical and political context of 2009. At that time, the world was still grappling with the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and the prolonged "War on Terror," which had significantly strained relations between the United States and many Muslim-majority countries. The prevailing narratives, often influenced by Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis, tended to simplify religious and cultural identities, framing them as fundamentally antagonistic. This environment fuelled suspicion, fear, and social fragmentation along religious lines. Responding to these divisive tensions, Obama (2009) emphasizes that "faith should bring us together," promoting a counter-narrative of unity and shared purpose. By explicitly naming Christians, Muslims, and Jews, and celebrating initiatives such as "Saudi Arabian King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue and Turkey's leadership in the Alliance of Civilizations", he situates his speech within ongoing global efforts aimed at fostering peace through dialogue. These references demonstrate Obama's engagement with contemporary

peacebuilding initiatives that seek to bridge divides and counter extremism through intercultural understanding. The call for faith to unite, and for dialogue to be translated into service, is deeply shaped by the challenges of its moment, an era marked by conflict and distrust. They also articulate a hopeful vision aligned with broader international movements toward dialogue and mutual respect. Through this passage, Obama positions the United States not as a distant power but as a partner in a global effort to promote peace and intercultural cooperation, signalling a deliberate shift in U.S. diplomacy and cultural engagement.

In another excerpt where Obama (2009) states, "freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together. We must always examine the ways in which we protect it," he focuses on religious freedom as a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence. This emphasis is particularly significant given the historical context in which the speech was delivered; post-9/11 America and much of the Western world were witnessing a surge in Islamophobia, heightened suspicion of Muslim communities, and the implementation of policies that often marginalized or indirectly discriminated against Muslims. By pointing out that, in the United States, "rules on charitable giving have made it harder for Muslims to fulfill their religious obligation," Obama explicitly recognizes structural barriers faced by American Muslims. His commitment to working with Muslim Americans to ensure they can "fulfill zakat" (Obama, 2009) is a clear stance against discriminatory policies that unequally affect a religious minority. This mirrors the times when Muslims were frequently subjected to increased surveillance, legal restrictions, and social exclusion under the guise of national security. Moreover, Obama's call for Western countries to "avoid impeding Muslim citizens from practicing religion as they see fit, for instance, by dictating what clothes a Muslim woman should wear," (Obama, 2009) confronts a specific and highly contentious issue. This critique addresses both formal policies and social pressures that sought to regulate Muslim religious expression, often targeting

women's dress as a symbol of broader cultural and religious difference. By framing such restrictions as an infringement on religious freedom, Obama opposes cultural assimilationist tendencies and affirms the right of Muslims to maintain their religious identity without coercion or discrimination.

This passage, therefore, is not simply a general statement about religious freedom but a direct embodiment of a historical moment characterized by widespread discrimination against Muslims in Western societies. Obama's language reflects an awareness of and opposition to the rising tide of Islamophobia, positioning religious freedom as a cornerstone of both American values and international human rights. It signals a political and ethical commitment to protect Muslim communities from marginalization and to foster inclusive societies where diverse faiths can coexist peacefully. Thus, through this passage, Obama's speech mirrors the anxieties and challenges of its historical time, directly addressing the climate of suspicion and discrimination that Muslims faced globally in a post-9/11 world. It rejects Islamophobic practices and policies, articulating a call for respect, inclusion, and the protection of religious liberties as essential components of peace and justice. By acknowledging concrete examples, such as restrictive U.S. rules on charitable giving that complicate Muslims' fulfillment of zakat, and Western tendencies to regulate Muslim women's dress, Obama situates his discourse in the lived realities of Muslims facing systemic Islamophobia and cultural marginalization. This grounding in specific historical circumstances marks the speech as a historically situated text, responsive to the social and political challenges of its moment.

These passages collectively demonstrate how Obama's 2009 Cairo speech reflects a significant historical shift from unilateralism and militarism toward multilateralism, global engagement, diplomacy, and intercultural dialogue. The speech situates U.S. foreign policy within a broader context that recognizes the limits of military force and the necessity of

engaging with Muslim-majority countries as partners. By foregrounding respect for sovereignty, international cooperation, interfaith, and cultural understanding, Obama's discourse enacts the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, aiming to replace conflict with conversation and domination with mutual respect. Hence, from a new historicist perspective, Obama's 2009 speech is not merely a cultural artifact, but a text embedded in its historical moment.

Delivered on September, 21, 2011, President Obama's address to the UNGA unfolds against the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the transformative waves of the political upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa. The speech captures moments when U.S. foreign policy is increasingly oriented towards multilateral engagement, respect for sovereignty, and negotiated peace, all fundamental to the Dialogue among Civilizations. Central to the 2011 speech is Obama's emphasis is his firm emphasis on direct dialogue and mutual recognition as the indispensable foundation for achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Throughout his speech, Obama explicitly rejects unilateral actions or external impositions as viable routes to resolution, underscoring instead the necessity of negotiations conducted by the parties themselves. Obama (2011) articulates this principle clearly when he states: "it is the Israelis and the Palestinians -- not us -- who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them." By framing peace as a bilateral, negotiated process grounded in mutual recognition and compromise, Obama's speech rejects unilateralism and coercion. He implicitly criticizes approaches that bypass dialogue or impose solutions through force or international declarations alone, suggesting that such tactics undermine trust and hinder progress. Thus, his vision situates the U.S. role as a facilitator and partner rather than an imposer, emphasizing respect for sovereignty and the primacy of the parties involved. This position aligns with promoting multilateralism and cooperative diplomacy.

The 2011 speech also situates conflict within the broader context of regional political transformations and global challenges, particularly of the Arab Spring, a series of unprecedented popular uprisings reshaping the Middle East and North Africa. Obama (2011) recalls how, "One year ago, Egypt had known one President for nearly 30 years. But for 18 days, the eyes of the world were glued to Tahrir Square, where Egyptians from all walks of life … demanded their universal rights." This portrayal rejects sectarian and civilizational binaries, instead emphasizing shared human aspirations that transcend religious and cultural differences. It underscores the Arab Spring as a moment of collective demand for dignity, freedom, and justice. Instead of framing the region's upheavals as a clash between incompatible civilizations, the speech portrays them as part of a universal struggle for dignity and rights, uniting people across religious and cultural divides.

Obama further situates this regional transformation within a global wave of political awakening, noting that, "more nations have stepped forward to maintain international peace and security. And more individuals are claiming their universal right to live in freedom and dignity" (Obama, 2011). This framing reflects a growing international consensus on the importance of supporting democratic movements and human rights, showcasing a multilateral commitment to peace and security. At the heart of this vision is the principle that, "each nation must chart its own course to fulfil the aspirations of its people" (Obama, 2011). This declaration embraces national sovereignty and self-determination, foundational concepts in the Dialogue among Civilizations paradigm. It recognizes that sustainable peace and democracy emerge not through external imposition but from culturally and historically grounded processes unique to each society.

Moreover, Obama underscores the role played by international institutions and alliances in responding to crises and supporting political transitions during a turbulent period in the

Middle East and North Africa. He states: "The Security Council authorized all necessary measures to prevent a massacre... The Arab League called for this effort; Arab nations joined a NATO-led coalition that halted Qaddafi's forces in their tracks." (Obama, 2011). Such references affirm the importance of multilateral cooperation and collective action, moving away from unilateral military interventions toward diplomacy backed by broad international consensus. By explicitly naming the United Nations Security Council, the Arab League, and a NATO-led coalition, Obama draws attention to the legitimacy and efficacy that arise from broad-based coalitions involving both global and regional actors. This multilateral approach contrasts with earlier unilateral military actions, particularly those associated with the Iraq War, and illustrates a commitment to a more cooperative order.

Within the broader narrative of the speech, these passages reflect the complexities and hopes of its historical moment, and serve to illustrate how the United States envisions its role not as an unchallenged hegemon acting alone but as a partner working within a framework of international collaboration. This stance aligns with the Dialogue among Civilizations framework by fostering cooperation among diverse actors and respecting the sovereignty and agency of all parties involved.

Obama's speech conveys the complexities and hopes of its historical moment. It embodies the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative by emphasizing multilateralism, global engagement, partnership and alliances, diplomacy, respect for diversity and sovereignty, interfaith, shared human values, and peaceful coexistence. This approach challenges divisive narratives and supports the emergence of a global order based on dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect. From the new historicist lens of the historicity of the text, Obama's speeches are texts inseparable from their contexts as they actively engage with the realities of their time, thus, they are a product of and response to their historical moment. Besides, not only do

Obama's speeches reflect the political and social context of their moment but also function as a reinterpretation of history. This is examined in the ensuing section though the new historicist tenet of the textuality of history.

