

The Sociology of Terrorism

**The Sociology of Terrorism:
Studies in Power, Subjection,
and Victimage Ritual**

Michael Blain



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

The Sociology of Terrorism: Studies in Power, Subjection, and Victimage Ritual

Copyright © 2009 Michael Blain

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2009

ISBN-10: 1-59942-938-1
ISBN-13: 978-1-59942-938-0

www.universal-publishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Blain, Michael, 1943-

The sociology of terrorism : studies in power, subjection, and victimage ritual / Michael Blain.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-59942-938-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Terrorism--Social aspects. 2. Political violence--Social aspects. I. Title.

HV6431.B57 2008

303.6'25--dc22

2008051151

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	VII
List of Tables, Graphs, and Diagrams.....	IX
Acknowledgements	XI
Introduction	13
Part I: Theoretical Perspective	
Chapter One	
The Role of Terrorism in Political Conflict	23
Chapter Two	
Political Movements and Terrorism	37
Part II: Terror	
Chapter Three	
Nazi Paradigm I: Movement	63
Chapter Four	
Nazi Paradigm II: Holocaust	83
Chapter Five	
US Global War on Terrorism	105
Part III: Counter-Terror	
Chapter Six	
Power and Practice in the Peace Movement.....	137
Chapter Seven	
Peace Activists as Life Guards.....	157
Chapter Eight	
Critical Discourse Analysis	175
References	195

List of Illustrations

4-1	Devil's Pig	88
4-3	Knight, Death and Devil	89
4-4	The Flag Bearer	95
4-5	Anti-Semitic War Poster	97

List of Tables, Graphs, and Diagrams

0-1	Ethnological Model of Symbolic Interaction	14
1-1	Inversion of Perspective in Victimage Ritual	33
4-3	The Rhetoric of Nazi Motives	92
5-1	Number of New <i>OED</i> Concepts of Political Violence in Relation to French Revolutionary Period, 1789-1815.....	111
5-2	Geopolitical References in US President’s State of the Union Messages,1790-2008	120
5-3	The Correlation of Key Liberal Terms Deployed in US Presidential State of the Union Speeches by Stages in the History of US Strategic Context, 1790-2008	121
5-4	The Correlation of Key Liberal Terms Deployed in Bush Radio Speeches in Strategic Context	125
6-1	Dramatistic Model of Movement Motives	141
7-1	Polar Terms in Anti-SIS Rhetorical Discourse	161
8-1	The Arsenal of CR/ICA Anti-Gay MCDs	185
8-2	Frequencies (Percentages) of <i>Idaho Statesman</i> Articles Containing Key Terms in Three Time Periods	187

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the continuing support and inspiration of my partner, Angeline Kearns Blain. I have benefited substantially from her Irish sensitivity to issues of political violence, the charge of terrorism, and colonial domination. Her research on women involved in the peace movement has permanently altered my perspective on political violence.

I would like to express my gratitude to Eiko Strader, who prepared the final manuscript with a high degree of professional skill. I especially appreciate her conscientious and meticulous attention to detail in organizing and copy-editing the text, and her contribution to the design of the cover art. I am also grateful to Lynda Robinson, Office Administrator of the Department of Sociology at Boise State University, for her exceptional diligence in maintaining the conditions necessary to the conduct of my work.

The material covered in several of the chapters is derived from previously published works. The author gratefully acknowledges the following for permission to reproduce copyrighted material:

- Chapter 1:** “The Role of Death in Political Conflict,” *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 63, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 249-66. Copyright © 1976 by the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, Inc.
- Chapter 2:** “Power, War, and Melodrama in the Discourses of Political Movements,” *Theory and Society*, 23, no. 6 (1994): 805-38. Copyright © 1994 Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Chapter 3:** “Fighting Words: What We Can Learn from Hitler’s Hyperbole,” *Symbolic Interaction* 11, no. 2 (1988): 257-76. Copyright © 1988 by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction.
- Chapter 4:** “Group Defamation and the Holocaust,” in *Group Defamation and Freedom of Speech: The Relationship Between Language and Violence*, ed. Monroe H. Freedman and Eric M. Freedman (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 45-68. Copyright © 1995 by Hofstra University. Reproduced with permission of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT.
- Chapter 6:** “Power and Practice in Peace Movement Discourse,” in *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*. Volume 11, ed. Louis Kriesberg (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press Inc., 1989), 197-218. Copyright © 1989 Elsevier B. V.
- Chapter 7:** “Rhetorical Practice in an Anti-Nuclear Weapons Campaign,” *Peace & Change* 16, no. 4 (October 1991): 355-78. Copyright © 1991 The Peace History Society and the Peace and Justice Studies Association.
- Chapter 8:** “The Politics of Victimage: Power and Subjection in a US Anti-Gay Campaign,” *Critical Discourse Studies* 2, no. 1 (April 2005): 31-50. Copyright © 2005 Taylor & Francis Group.