4.3. Textuality of Obama's Speeches: Constructing a Dialogic History

One of the fundamental tenets of New Historicism is the textuality of history, which posits that history is not a fixed or objective record of past events but a narrative constructed, interpreted, and continually reshaped via language. According to this perspective, historical texts, and speeches, as a prominent form of such texts, do more than merely reflect historical realities; they actively participate in constructing meaning, and influencing how societies understand their past and present. Applying this tenet to Barack Obama's speeches, *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and his *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*, involves examining how these speeches actively construct and shape the narrative surrounding those events. Importantly, these speeches achieve this through specific textual practices such as personification and intertextuality; tools that enable President Obama to frame historical events in a manner that not only responds to dominant historical discourses, but also actively echoes the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, a counter-discourse that challenges the prevailing Clash of Civilizations framework.

First of all, in both his 2009 Cairo University speech and his 2011 address to the UNGA, Barack Obama employs personifications to craft a compelling narrative of international relations as an ongoing dialogue among civilizations. In the phrase "throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality," Obama (2009) personifies Islam as a human or an active teacher capable of demonstrating values and behaviours across time. By attributing the human action of "demonstrating" to Islam, the speech frames the religion not as a static set of beliefs but as a

force that has historically embodied principles of tolerance and equality. This personification serves several purposes within the Dialogue among Civilizations framework. First, it challenges monolithic portrayals of Islam found in the Clash of Civilizations narrative by showing its positive contributions to universal human values of advancing tolerance and equality, thereby fostering mutual respect. Second, by situating these qualities as demonstrated "throughout history," Obama connects the present moment to a continuous, shared legacy, reinforcing the idea that peaceful coexistence and intercultural understanding have deep historical roots. This narrative, thus, counters the clash thesis by presenting Islam as inherently compatible with dialogue.

The second personification, "civilization's debt to Islam," (Obama, 2009) attributes to civilization the human capacity to owe or be indebted, thus making civilization itself an actor capable of recognizing contributions. This framing emphasizes that global civilization, encompassing diverse cultures, knowledge systems, and values, has materially and intellectually benefited from Islamic achievements. By expressing this as a "debt," Obama conveys a relationship of gratitude and acknowledgment, which encourages a reevaluation of intercultural relations based on recognition rather than dominance or antagonism. Within the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, this personification functions as a discursive strategy to foster appreciation for cultural interconnectedness and to dismantle hierarchical views that pit civilizations against one another. It situates Islam as an essential contributor to the collective human heritage, thereby promoting a more inclusive and dialogic conception of history and culture.

The statement "It was Islam -- at places like Al-Azhar -- that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and Enlightenment" (Obama, 2009) employs a powerful personification to depict Islam as an active bearer of

knowledge and enlightenment. By attributing to Islam the human-like action of carrying "the light of learning," Obama depicts it not only as a faith but as a force that preserved and transmitted intellectual and cultural treasures across time. This personification deepens the earlier personification of "civilization's debt to Islam," by specifying how Islamic civilization actively contributed to the foundation of modern Western thought. The "light of learning" is itself a metaphor personifying knowledge as a luminous, guiding force; something that can be carried, preserved, and passed on. Associating Islam with this light reinforces the narrative that Islam played a crucial, positive role in global intellectual history. The reference to Al-Azhar, one of the oldest centres of Islamic learning, anchors this personification in a concrete historical institution. It illustrates how Islamic scholars and institutions were pioneers of knowledge during the Dark Ages when much of Europe experienced intellectual stagnation. By framing Islam as a guardian and transmitter of enlightenment, Obama challenges dominant narratives that either ignore or marginalize Islamic contributions to civilization.

Together, these personifications in Obama's speeches work as textual practices that reconstruct historical narratives in a way that fosters tolerance, equality, appreciation and recognition of the Islamic civilization, encouraging audiences to embrace a vision of global relations grounded in such values which are fundamental to the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, and refuting the clash narrative that Islam is the enemy Other of the West as well.

In his 2011 address to UNGA, President Obama asserts that "peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations," another personification that serves as a textual practice personifying peace as an active, complex process that cannot be achieved solely through formal declarations or symbolic acts. This phrase situates peace not as a passive outcome granted by international consensus or institutional endorsements, but as a deliberate, negotiated, and reciprocal endeavour requiring genuine dialogue between the conflicting the

Israelis and the Palestinians. This framing reflects the new historicist tenet of the textuality of history, as Obama's discourse does not only recount the historical dispute but actively shapes the narrative of peacebuilding. The speech constructs history as a process contingent on human action and communication, challenging clash-oriented views that portray the conflict as inevitable due to civilizational differences.

Furthermore, the phrase "the humiliating grip of corruption and tyranny is being pried open" (Obama, 2011) employs a vivid personification that transforms abstract political concepts of corruption and tyranny into a tangible, oppressive hold, one with a "grip" that has historically constrained and humiliated societies. This textual device brings to life the concepts of corruption and tyranny, depicting them as active, almost sentient entities that hold power tightly, yet are vulnerable to being forcefully loosened or dismantled. This metaphorical language is reinforced by the preceding list of significant political upheavals: the fall of notorious autocrats like Qaddafi, Gbagbo, Ben Ali, and Mubarak, and the death of Osama bin Laden symbolizing the decline of violent extremism. By juxtaposing these historic shifts with the personification of oppression's grip being "pried open," Obama crafts a narrative of historical momentum and hopeful transformation. The grip is not simply loosening passively; it is actively being "pried open," suggesting deliberate, collective efforts to break down long-standing systems of repression. Within the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, this personification serves to dramatize the possibility of overcoming longstanding divisions and injustices through persistent dialogue and reform rather than through violence or domination. The "humiliating" nature of the grip appeals to universal human dignity, emphasizing the moral imperative to break free from oppression. Additionally, this discursive device exemplifies the textuality of history by showing how Obama's 2011 speech does not merely recount historical events but actively shapes the understanding of these events as part of an ongoing, hopeful

narrative of liberation and renewal. The language constructs history as a process defined by ethical action, inviting people to participate in shaping a new global order grounded in mutual respect and freedom.

In conclusion, these personifications act as strategic textual practices that encapsulate Obama's vision of peace and liberation as dialogic achievements. Through these textual practices, Obama promotes the Dialogue among Civilizations framework. This approach is significant within the historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the Arab Spring events.

Second of all, intertextuality, a core textual practice within New Historicism, refers to the ways in which texts reference, echo, or incorporate other texts, thereby situating themselves within broader discursive and historical frameworks. In Barack Obama's post-9/11 speeches, intertextuality manifests prominently through both allusions and direct quotations. These references serve not only to lend authority and resonance to his arguments but also to connect his discourse to a larger historical and cultural narrative. Importantly, they help position Obama's narrative within the framework of the Dialogue among Civilizations by invoking religious teachings, shared values, and historical precedents that bridge cultural divides.

In his 2009 Cairo speech, Obama employs an allusion to the Qur'an, paraphrasing that "whoever kills an innocent…it is as if he has killed all mankind," and "whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind" (Obama, 2009). Obama alludes to this moral teaching of the Qur'an to emphasize the value of human life and the ethical foundation of peace within Islam. This allusion allows Obama to position Islam as a force for peace, aligning its ethical teachings with broader humanistic principles. It also strengthens his argument that Islam should not be associated with violent extremism, but instead plays a crucial role in promoting global peace as well as condemning violence.

In addition to the previously identified allusion, Obama (2009) employs a profound religious allusion when he references the story of Isra, stating: "Jerusalem is…a place for all of the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together as in the story of Isra…when Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, peace be upon them, joined in prayer." By alluding to this sacred story, Obama symbolically positions Jerusalem as a site of interfaith harmony and coexistence rather than division and conflict. This allusion underscores the shared religious heritage that binds the Jews, Christians and Muslims, emphasizing common ground rather than difference. This intertextual reference fosters a narrative of peaceful mingling and mutual respect, which counters prevalent narratives of religious antagonism associated with the region. By invoking Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) together in prayer, Obama crafts an image of unity and cooperation that transcends sectarian boundaries. This discursive strategy works to rewrite historical narratives often marked by conflict into a vision aligned with peaceful coexistence and shared humanity, key tenets of the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative. It situates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and interreligious tensions within a larger context of common heritage and possibility for unity, contributing to a discourse that promotes empathy, dialogue, and mutual recognition across civilizations.

Further, Barack Obama invokes foundational moments and movements from American history that resonate beyond their national context. Two prominent allusions stand out: the reference to the Declaration of Independence and the implicit evocation of the American Civil Rights Movement. These allusions are not casual or ornamental; rather, they function as deliberate textual practices through which Obama reconstructs history in a way that fosters a narrative of dialogue.

Firstly, Obama's (2009) statement that "we were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal" directly alludes to the Declaration of Independence's famous assertion that "all

men are created equal." This textual practice suggests that American history should be viewed not as a story of exceptionalism or imperial dominance but as one rooted in shared human ideals of justice and equality. By deploying the Declaration in this way, Obama challenges prevailing narratives of irreconcilable civilizational differences, particularly those exacerbated by post-9/11 tensions. Instead, he offers a dialogic construction of history, wherein American and Islamic civilizations are not isolated or opposed but connected through common principles.

Secondly, Obama alludes to the American Civil Rights Movement through his reflection on the history of African Americans: "For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the center of America's founding" (Obama, 2009). This passage recalls the struggle for racial equality led by figures such as Martin Luther King, emphasizing nonviolent resistance as a powerful tool for social change. The historical experience of African Americans is not confined to a particular nation or ethnicity; it is universalized as an exemplar of dignified resistance against oppression. This textual practice constructs a historical analogy that resonates with the experiences of many in the Muslim world, particularly Palestinians facing displacement and occupation. By aligning the American civil rights struggle with contemporary calls for justice in the Middle East, Obama establishes a shared narrative of moral resistance grounded in peaceful means and universal human rights. This serves to contain extremist discourses that justify violence and instead promotes a vision of justice achieved through dialogue and mutual recognition.

Together, these allusions function as part of a larger New Historicist textual strategy; history is constructed not as a fixed, objective past but as a discourse shaped by language. Obama's speech demonstrates how historical texts can be reinterpreted and redeployed to build bridges across civilizations rather than walls. By invoking these iconic moments of American

history in a foreign context, he crafts a historical narrative that embraces equality and nonviolence which are principles of Dialogue among Civilizations framework.

Alongside allusions, Barak Obama makes strategic use of direct quotations from international, religious, and foundational texts, employing explicit intertextuality to lend authority to his vision of dialogue. In his 2011 *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*, Obama invokes a series of selected quotations. He directly quotes the United Nations Charter, affirming its mission "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security." By doing so, he anchors his address in a globally recognized and respected legal framework, positioning the UN as a continuing embodiment of collective human aspirations. This direct quotation reinforces history as a shared, normative project transcending cultural and national boundaries, and underscores the role of international institutions in facilitating civilizational dialogue. Similarly, Obama quotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by stating that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights." This explicit citation invokes a universal ethical standard that transcends particular traditions, fostering an inclusive discourse that validates the equal worth and dignity of all peoples. The speech also concludes with a direct quotation from President Harry Truman, who described the United Nations as "an expression of the moral nature of man's aspirations." This ethical framing highlights the UN's role not just as a political institution but as a manifestation of shared human hopes for justice and peace. By quoting Truman, Obama connects contemporary international efforts to their historical roots, reinforcing a vision of history as a continuous, morally grounded dialogue among peoples and cultures.

In the same way, Barack Obama's 2009 speech at Cairo University incorporates a series of quotations from religious texts, employing explicit intertextuality. In this passage, Obama directly quotes the Holy Qur'an: "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth." By doing

so, Obama situates his discourse within the religious and cultural framework of his Muslim audience, through the moral authority of a sacred Islamic text. This direct quotation serves not only to connect with his listeners' values but also positions him as a humble and sincere interlocutor committed to honest dialogue grounded in shared human interests. Obama's following statement, "that is what I will try to do today -- to speak the truth as best I can" (Obama, 2009) performs a discursive positioning that aligns with the Qur'anic teaching. He frames himself as a sincere, modest speaker, committed to honesty and transparency, which is crucial for establishing trust in the dialogic context of the speech. This attitude counters any perception of imperialism, instead promoting an ethic of mutual respect and openness, vital for the Dialogue Among Civilizations narrative.

Furthermore, Barack Obama incorporates other direct quotations from foundational American political documents. They are explicit intertextual references that serve as crucial textual practices. Obama's quotation of Thomas Jefferson, "I hope that our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power the greater it will be," (Obama, 2009) functions as a powerful moral statement about the responsible use of power. By evoking Jefferson, Obama situates American strength within a tradition that values restraint and ethical governance. This counters prevalent perceptions of American dominance and militarism, recasting U.S. power as something that must be tempered by wisdom and humility.

The speech also draws upon the Declaration of Tripoli under John Adams, with the statement: "The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility of Muslims." This quotation serves to remind the audience of America's early diplomatic commitment to religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence with Muslim societies. By invoking this founding declaration, he directly challenges dominant narratives of hostility between the U.S. and the Muslim world, reinforcing a historical precedent for mutual respect.

Besides, Obama (2009) invokes the Latin motto *E pluribus unum* ("Out of many, one"), a phrase deeply embedded in the American national identity. This motto symbolizes the unity that arises from diversity, reflecting the principle that a multitude of different peoples can come together to form a cohesive society. By explicitly citing this motto, Obama extends its meaning beyond American nationalism to articulate a universal ideal of multiculturalism and inclusion. This affirmation of diversity as strength resonates with his Muslim audience and underscores the speech's central theme: that cultural and religious plurality can serve as a foundation for peace and mutual respect. These three quotations function as explicit intertextual practices within Obama's speech. They construct an American identity defined by ethical wisdom, religious tolerance, and unity in diversity.

Barack Obama concludes his 2009 Cairo University speech by explicitly quoting sacred texts from the Qur'an, the Talmud, and the Bible, stating:

> We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written.
>
> The Holy Qur'an tells us: "O mankind! We have created you male and a female; and we have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another."
>
> The Talmud tells us: "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace."
>
> The Holy Bible tells us: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

By closing with these direct quotations, Obama strategically situates his speech within the shared spiritual and ethical heritage of the three faiths, signalling a profound commitment to interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. This strategy functions as a textual bridge that

transcends religious boundaries, emphasizing the common moral values that unites diverse civilizations. Each quotation, authoritative within its own tradition, is employed to underline a convergent message: peace, unity, and the human capacity for renewal. Moreover, the initial statement, "We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written," (Obama,2009) explicitly frames the speech's concluding religious references as both a moral foundation and a call to action. The phrase "what has been written" acknowledges the enduring authority of sacred scriptures while inviting a reinterpretation of these texts as sources of hope and cooperation rather than division.

Obama's direct quotation from the Holy Qur'an celebrates human diversity as a divine purpose intended to foster understanding and dialogue rather than conflict. This explicit reference reaffirms the Qur'an's ethical vision of pluralism, directly supporting the speech's overarching theme of intercivilizational engagement. Similarly, the quotation from the Talmud openly invokes Jewish tradition to reinforce the primacy of peace as a guiding principle. By doing so, Obama acknowledges the ethical aspirations embedded in Judaism, positioning it as part of a shared spiritual heritage dedicated to harmony. Finally, the quotation from the Bible draws on Christian scripture to celebrate peacebuilders and moral courage. This intertextuality closes the triad with a universal Christian ethic that resonates across cultures and religions.

Together these three direct quotations illustrate the possibility of transcending historical conflicts through shared ethical commitments, thereby inviting a new beginning grounded in mutual respect and peace, embodying the ideals of the Dialogue among Civilizations. This discursive strategy challenges dominant narratives of inevitable conflict between civilizations by presenting diversity as an opportunity for knowledge, respect, and dialogue. Within the framework of New Historicism, this represents a recontextualization of religious text,

transforming history into a dialogic discourse where multiple identities coexist and interact productively.