Introduction

The studies compiled here advance a sociological theory of the role of culture and language in the genesis and dynamics of political violence and terrorism. One positive consequence of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States has been to refocus attention on the problematic of political violence. Once more we learn the difficult lesson that violence is a slippery political concept. One group's political hero is another group's terrorist, and vice versa. As Scheper-Huges and Phillippe Bourgeois (2004, 1) state in their anthology, the only thing we can know with any degree of certainty about violence is that "It is mimetic, like imitative magic or homeopathy...So we can rightly speak of chains, spirals, and mirrors of violence..." Violence begets violence. US support for violent and oppressive regimes in the Middle East begets Al Qaeda's violence against the US. In turn, Al Qaeda's violence begets the terrorism and torture of the US global war on terrorism.

For sociological purposes, it is important to deal with the problem of the selective and one-sided use of categories like terrorist or terrorism from the outset. Terrorism is defined as political violence used by any group—government or movement—as a means to achieve its political aims against the resistance of others. This definition is intended to cover the full spectrum of tactics employed by official alliances, states, and governments as well as political movements such as Al Qaeda. The principle theoretical claim advanced here is that people are moved to acts of political terrorism through the strategic use of symbolic interaction. The demagogic "war of words" is part and parcel of this process; it is the textual component of the "war of bullets and bombs." Political leaders like Osama bin Laden (2005) and President George W. Bush (www.whitehouse.gov) must engage their enemies in a continuous rhetorical battle to rally their loyal troops and gain and sustain public support to achieve their political goals.

The studies presented in this book examine how political actors in power struggles engage in the "strategic" use of ritual symbols and discourse to motivate people to engage in terrorist acts against their adversaries. This process is conceptualized employing concepts borrowed from Michel Foucault and Kenneth Burke. Following these thinkers, political violence or terrorism is defined as a mode of power and subjection by means of victimage ritual.

Politics and Culture

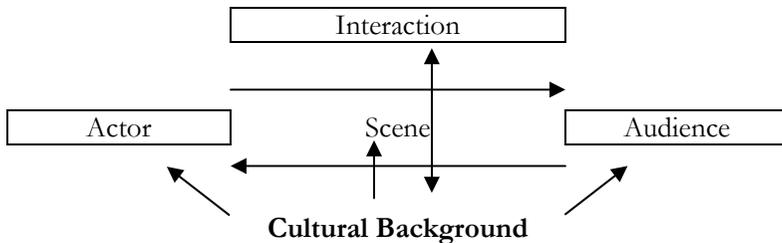
The study of culture and politics is in flux. The studies described in this compilation have contributed directly to interpretive debates regarding the

role of culture and language in politics. Mabel Berezin's (1997) excellent review of the state of the field refers to the limits of the dominant frame-analytic approach that has fixated attention in the study of discourse and collective action:

The problem with frame analysis is that while its boundedness appeals to those who started out as structuralists, it is overly rigid to persons who have a more fine-grained sense of cultural and historical analysis. An interest in rhetorical strategies or language and political mobilization is beginning to emerge and will be a major competitive paradigm to frame analysis. (p. 375-76)

Berezin cites Blain (1994) as an example of this new approach to practices. The concept of cultural background that informs the present studies is directly linked to an ethnological model of symbolic interaction. Social interaction is ethnological and symbolic in the sense that it depends on actors' cultural backgrounds and interpretive understandings of the norms and values of a society.

Diagram 0-1: Ethnological Model of Symbolic Interaction



Culture is the total “tool-kit” or repertoire of practices available to actors in a society. Human beings are ethnocentric beings who acquire a knowledge of the interactional strategies of a society through various agencies of socialization. Culture accumulates through the creation of symbol systems. These are then socially transmitted from one generation to the next, which makes them relatively durable. Knowledge of these symbol systems is acquired through interaction with knowledgeable members of a society. The Actor and Audience must have a common cultural background to be able to engage in understandable interaction.

Symbol systems like speech and writing are material, meaningful, and magical. They are material in the sense that they are observable, recordable, and documentable practices. Symbolic interaction is possible when the Actor and Auditor share a knowledge of the signs and symbols of social structure and status, and their associated norms and values. The material aspect of symbol-systems is captured in the useful semiotic distinction between signifi-

er and signified. The Name is Not the Thing. It is in the play of associated signifiers that meanings and interpretations are constituted. Symbol systems are magical because they make it possible for actors to use them to rhetorically influence, incite, and provoke others to engage in collective action. For example, the constant linking of “Islamic” and “terrorism” by a powerful authority figure such as the US President can provoke auditors to engage in and applaud bombing actors categorized as Islamic terrorists.

Power and Subjection

The conceptualization of power and subjection employed in these studies is derived from Michel Foucault’s histories. In Volume I of his history of sexuality, Foucault linked the analysis of power and subjection to the concept of strategy: “One needs to be nominalistic,” he proposed, “power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society” (1978 [1976], 93). To Foucault, a power relationship is not simply a relationship between two parties, individual or collective, but a way of acting on the action of others. Acting on the action of others involves subjection and the practices of subjectification. Since the “others” are also actors, the exercise of power is agonistic, implicating relations of strategy and counter-strategy. A genealogy of power relations, then, requires two things: a description of the “theater of force relations” in a society and a description of how actors in that theater constitute themselves as subjects acting on self and others.

Strategy is the key term in Foucault’s analytic (as it is in Kenneth Burke’s notion of linguistic and symbolic acts as “strategies for dealing with a situation”). Foucault relates power relations to strategy in three ways. In its most general sense, a strategy refers to the totality of the means put into operation to implement power effectively, or to maintain it. The second relation concerns the issue of the possibility of counter-action in a power struggle. When actors engage in struggles, they calculate strategies on the basis of what they think the opponent might do or what the opponent might think the actor might do. A third relation has to do with the free-play of antagonistic reactions in confrontations. The moment of victory or stalemate arrives when this free-play is replaced by stable mechanisms. This conceptualization has important consequences for how Foucault builds freedom and resistance into his analysis. Power relations are social relations. The “other” over whom power is exercised must be recognized as an agent who acts, and therefore, the agonistic relationship between power and freedom’s refusal to submit cannot be separated. Any attempt to exercise power over this agent generates a dynamic theater of possible strategies of action and counter-strategies.

Foucault’s (1978 [1976], 98-102) well-known history of the the discourse of sexuality is a paradigmatic example of power as a mode of subjection. The

idea that one has a sexual subjectivity is itself a way of exercising power over individuals and populations. Discursive elements like “sexuality” are tactically polyvalent. They can come into play in various strategies, including “an opposing strategy.” For example, Foucault shows how the development of a “scientific” knowledge of sexual perversity in the 19th century is correlated with the emergence of a medico-sexual regime that took hold of the family. Once constituted, elements of this discourse could be rearticulated in an opposing strategy. The sexual liberation and gay movements that emerged in the later 19th C. attacked modern society as sexually repressive. Similarly, 18th C. Monarchs employed the terrorism of public torture to constitute a sovereign/subject relation. French revolutionary terror turned the tables on the Monarch, adopting “terrorism” as a strategy of democratic politics.

These ideas can be extended to the current US global war on terrorism and the practices of torture. The modern concept of political terrorism first emerged in the wake of the French Revolution (Blain 2007). Terrorism and torture are tactics of political power and subjection. The US power elite provides military training and financial and logistical support to “friendly” regimes in the Middle East, such as Iran, Israel, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. These regimes use torture and terror to subjectify their subject populations. Resistance movements in the region emerge in response to these regimes. They are indicted as “terrorist,” and members of the population who support these movements are tortured to elicit “intelligence” and terrorized into docile subjection (see McCoy 2005 for many examples of US propagation of the practices of “psychological” torture).