Overall, through intertextuality, using both allusions and direct quotations, President Obama reframes post-9/11 events and the broader global context, positioning history not as a linear narrative of conflict, but as a dialogic process where civilizations can engage in meaningful exchange. By referencing religious and foundational political texts, he not only reinterprets their values but also recontextualizes these texts within the specific challenges and opportunities of the post-9/11 era. Invoking these authoritative texts, Obama constructs a collective vision of history, guided by universal principles of peace, justice, and respect for diversity. This intertextual strategy not only bridges cultural and religious divides but also supports the goal of creating a world where civilizations work together in harmony, advancing the ideal of the Dialogue among Civilizations. This strategy is deeply aligned with New Historicism's tenet of textuality of history, where historical meaning is not fixed but constantly reinterpreted and repurposed to advance ideological goals. The next section, builds upon this by analyzing the representations, ideologies, and power relations in Obama's speeches, exploring how these discursive strategies not only reconstruct history but also shape contemporary political identities and influence global power relations.

4.4. Representations as Constructs of Ideology and Power in Obama's Speeches

Barack Obama's *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood* serve as important texts through which dominant ideologies and power relations are constructed and enacted. From a new historicist perspective, as articulated by Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), texts function as spaces of negotiation, where culture, power, and history converge, generating meanings that support specific political and social interests. Obama's speeches are not neutral expressions but

are deeply embedded within and actively contribute to power relations that promote specific ideologies and policies. Central to these is the deployment of the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative, which redefines global conflict not as a clash of civilizations but as a cooperative effort to foster mutual respect, understanding, and peace.

Expanding on the analysis of how Obama's speeches construct historical meaning through personifications, allusions and direct quotations as intertextual devices, this section explores the ideological and political functions of those constructions. Specifically, it explores how the speeches construct representations that shape perceptions of identity and global relations, while contributing to the justification and naturalization of U.S. policies in the post-9/11 era. Grounded in Stephen Greenblatt's (2000) and Montrose's (1986) understanding of representation as a cultural practice shaped by power relations, this analysis views Obama's language not just as a tool for description but as a way of constructing and legitimizing ideological dominance.

For Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000), representations are about what is being depicted in the text. They are the content or subjects of the text as they are framed through language. Representations can be groups, places, concepts, ideas, identities, events, or social realities that the text constructs or portrays. This reinforces Greenblatt's assertion that texts do not only reflect reality but also actively construct it. Similarly, Obama's speeches are analyzed as ideological artifacts that create significant cultural representations of the "self" (the U.S./the West), the "Other" (the Muslim world/Palestinians), and the global relations, serving to redefine U.S. power in the post-Bush era and naturalize a liberal-humanist discourse that sustains hegemonic global relations through moral leadership. Three central ideological strands inform this discursive strategy: revised American exceptionalism, liberal internationalism, and the

narrative of Dialogue among Civilizations. Each ideology helps reshape global representations, reinforce or reframe power structures, and reimagine America's position on the world stage.

The first ideology that emerges from Obama's discourse is a revised form of American exceptionalism. While Bush frequently casts the United States as a providential and uniquely righteous nation, Obama presents an updated model rooted in ethical responsibility and cultural inclusivity. He constructs an image of the U.S. as a nation uniquely positioned to bridge civilizational divides, one that acknowledges past mistakes and operates with humility. In his Cairo speech, Obama explicitly rejects the portrayal of America as a self-interested empire, instead presenting the nation as a product of anti-colonial struggle and democratic ideals. He states: "America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire. The United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known. We were born out of revolution against an empire" (Obama, 2009). This reframing allows Obama to reclaim moral authority by aligning the U.S. with universal aspirations for freedom and self-determination. By acknowledging America's own revolutionary origins, he subtly critiques contemporary foreign interventions while still positioning the United States as a historical beacon of progress. This duality is central to his revised exceptionalism: America remains exceptional, but its leadership is now defined by cooperation rather than coercion. At the same time, Obama's (2009) invocation of American Muslims as successful, patriotic contributors to national life reinforces the ideological narrative of exceptionalism that America is a uniquely inclusive and tolerant society.

In his 2011 UN address, Obama extends this revised exceptionalism by presenting U.S. leadership as facilitative rather than dictatorial. He points out collective action in Libya to underscore multilateralism as the new standard for legitimacy, by crediting, the UN, NATO and the Arab League rather than emphasizing unilateral U.S. action. Hence, president Obama aligns

American power with global consensus, thereby enhancing its moral authority. This approach contrasts sharply with the Bush administration's divisive discourse, instead portraying the U.S. as first among equals in a rules-based order. Accordingly, Obama's speeches craft a revised exceptionalism, representing the United States as a humble yet indispensable leader. In this respect, Obama fashions his nation as divinely sanctioned and historically justified in its moral leadership. This resonates with Greenblatt's (1988) emphasis on representation as an act of self-fashioning.

Moreover, Barack Obama's 2009 Cairo speech and 2011 UN address articulate an ideological vision of liberal internationalism that reshaped America's post-9/11 global discourse. These speeches present multilateralism, institutional engagement, and diplomatic dialogue as the cornerstones of effective global governance. Obama (2009) proclaims: "Our problems must be dealt with through partnership; our progress must be shared," a formulation that affirms multilateral cooperation. In his historic Cairo speech, Obama establishes the foundational principles of his internationalist approach by declaring his intention "to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect" (Obama, 2009). This framing rejects the unilateralism of the previous administration, instead proposing a relationship built on reciprocity and shared objectives. The emphasis on mutual benefit rather than American dictates reflects core liberal internationalist beliefs about the nature of productive international relations. Obama extends this philosophy to economic development in the MENA and Southeast Asia, announcing concrete multilateral initiatives like "a new fund to support technological development in Muslim-majority countries," the appointment of "science envoys" for international collaboration, "create green jobs," and "digitize records" (Obama, 2009). These and similar

proposals reflect the liberal internationalist conviction that enduring economic and scientific collaboration fosters more stable international relations than military force alone.

The Cairo address further develops its internationalist framework through its treatment of human rights and democratic values. Obama's (2009) assertion that "these are not just American ideas; they are human rights" represents a significant element of liberal internationalist thought. By grounding his argument in liberal internationalism, Obama seeks to create space for cross-cultural dialogue while maintaining advocacy for fundamental freedoms. Likewise, his UN speech reinforces the principle of universal human rights: "This is how the international community is supposed to work -- nations standing together for the sake of peace and security, and individuals claiming their rights" (Obama, 2011). In this context, Obama connects global peace and security to the fundamental protection of human rights, suggesting that peace and stability are the necessary preconditions for the enjoyment of human rights. This statement emphasizes that peace and security are essential conditions that enable individuals to claim their rights. Obama envisions a world where nations work collectively to secure these conditions for all, reinforcing the liberal internationalist belief that the protection of human rights is the cornerstone of global cooperation and stability.

Furthermore, Obama's discourse fashions a state identity that aspires to lead by consensus rather than coercion, drawing legitimacy from global interconnectedness and shared governance through international institutions. Obama's 2011 UN address significantly expands on these themes while applying them to specific geopolitical challenges. His detailed account of the international community's response to the Libyan crisis serves as a case study in liberal internationalist principle of institutional engagement. The description of how "the United Nations lived up to its charter" and how the "Security Council authorized all necessary measures to prevent a massacre" (Obama, 2011) presents a model of collective security that

contrasts sharply with the unilateral interventions of the early 2000s. Obama's emphasis on UN processes and Arab League participation with "a NATO-led coalition" (Obama, 2011) in the Libya operation reflects the liberal internationalist belief in the legitimizing power of multilateral institutions and regional partnerships. Similarly, his discussion of global economic interdependence, when he states, "in a global economy, nations will rise, or fall, together," and calls for "urgent and coordinated action" (Obama, 2011) exemplifies the liberal internationalist view of economic policy as a collective security issue requiring global institutional solutions. Bush's neoconservative framework, by contrast, promoted a foreign policy grounded in preemptive action and American primacy, often bypassing international institutions in favour of unilateral enforcement of perceived universal values.

Additionally, diplomacy is articulated as a fundamental approach to resolving global conflicts and advancing peace. In both speeches, Barack Obama articulates diplomacy as a foundational principle of his liberal internationalist vision, emphasizing dialogue, mutual understanding, and partnership as essential to resolving global conflicts. He repeatedly underscores the necessity of "a sustained effort to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect one another, and to seek common ground" (Obama, 2009), a formulation that embodies the spirit of diplomatic engagement through empathy and cooperation. At the United Nations, he similarly calls for a break in the "deadlock" only achievable when "each side learns to stand in the other's shoes... to understand each other's hopes and each other's fears" (Obama, 2011), reflecting a commitment to negotiation grounded in mutual recognition and respect. These appeals to shared understanding and direct engagement encapsulate liberal internationalism's core tenets of multilateralism and peaceful conflict resolution, positioning diplomacy not as a mere policy tool but as an ethical framework that reshapes global power relations through dialogue rather than coercion. Accordingly, Obama distinguishes diplomacy

as a dialogic practice that fosters consensus and cooperation which are core principles of liberal internationalism. These statements construct a vision of diplomacy as essential for addressing international issues and cultivating lasting peace, marking a clear departure from unilateralist and militarized approaches to foreign policy.

Most notably, Obama's discourse is structured around the ideology of Dialogue among Civilizations, which serves as a cultural counter-narrative to Huntington's clash thesis while offering an alternative framework for global engagement. This ideology works as the overarching framework in Obama's speeches, emphasizing that global conflicts should not be framed in terms of cultural and civilizational divides but as opportunities for cooperation, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. This is clearly articulated in one of the most powerful passages where Obama explicitly addresses bridging civilizational divides in his 2009 Cairo speech:

> I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings.

In this excerpt, Obama represents the United Sates as an agent of dialogue rather than confrontation. This self-representation reflects a shift in global power relations, where the U.S. is depicted as a facilitator of peace rather than a country imposing its will. The self-positioning of the U.S. as a leader in global cooperation resonates throughout both speeches, promoting the idea that civilizations can engage in meaningful exchange and solve global challenges together. Alongside this self-fashioning is Obama's representation of the Islamic world and the Palestinian people. The speech performs a representational shift in which Islam is no longer

cast as a threat to the West, but rather as a civilizational partner whose values align with those of America. Unlike Bush, who frequently essentialized the Islamic world as a cultural existential threat, Obama attempts to reframe this relationship through a discourse of reconciliation. Besides, by declaring his intent to forge "a new beginning," one rejecting the inevitability of civilizational competition, Obama reframes U.S.-Muslim relations as an opportunity for mutual transformation rather than mere conflict management. Overall, as Greenblatt suggests, this shift is not just stylistic; it signals a redefinition of how America constructs its political persona within evolving historical frameworks.

In the 2011 UNGA speech, Obama reinforces this ideology by asserting that global peace can only be achieved through mutual recognition and negotiation, focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He calls for a two-state solution, reflecting the Dialogue among Civilizations approach, which supports respect for sovereignty and dialogue as the means to resolve conflict. The speech's most striking bridge-building moment came in his depiction of Jerusalem as "a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims, and a place for all the children of Abraham to mingle peacefully together" (Obama, 2011). Here, Obama deepens Abrahamic interfaith which was already evoked in his 2009 Cairo speech that invokes sacred texts from Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. This alignment of the three religions performs significant representation by reframing Islam, in particular, as integral to a shared moral order. This interfaith reference functions not as a separate ideology but as theological instrument in support of the broader civilizational dialogue. Through this ideology, President Obama redefines global power relations, advocating for shared responsibility and the idea that no nation or civilization should dominate or exclude others. His call for global cooperation and respect for diversity through dialogue undermines any concept of a Clash of Civilizations, instead positioning the U.S. as a bridge-builder and a mediator in the world.

Building on these ideological underpinnings of revised American exceptionalism, liberal internationalism, and Dialogue among Civilizations, Obama's discourse also functions to legitimize and consolidate American leadership on the global stage. The speeches represent American engagement in world affairs, whether military, diplomatic, or economic, as intrinsically benevolent. In Cairo, Obama (2009) affirms, "America will defend itself, respectful of the sovereignty of nations and the rule of law." The implication is that American power is disciplined by virtue and thus may be deployed without imperial consequence. While this departs from Bush's explicitly confrontational Clash of Civilizations narrative, it continues to frame the international arena as one requiring American mediation and oversight.

From a new historicist perspective, these ideological discourses illustrate how power is exercised through language to produce consent and shape historical reality. The interwoven nature of representation, ideology, and power in Obama's speeches sustains American leadership by constructing a narrative of ethical responsibility, shared values, and inclusive diplomacy. This narrative reconfigures global power relations by positioning the United States as the moral and political centre of an interdependent world order, while implicitly defining the parameters of legitimacy for other nations and movements.

The previous section has demonstrated how Obama's discourse employs ideological representations and power relations to construct a narrative of Dialogue among Civilizations. It is important to further explore the deeper processes by which this prevailing discourse manages dissent and alternative perspectives. The new historicist concepts of subversion and containment provide a critical lens to examine how Obama's discourse not only asserts a vision of global cooperation but also strategically neutralizes, absorbs, or marginalizes counter-narratives that might contest the dominant civilizational paradigm.

4.5. Subversion and Containment in Obama's Discourse: Rearticulation of Hegemony through the Discourse of Dialogue

Applying the same methodological framework used in the analysis of President George Bush's discourse, this section examines the speeches of President Barack Obama, with a focus on his *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*, through the New Historicist lens of subversion and containment. As theorized by Stephen Greenblatt (1988), this dialectic underscores the capacity of dominant ideological structures to generate and absorb dissenting voices, thereby maintaining their hegemonic stability. Subversion, in this context, refers to discursive or ideological elements that appear to challenge prevailing assumptions or dominant narratives, while containment denotes the strategies, textual, symbolic, or political, through which such challenges are managed, neutralized, or silenced in service of ideological continuity.

Obama's discourse is revealed from the previous sections of analysis as a departure from the overt civilizational antagonism that characterized Bush's post-9/11 discourse. Yet, when analyzed through a New Historicist lens, his speeches reveal a complex negotiation between discursive subversion of the Clash of Civilizations paradigm and the containment of such subversion within a broader framework of liberal internationalism and American global leadership. This section proceeds in three stages. First, it explores internal subversion by identifying contradictions within Obama's own discourse. Second, it addresses external subversion, considering how Obama responds to the Clash of Civilizations narrative as a broader cultural and ideological discourse. Finally, this section analyzes Obama's strategies of containment, showing how his emphasis on dialogue rearticulates the American ideological project in more dialogic but still hegemonic terms.

As in the previous chapter, the categories of internal and external subversion are not derived directly from Greenblatt's terminology but function as analytical constructs designed to trace the layered and often contradictory operations of power within political discourse. By applying this model to Obama's speeches, this section examines how dissent is not only expressed but also contained, allowing dominant ideologies to evolve in form while remaining intact in function. This reading affirms the new historicist conviction that texts, far from being autonomous or transparent, are cultural artifacts deeply embedded in the negotiation of power.

Obama's discourse in both speeches appears to promote mutual respect between the United States and the Muslim world. He consistently frames the relationship not as one of inherent conflict, but of shared interests, overlapping values, and historical interdependence. However, beneath this friendly stance lie contradictions that subvert the coherence of his discourse. Obama's cultural reverence is immediately counterbalanced by a firm reaffirmation of American security priorities, including counterterrorism efforts and the continued military presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He justifies U.S. involvement in Afghanistan by stating that "we did not go by choice; we went because of necessity" (Obama, 2009), and underscores the legitimacy of military engagement by invoking the trauma of 9/11 and framing al Qaeda as an undisputed global threat, stating: "These are not opinions to be debated; these are facts to be dealt with" (Obama, 2009). This discursive strategy constructs a moral imperative that justifies continued American action in Muslim-majority territories. While Obama claims the U.S. is committed to partnership and understanding, he immediately reaffirms its right to unilateral action in defense of its interests, thereby reinforcing a familiar logic of military intervention as a response to terrorism, under the guise of shared moral values and dialogue.

In both speeches, Obama also situates the West as a site of progress, pluralism, and moral authority, while simultaneously attempting to reframe Islam not as a threat but as a

potential partner in this shared project of global justice. Yet the discursive balance is uneven; while Islam is praised for its past, it is subtly positioned as a civilization in need of reform, development, and alignment with Western democratic norms. Such framing subtly reasserts American geopolitical dominance even as it appears to distance itself from imperial ambition. This tension between the discourse of inclusion and the reality of power projection reveals an internal subversion within Obama's discourse. The ideals of mutual respect and cultural recognition are undercut by a strategic narrative that normalizes military intervention, not as a coercive act, but as a shared ethical duty. In effect, Obama's speeches speak the language of partnership while enacting the logic of containment.