Victimage Ritual

The studies presented in this book merge Foucault’s power/subjection analytic with Kenneth Burke’s dramaturgical approach to discursive practices. To Burke and those inspired by his perspective, social action is rhetorical precisely because it is always a strategy for acting on social situations (Gusfield 1989, 1-49). One tries, Burke states, “to develop a strategy whereby one ‘can’t lose,’” and “one tries to fight on his own terms,” but “one must also, to develop a full strategy, be *realistic*. One must *size things up* properly.” Burke interprets discursive acts in the same way that political actors use words, as a “sincere” but “calculated” means to achieve their political objectives.

Burke’s perspective can be merged with Foucault’s analytic because both thinkers view discourse and ritual practices as strategies for dealing with situations. Burke links power and domination to the ubiquitous presence of victimage rituals and scapegoats in human communal life (Burke 1965; Duncan 1962, 253-311; Gusfield 1981, 101-108). Politics, seen in this light, is a dramatic struggle of heroes against villains, good against evil, the just against the unjust, to create, alter, or sustain power relationships. Burke’s rhetorical critique of victimage ritual is based on his method of dramaturgical analysis.

“Dramatism,” he writes, “is a method of analysis and a corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions” (Burke 1968; also Overington 1977). In this perspective, for example, the US war on terrorism can be viewed as a mode of imperial power and subjection by means of a global victimage ritual.

Chapter Overview

There are three parts to this text. Part I develops a merged Burke/Foucault theoretical perspective on the sociology of violence and terrorism, defining and illustrating concepts of power, subjection, and victimage ritual. Part II elaborates these concepts in two case studies, the Nazi use of victimage ritual and the US Global War on Terrorism. Part III presents a series of case studies of struggles to resist violence and war, the peace movement and anti-nuclear activism, and the struggle to resist the ritual victimage of gay people.

Chapter 1 is a lightly edited version of a theoretical article first published in the *Psychoanalytic Review*. It theorizes how politicians use language and ritual to motivate masses to acts of collective violence. The process is theorized employing concepts derived from Hugh Duncan’s (1962) sociology (inspired by Kenneth Burke’s dramatism) and Freud’s analysis of sadomasochism. The discourse and ritual symbolism of political violence is analyzed with the semiotic methods of the structural linguist. Several propositions emerge: (1) political actors/leaders seek to arouse sadomasochistic desires in mass audiences by symbolizing death and killing in the terms and imagery of tragic drama (i.e., victims, heroes, and villains); (2) tragic communication taps into an unconscious cultural complex, the law of talion, victimage ritual, and the scapegoat; and (3) politicians use tragic drama and victimage ritual to mystify killing and gain the identification of the masses with the signs and symbols of their authority and power.

Chapter 2 refines and extends the theoretical concepts advanced in Chapter 1 to the study of political movement. There is an intimate link between political movement and terrorism. Anthony Giddens (1985, 295-310) concluded his critique of historical materialism with a discussion of this association. Many of the worst instances of totalitarianism terrorism in modern times began as political movements (e.g., the French Revolution, Stalinism, Nazism, US Conservatism). This chapter articulates a power-strategy interpretation of how discourse functions in struggles, employing examples from the Irish Republican Movement as well as Peace movements. It proposes that: (1) the tradition of social movements is genealogically derived from the Western practice of warfare, and that this military sense of what movements are is an evident but unexplicated feature of sociological discourse; and (2) participation in movement activism constitutes actors as ethical agents and strategic power subjects. The primary function of a movement discourse is to

differentiate the field of power relations into a melodramatic struggle of antagonists, and by doing so, to constitute movement actors as knowledgeable, moral agents and heroic power subjects engaged in a violent or nonviolent struggle against villainous powers.