A similar contradiction emerges in both speeches through Obama's use of universal values such as freedom, dignity, and democracy. He insists that these are not exclusively American ideals but aspirations common to all people as he declares: "These are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere" (Obama, 2009). In his UN address, Obama also appeals to the universality of human dignity and democratic aspiration, arguing that "the promise written down on paper -- that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights -- is closer at hand" (Obama, 2011). He references the Arab Spring as a manifestation of these universal principles, describing uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and elsewhere not as a rejection of the West, but as movements that affirm the same values long championed by the United States. He praises Muslims who, through peaceful protest and democratic activism, embrace a moral vision of history that coincides with liberal democratic norms. However, his examples and framing rely on a Western liberal template as the normative model for legitimate governance and development. Thus, although the language suggests cultural openness, it ultimately re-centres Western ideological norms, undermining the very pluralism it seems to celebrate.

In the case of Palestine, Obama walks a tightrope between affirming Palestinian aspirations and defending Israeli security. He states: "the Palestinian people deserve a state of their own. But … a genuine peace can only be realized between the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves ... Israelis must know that any agreement provides assurances for their security. Palestinians deserve to know the territorial basis of their state." (Obama, 2011). While this may appear balanced, it functions ideologically to delegate responsibility for statehood to a negotiation process tilted in Israel's favour, backed by U.S. support. By foregrounding Palestinian "aspiration" while stressing Israeli "security," the speech subtly creates a hierarchy of needs, in which one party's survival is existential, and the other's dream is conditional. The result is a discourse that reproduces unequal power relations while masking them in the language of even-handed diplomacy.

Another key dimension of subversion and containment in Obama's discourse lies in his strong endorsement of international alliances and multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, NATO and the Arab League, as pillars of global cooperation and shared responsibility. He presents these institutions as embodiments of liberal internationalism, suggesting that power should be exercised collectively and through consensus. Obama (2009) affirms: "any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail." Similarly, in his UNGA address, he underscores the importance of multilateralism, declaring that "the United Nations and its member states must do their part to support those basic aspirations" of "sustained freedom, dignity and security." Furthermore, he presents the intervention in Libya as a successful example of collective action, emphasizing the roles played by NATO and the Arab League, and framing their cooperation as a model for how the international community can work together to uphold peace and human rights.

Yet this embrace of multilateralism is subverted by the repeated affirmation of America's unique global role and privilege to lead. Even while championing collective action, Obama frames the United States as the indispensable actor without which multilateral action lacks legitimacy or efficacy. For example, in addressing the crisis in Syria, Obama declares: "Already, the United States has imposed strong sanctions on Syria's leaders. We supported a transfer of power that is responsive to the Syrian people. And many of our allies have joined in this effort" (Obama, 2011). This declaration casts the U.S. as the initiator of international response, with others following its lead. In the same way, while condemning violence and repression in Yemen and Bahrain, Obama consistently places American policy at the centre of any meaningful resolution. In the case of Yemen, he affirms: "America supports those aspirations," and calls for a peaceful transition of power, while in Bahrain he stresses that the U.S. "will continue to call on the government and the main opposition bloc… to pursue a meaningful dialogue." (Obama, 2011). These interventions, although expressed in the language of solidarity and support for democratic movements, subtly reinforce the notion that American recognition and guidance are what validate and enable legitimate reform.

This strategy of containment reaches its most pointed expression in Obama's treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; an issue he himself acknowledges as a "test" for American principles as well as foreign policy (Obama, 2011). After affirming America's broad support for democratic transitions and universal rights across the Arab world, Obama shifts to a markedly different language when addressing Palestinian aspirations. Rather than endorsing the Palestinian bid for statehood at the United Nations, he asserts that "there are no shortcuts" to peace and insists that "peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations -- if it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now" (Obama, 2011). Here, Obama reframes a multilateral diplomatic effort as both naive and counterproductive,

suggesting that only direct negotiations, under terms implicitly set and brokered by the United States, can yield a legitimate solution. The Palestinian appeal to the international community is thus delegitimized while American mediation is elevated as the only viable path forward.

This discursive shift illustrates a strategy of containment: what appears to be neutral hides an unequal balance of power. Obama affirms that "there are no shortcuts," yet he avoids acknowledging the obstacles that hinder genuine negotiation, chief among them the United States' own material, military, and diplomatic support for Israel. He cautions the international community to recognize this reality when he declares that "America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakable. Our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring" (Obama, 2011). The principle of mutual recognition is discursively affirmed, but in practice, recognition flows one way; Palestinians are urged to prove their commitment to peace while Israeli actions, including settlement expansion and occupation, are mostly overlooked. From a new historicist perspective, the speech presents a containment of geopolitical dissent by portraying the demand for Palestinian sovereignty as a deviation from legitimate diplomatic norms. As a result, the speech makes international attempts to question Israel's actions seem unacceptable, helping to protect American-Israeli hegemony.

President Obama extends this framework through a broader affirmation of American global responsibility. He proclaims: "We will always stand up for the universal rights that were embraced by this Assembly," immediately linking those rights to specific liberal democratic criteria: "elections that are free and fair; … governance that is transparent and accountable; respect for the rights of women and minorities; justice that is equal and fair" (Obama, 2011). Despite being presented as universal, these principles closely mirror Western political values, thereby containing the revolutionary energy of the Arab uprisings within a framework sanctioned by American liberal ideology. Moreover, his promise that "the United States will

continue to support those nations that transition to democracy -- with greater trade and investment – so that freedom is followed by opportunity" (Obama, 2011) underscores the instrumental nature of American engagement; support is conditional on conformity to a model of governance that aligns with U.S. interests and values.

At the same time, in both the 2009 Cairo University speech and the 2011 UNGA address, Barack Obama apparently engages in a direct discursive subversion of the Clash of Civilizations thesis, a paradigm that had shaped much of the post-9/11 discourse under the Bush administration. This thesis, most famously articulated by Samuel Huntington, posits an inevitable and essentialist conflict between the West and Islam. Obama deliberately distances himself from this binary, rejecting the narrative of inherent hostility and redefining the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world as one based on cooperation, shared values, and historical interconnectedness.

The most explicit instance of this subversion comes early in the Cairo speech, where Obama declares: "America is not -- and never will be -- at war with Islam" (Obama, 2009). Rather than characterizing Islam as a civilizational adversary, Obama represents it as a respected interlocutor, celebrating the historical contributions of the Islamic civilization to global knowledge, crediting it with advances in science, medicine, philosophy, and the arts. He also cites Qur'anic verses to underscore Islam's moral alignment with universal principles such as justice and the sacredness of life. In addition, Obama emphasizes the presence of Muslims in America's own historical and cultural development, asserting that "Islam has always been a part of America's story" (Obama, 2009). Such gestures reposition Islam from being the "Other" in a global civilizational confrontation to being an integral participant in a shared human endeavour.

In his UNGA address, though less explicit, Obama further reinforced the subversion of the clash thesis. Obama frames the Arab Spring not as a threat to Western interests, but as a manifestation of universal human aspirations for dignity and freedom. He asserts that "the promise written down on paper -- that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights -- is closer at hand" (Obama, 2011), thus aligning the democratic uprisings in the Arab world with the values long espoused by American liberal democracy. By interpreting the Arab Spring as an internal movement within the Muslim world seeking to affirm universal values, rather than a challenge to the West, President Obama attempts to delegitimize the narrative that Islamic societies are fundamentally incompatible with democracy, an assumption already claimed by Huntington in his Clash of Civilizations thesis.

However, Obama's discursive subversion, through his embrace of a Dialogue of Civilizations, is ultimately contained by the deeper ideological paradigm of the Clash of Civilizations thesis. While he explicitly rejects the idea of a fundamental opposition between Islam and the West, his broader discourse implicitly reinforces civilizational hierarchies through appeals to American leadership, liberal norms, and strategic interests. In the Cairo speech, after paying tribute to Islamic civilization, Obama calls on Muslim societies to adopt values such as religious tolerance, gender equality, and democratic participation. He asserts that "freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together," and that governments must reflect "the will of the people" (Obama, 2009). Though framed as universal principles, these values mirror a Western liberal template and indirectly cast the Muslim world as lagging behind, needing to be guided toward a more civilized political order. Similarly, in the UNGA address, Obama praises the Arab Spring but embeds his support within the framework of American ideological expectations. He affirms that successful transitions must be grounded in "elections that are free and fair; … governance that is transparent and accountable; respect for

the rights of women and minorities; [and] justice that is equal and fair" (Obama, 2011). These criteria, while presented as neutral, reflect distinctly Western political values and reaffirm the United States as the validator of legitimate political change. The implication is that Islam can be accepted, but only insofar as it conforms to the liberal democratic norms championed by the West.