Part II is composed of three chapters. Chapters 3 and 4 present the results of a study of Nazi movement rhetoric and the ritual scapegoating of the Jews in the Holocaust. They argue that Nazi ritual discourse is a paradigm of how to use power and subjection by means of victimage ritual to talk people into engaging in political violence, warfare, and genocide. They describe how Nazi agents concocted the ritual rhetoric they used to incite their followers to kill their enemies. The formal features of this system of discourse are identified and explicated. By identifying the main features of the Nazi paradigm, we can recognize when political agents are using the same technique and counter its seductive and lethal effects. These chapters argue that the main effect of this kind of ritual rhetoric is congregation through segregation or social integration through the constitution of common enemies. Human beings socialize in hate as well as love. They admonish the reader to beware that we do not become monsters in the process of fighting monsters.

Chapter 5 of Part II employs the perspective advanced here to illuminate important aspects of the US global war on terrorism. The global war, it argues, is a pretext for US imperialism. As a discourse, terrorism also functions to vilify those who actively resist US domination as terrorists and “cover-up” the use of terror and torture by the US and allied military and intelligence forces. The analysis unfolds in two steps. The first step extends Foucault’s history of biopower to the emergence and functioning of the discourse of terrorism. It begins with a genealogy of the emergence and descent of the Anglo-American discourse of terrorism. The modern concept of terrorism, it argues, first entered the English lexicon in direct response to the French Revolution, providing governments with a conceptual solution to the practical problem of differentiating legitimate from illegitimate forms of political violence in liberal societies founded on a democratic right to engage in revolutionary violence in response to oppression and tyranny.

The second analytic step taken in Chapter 5 is to show how, once constituted, terrorists and terrorism as subjects and objects of power/knowledge can function in the present as scapegoats in a new strategy. In Burke’s perspective, Presidential speeches are victimage rituals that function to constitute Presidents as guardians of the social order. In times of conflict, Presidents represent themselves as heroes struggling against villainous domestic and foreign powers who threaten the “security” and “freedom” of the American people. The willingness of Presidents to sacrifice life in these struggles is a central feature of this ritual rhetorical pattern. Politicians stage victimage rituals and engage in melodramatic rhetorical attacks to constitute their political authority and power. In the process, they vilify their opponents as terrorist threats to security and freedom, and glorify their loyal followers.

Part III is composed of three chapters that present the results of case studies of the use of ritual discourse in movements to resist terrorism. Chapter 6 examines of the notions of power and practice in the discourse of activists involved in the 1980s Greenham Commons Women's Peace Camp in Great Britain. C. Wright Mills's pamphlet *The Causes of World War III* is reviewed. It suggests that Mills's classic analysis of power and peace programs must be modified in the light of two decades of intense grass-roots activism. To that end, the results of a rhetorical analysis of a key literary statement produced by participants in the Greenham Commons action are presented, focusing on how activists constitute themselves as "empowered" political subjects, and how they think about power, violence, and terror, and the tactical use of their bodies in direct actions deployed against the military site. Two notions of power appear to be at work in activists' discourse: a structural conception similar to the one advanced by Mills in his work, and a strategic conception similar to the one identified by Michel Foucault. The Greenham Commons activists appear to have borrowed a strategic rhetoric of motives from their enemy, the military, and to have redeployed it in an ironic "war on war." The implications of this finding are explored through a consideration of recent developments in thinking about power and social movements in modern society.

Chapter 7 presents the results of a rhetorical analysis of the discursive practices used by peace activists to defeat a US Department of Energy plan to construct a nuclear weapons plant in Idaho. According to this model, the activists use melodramatic rhetoric in power struggles with their opponents. Two main features of these activists' ritual discourse are described: the vilification of pronuclear agents, and the constitution of the activists themselves as moral agents and life guards defending the environment and life against the life-destroying activities of these vile agents. The results show the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategy in local battles against the "war machine."

Chapter 8, the final chapter, articulates a genealogical approach to critical discourse analysis as a means of resistance to terrorism and violence. The concepts and possibilities of this approach are displayed through a case study of the discourses produced by the 1994 anti-gay, "no special rights" initiative in Idaho (USA). Proponents of the initiative represented themselves as "conservative" Idaho citizens fighting a culture war to preserve traditional family values against a powerful, sexually perverse, and destructive subject with a liberal gay agenda. The analysis traces the emergence and dynamic interplay of antagonists' rhetorical moves and counter-moves in this closely fought battle. It shows how categories like "conservative" can be reinterpreted and put into play in a counter-strategy to defeat these destructive campaigns.