In this way, the surface language of mutual respect and intercultural dialogue is absorbed into a geopolitical script that still privileges American hegemony and Western civilization. The Dialogue of Civilizations becomes a strategy of containment; an aesthetic and discursive practice that defuses civilizational conflict while leaving its structural logic intact. From a new historicist perspective, Obama's discourse thus performs a refined version of ideological reproduction, where apparent subversion is reabsorbed into dominant power structures under the guise of moral universality and international cooperation.

4.6. Conclusion

Chapter four analyzed President Barack Obama's speeches of *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and his *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*. By applying the tenets as well as concepts of New Historicism, this chapter demonstrated the ways in which Obama's speeches do not only reflect historical events but actively participate in the construction of historical meaning. His discourse responds to a world reshaped by unilateral military interventions, rising Islamophobia, and global demands for renewed diplomatic engagement. Within this context, Obama's discourse seeks to rearticulate American identity and foreign policy through the framework of a Dialogue among Civilizations.

The analysis has demonstrated that Obama grounds his speeches in specific historical and socio-political realities, invoking examples such as constraints on Muslim charitable giving

and the policing of Muslim women's dress. These references situate his speeches in the lived experiences of marginalized communities, challenging the post-9/11 securitized framing of Islam. At the same time, his invocation of shared civilizational values and religious pluralism, via intertextual references to the Qur'an, Bible, and Talmud, functions as a discursive strategy aimed at promoting mutual respect and shared universal values.

However, while Obama's language signals a discursive departure from the confrontational discourse of the Bush era, the analysis also revealed a deeper continuity in the structure of American global dominance. His calls for multilateralism and partnership, framed in a conciliatory and cooperative language, do not dismantle hegemonic logics but rather reconfigure them within the discourse of Dialogue among Civilizations. Institutions such as the United Nations and NATO are represented not as checks on U.S. authority but as vehicles through which American leadership is exercised more diplomatically. Thus, his discourse performs a dual function: it subverts the language of imperial unilateralism while simultaneously containing that subversion within the boundaries of liberal internationalism.

Through intertextual references to the Declaration of Independence and the Civil Rights Movement, and the Islamic civilization's contributions to the Renaissance, Obama constructs a dialogic history that reframes the past as a shared human legacy rather than a source of division. Yet this discursive openness is ultimately constrained by the reaffirmation of U.S. strategic interests, particularly in relation to Israel and broader Middle East policy, which remain non-negotiable. The tension between ideological orientation towards dialogue and the established geopolitical priorities reflects a broader dialectic of subversion and containment at the heart of Obama's discourse.

In conclusion, Obama's discourse operates as a cultural artifact of its historical moment; one that reimagines U.S. global identity in the language of dialogue, justice, mutual respect,

and shared values, while implicitly reinforcing the dominant paradigm of American hegemony. It exemplifies how, from a New Historicist perspective, political texts not only respond to history but also shape it, mediating between competing civilizational narratives of clash and dialogue in a world which is still haunted by the legacies of 9/11.

General Conclusion

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This thesis set out to analyze U.S. foreign policy discourse in the post-9/11 era, with a particular focus on how presidential speeches construct and negotiate civilizational narratives. It specifically examined four major speeches: George W. Bush's *2002 State of the Union Address* and his *Address to the Nation on the Five-Year Anniversary of 9/11*, as well as Barak H. Obama's *A New Beginning: Speech at Cairo University* and his *Address to the United Nations General Assembly on Palestinian Statehood*. To carry out this investigation, the study adopted New Historicism as its main methodological foundation.

Anchored in the theoretical tenets and concepts of New Historicism, this thesis aimed to explore the discursive strategies through which American hegemony was legitimized in pivotal geopolitical contexts, from the Afghan War and the Iraq invasion to the Arab Spring. One of the study's central objectives was to show how Bush's discourse explicitly invoked the Clash of Civilizations paradigm to reinforce a hegemonic vision of American global leadership. By comparison, this study also aimed to assess whether Obama's discourse, typically framed as promoting Dialogue among Civilizations, subverted or reproduced the civilizational narratives of the preceding administration.

The central question guiding this research was: How do the selected U.S. presidential speeches in the post-9/11 era construct civilizational narratives through historically embedded discursive strategies? In addressing this main inquiry, four sub-questions were formulated, each exploring a distinct yet interconnected dimension of the presidents' discourses. Building upon the research questions, this study conducted a discourse analysis of President Bush's and Obama's addresses, to examine how these political texts construct, reinforce, or potentially subvert civilizational narratives.

General Conclusion

This academic exploration methodically addressed each of these questions. Firstly, it demonstrated that President George W. Bush's discourse overtly embraces the assumptions of the Clash of Civilizations paradigm. His discourse represents the post-9/11 world as divided into opposing civilizational blocs. While Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory offers a paradigm for understanding post-Cold War world order, Bush's speeches mobilize this theory ideologically to justify U.S. military interventions in the global War on Terror. Through the construction of a binary between the West and Islam, Bush's discourse transforms the theoretical framework into a powerful ideological justification for military and political action. The Clash of Civilizations theory, thus, functions not just as a framework for analyzing international relations but as an ideological tool to legitimize power and military intervention, positioning the United States as the moral and political leader in a civilizational struggle.

Secondly, the thesis evaluated the extent to which President Barack Obama's discourse aligns with the principles of the Dialogue among Civilizations approach. The analysis reveals that, although Obama's language marks a discursive departure from Bush's confrontational discourse, it nonetheless retains significant continuities. His appeals to the Dialogue among Civilizations narrative does not fundamentally disrupt existing power hierarchies, but rather reconfigures them in more diplomatic terms.

Thirdly, this study investigated how the selected presidential speeches function as cultural texts shaped by, and simultaneously discursively shaping, the historical context of the post-9/11 era. Drawing on New Historicism's tenets of historicity of the text and textuality of history, the thesis argued that Bush's and Obama's speeches do not simply reflect historical events but actively participate in reconstructing and reinterpreting history. In other words, both sets of speeches are embedded in their historical moment, and at the same time, they discursively construct and shape the civilizational narratives following the 9/11 events. While Bush's and Obama's discourse directly engage with their historical, political, social and cultural

contexts, they rely on textual practices which construct history that align with the respected civilizational narratives. Bush's speeches are constructed through the use of narrative framing within metaphors and intertextuality, mainly allusion, that correspond closely to Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. However, through personification, and intertextuality, using both allusions and direct quotations, President Obama reframes post-9/11 events and the broader global context, positioning history not as a linear narrative of conflict, but as a dialogic process where civilizations can engage in meaningful exchange.

Fourthly, the thesis explored the manifestations of subversion and containment in the selected discourses. A New Historicist reading of Bush's speeches revealed a complex interplay of subversion and containment. Internally, Bush's discourse lays bare contradictions between America's proclaimed ideals of freedom, democracy, and human dignity and the realpolitik of military interventions and domestic security policies. These hypocrisies and contradictions function as subversive fissures within the hegemonic discourse, destabilizing the coherence of the official narrative and revealing how the language of freedom and democracy is deployed selectively. Externally, dissent from international institutions and hesitant nations challenges American unilateralism; however, Bush's discourse strategically contains such opposition by delegitimizing it through the use of moral binaries and appeals to American exceptionalism. This dual interplay of internal tensions and external resistance, managed through discursive containment, exemplifies the ongoing negotiation of power in the post-9/11 political context. Therefore, the speeches both reveal and mask the complexities of American power, demonstrating that hegemonic authority is maintained not by eradicating challenges but by absorbing and redefining them within dominant ideological frameworks. On the other hand, Obama's discourse introduces elements of subversion and containment which are often constrained by hegemonic narratives that contain subversion within ideological boundaries. What emerges, then, is a carefully managed discursive strategy through which subversive

energies, whether internal contradictions or external criticisms, are not repressed but reframed. Obama presents the United States as a morally superior power precisely because it listens, adapts, and respects others. Yet the listening is conditional, and the respect is bounded by the primary concern of maintaining global leadership. This is what Greenblatt (1988) identified as the logic of containment: the absorption and neutralization of dissent within a dominant ideological structure. Obama's discourse does not explicitly reject the clash narrative, but instead reframes it through the language of dialogue, partnership, mutual respect, and shared human values.

Furthermore, the synthesis of the research findings revealed that, in Bush's discourse, the ideology of American exceptionalism is overt and unambiguous, presenting the United States as the guardian of freedom and moral clarity in a world threatened by irrational, civilizational enemies. This aligns directly with Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations paradigm, which Bush's discourse reproduces through persistent binary oppositions. His speeches, particularly through different textual practices, position the U.S. as the indispensable nation in a civilizational struggle. Additionally, neoconservative ideals, especially unilateralism, morality, and the doctrine of preemptive intervention, permeate Bush's discourse, framing the War on Terror both as a strategic necessity of national security and a moral duty. These ideologies operate through an interplay of subversion and containment, wherein any dissenting or alternative worldview is rendered ideologically untenable, and therefore absorbed within the dominant narrative.

In contrast, Obama's discourse appears to mark a discursive departure from this confrontational stance, emphasizing multilateralism, diplomacy, and mutual respect, especially with the Muslim world. His speeches, while invoking the ideology of Dialogue among Civilizations, also reflect a revised form of American exceptionalism, one that reimagines the United States not only as a force of moral certainty but as a nation capable of listening and

leading collaboratively. Nevertheless, this discursive shift is far from a rupture. Obama's discourse remains grounded in the structures of liberal internationalism, which continues to assert U.S. global primacy, albeit through institutions like the United Nations and NATO rather than direct unilateral actions. While he critiques some of the excesses of the Bush era, his discourse ultimately reconfigures rather than dismantles hegemonic logics. By invoking shared civilizational values, religious pluralism, and historical interconnectedness, Obama articulates gestures of reconciliation that, at the same time, serve as discursive strategies for reaffirming a global order centred on American leadership.

Importantly, this synthesis demonstrated that both presidents mobilize ideological constructs as discursive instruments. Whether through the assertive stance of neoconservatism or the conciliatory approach of liberal internationalism, the ideological framing in both sets of speeches reveals a continuity in the pursuit of U.S. geopolitical interests. Even Obama's seemingly dialogic discourse does not escape the dialectic of subversion and containment. While it opens space for alternative narratives, it simultaneously narrows their potential by anchoring them within the bounds of liberal democratic ideals and American foreign policy goals.

Therefore, the analysis confirmed that U.S. presidential speeches in the post-9/11 context function not only as discursive responses to immediate crises but also as ideological texts that normalize and perpetuate broader civilizational narratives. They derive meaning not in isolation, but in relation to specific historical events and global power relations. Accordingly, from a New Historicist lens, the speeches of Bush and Obama demonstrate how political language is used to discursively shape history, identity, ideology, and power.

Building on the preceding synthesis of the findings, this study offers theoretical and methodological contributions to the analysis of political discourse. By applying New Historicism to post-9/11 U.S. presidential speeches, it extends the practice beyond its literary

focus and demonstrates its effectiveness as a critical framework for political discourse analysis. In so doing, the research shows how presidential speeches operate as ideologically laden cultural texts, that both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts. In this sense, the study provides a model for applying New Historicism to political texts. Through its principles of historicity, textuality, representation, and the dialectic of subversion and containment, this approach enables a layered reading that uncovers not only what is said, but the historical and ideological purposes behind its articulation.

Furthermore, this thesis deepened understanding of how political discourse constructs civilizational narratives. By analyzing the interplay of the Clash of Civilizations and Dialogue among Civilizations paradigms, it showed how ideologies such as American exceptionalism, liberal internationalism, and securitization are not simply expressed but discursively constituted. While Bush's discourse reinforces a militarized, interventionist worldview, Obama's reframes U.S. dominance through multilateralism and the language of dialogue, yet still uphold prevailing power hierarchies that sustain U.S. hegemonic influence.

Overall, New Historicism, as an interdisciplinary practice, positions political speeches as cultural artifacts, deeply embedded in historical and ideological frameworks. Having established an adaptable model for analyzing political discourse, this study reaffirms the relevance of New Historicism to contemporary political inquiry. This way, this thesis contributes to discourse studies, American studies, political science, and international relations, offering both a theoretical lens and a methodological approach for analyzing how civilizational narratives are constructed and sustained through political language.

As a final thought, the post-9/11 era reveals that civilizational narratives are not fixed, but rather politically constructed instruments that reflect, reinforce, and reshape global power relations. President Bush's adoption of the Clash of Civilizations paradigm intensified perceptions of division, insecurity, and moral polarization, while President Obama's appeal to

dialogue and shared human values projected an alternative vision of global coexistence, though constrained by the logics of U.S. hegemony. This study contends that foreign policy discourse functions as a contested space in which competing visions of global order, rooted in either confrontation or cooperation, are articulated and legitimized.

The tension between “clash” and “dialogue” continues to influence the discursive construction of American legitimacy, the shaping of international alliances, and the broader struggle for a more just and multipolar global system. Looking forward, future research might examine how subsequent administrations, such as those of Donald Trump and Joe Biden, have reconfigured these civilizational narratives in response to evolving global challenges, including the rise of populism, the climate crisis, the spread of digital authoritarianism, transnational migration and the securitization of borders. Such inquiry would further illuminate the interplay between discourse, culture, and power in the ongoing negotiation of world order.

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Summary

This thesis critically examines post-9/11 U.S. foreign policy discourse through a New Historicist analysis of key speeches by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama. It explores how both leaders construct civilizational narratives informed by the paradigms of the Clash of Civilizations and the Dialogue among Civilizations. Employing New Historicism as its theoretical and methodological lens, the study demonstrates how political discourse is shaped by and helps shape its historical context. Bush's discourse is shown to promote a neoconservative vision, portraying the U.S. as a defender of Western civilization against existential threats. In contrast, Obama emphasizes multilateralism and religious pluralism, though still within a liberal internationalist framework. This thesis thereby argues that both leaders, despite differing discursive strategies, contribute to a civilizational discourse that sustains U.S. global hegemony.

ملخص

تُحلّل هذه الأطروحة بشكل نقدي الخطاب المتعلّق بالسياسة الخارجية الأمريكية في مرحلة ما بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر، وذلك من خلال تطبيق منهج التحليل التاريخي الجديد (New Historicism) على عدد من الخطب الرئيسة للرئيسين جورج و. بوش وباراك هـ. أوباما. تكشف هذه الدراسة كيف صاغ كلٌّ من الزعيمين سرديات حضارية مستندة إلى نماذج صدام الحضارات والحوار بين الحضارات. ومن خلال اعتماد التاريخ الجديد كعدسة نظرية ومنهجية، تُبيّن الدراسة كيف يتشكّل الخطاب السياسي من خلال السياق التاريخي الذي يصدر عنه، وفي الوقت نفسه يساهم في إعادة تشكيل هذا السياق. يُظهر الخطاب الذي اعتمده بوش تبنّيه لرؤية نيومحافظة، تُصوِّر الولايات المتحدة بوصفها مدافعًا عن الحضارة الغربية في مواجهة تهديدات وجودية. في المقابل، يركّز خطاب أوباما على التعددية في العلاقات الدولية والتعدديّة الدينية، وإن ظل ضمن إطار ليبرالي دولي. ومن ثمّ، تُجادل هذه الأطروحة بأن كلاً من بوش وأوباما، رغم اختلاف استراتيجياتهما الخطابية، يساهمان في ترسيخ خطاب يدعم الهيمنة العالمية للولايات المتحدة.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine de manière critique le discours de la politique étrangère des États-Unis après le 11 septembre, à travers une analyse néo-historiciste de discours des présidents George W. Bush et Barack H. Obama. Elle explore comment ces deux dirigeants construisent des récits civilisationnels influencés par les paradigmes du Choc des civilisations et du Dialogue entre les civilisations. En adoptant le néo-historicisme comme cadre théorique et méthodologique, l'étude montre comment le discours politique est à la fois façonné par son contexte historique et contribue à le façonner. Le discours de Bush promeut une vision néo-conservatrice, présentant les États-Unis comme le défenseur de la civilisation occidentale face à des menaces existentielles. En revanche, Obama met l'accent sur le multilatéralisme et le pluralisme religieux, bien qu'il demeure dans un cadre libéral internationaliste. Cette thèse soutient ainsi que, malgré leurs stratégies discursives divergentes, les deux présidents participent à la construction d'un discours qui perpétue l'hégémonie mondiale des États-Unis.