Part I

Theoretical Perspective

Chapter One

The Role of Terrorism in Political Conflict

The media of mass communication deluge us daily with reports of political violence, kidnappings, murders, massacres, assassinations, and terrorism. The contemporary imagination is haunted by the compulsive repetition of political terror and retaliation. Two examples should make the point clear and help to circumscribe the field of inquiry:

Washington (AP) – Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has declined to rule out the possibility that the United States would use military force against the Mideast oil producers “to prevent strangulation of the industrialized world.”

Cordoba, Argentina (AP) – Left-wing kidnappers murdered honorary US Consul John Patrick Egan Friday night and left his bloodied body on a dirt road wrapped in a guerrilla banner.

Kissinger’s statement is a thinly veiled terrorist threat to kill if necessary. It is formulated in terms of the law of talion, a response to an intentional attempt to strangle and kill the “industrialized world.” The terrorist threat serves a rhetorical function. The killing of the United States consul is formulated in terms that are loaded with implicit values. The juxtaposition of “blood” and “dirt” involve the reader in a hidden value judgment: the murdered consul is honorable and the “left-wing” kidnappers dishonorable and impure. The manipulation of the meaning of death in these statements is a form of symbolic action with potentially lethal consequences.

The subject matter of terrorism is taboo because it inevitably leads to the exposure of moral and political hypocrisy. No one can deny that homicide plays a powerful role in the dynamics of serious political conflict, or that the US power elite uses terrorism as a means of political subjection and domination (Mills 1956, 175-79). We need more knowledge and discussion of how violence affects political understandings and social relationships. The liberation of human beings from oppressive systems requires it. The concept of legitimate force is an obstacle in the path of liberation because it is the ultimate ideological mystification. Oppression can always be justified in the name of “survival.” It is easy for people to conflate the survival of political systems with personal survival.

The aim of this chapter is to present a sociological analysis of how politicians motivate people to engage in collective acts of political violence. It will demonstrate how political elites use symbolic discourse to motivate masses to

kill and die in order to create, maintain, or extend their power and authority. The analysis that follows takes place within the framework of these general assumptions and propositions:

1. The motivation of political conflict is best conceived in terms of a dramaturgic model of symbolic interaction and communication, coupled with a semiotic theory of the structure of linguistic signs and symbols.
2. Political homicide and terrorism are symbolically-organized events.
3. Political-leader actors provoke organized violence in mass audiences by symbolizing politically-implicated death in the signs and symbols of tragic drama and victimage ritual.
4. Victimage ritual generates sado-masochistic desires in the masses and mystifies them by tapping into an unconscious cultural complex, i.e., the archaic law of talion.
5. The sociopolitical and psychological consequences of the successful enactment of victimage ritual are political mystification and the identification of the masses with political leaders and the signs and symbols of their authority.
6. The empirical demonstration of these propositions can only follow from an intensive analysis of the signs and symbols of political conflict.

A Political-Sociology of Terrorism

Few sociologists have done more than Max Weber (1946, 43-76) to theorize the intimate connection between the modern nation-state and violence. This recognition is built into his definition of the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.” Political domination is based on two conditions: the moral authority of those in power and the control by power elites of the material means of violence. Moreover, Weber contends, “The decisive means for politics is violence.” By violence, it can safely be assumed that he means the capacity to kill and terrorize opponents. The means and ends of politics ultimately rest on the means and ends of killing. To deny this point is to prove oneself a political infant. But in the name of what ends can killing and terror be legitimated? Political violence brings us face to face with the problems of legitimacy and illegitimacy, right and wrong, rationality and irrationality. But Weber argues, “From no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose ‘justifies’ the ethically dangerous means and ramifications.”

Weber’s analysis of the “real” political motives behind revolutionary terrorism can be applied to political violence in general. He criticizes revolutionary politics as a chiliastic politics of ultimate ends:

Under the conditions of the modern class struggle, the internal premiums consist of the satisfying of hatred and the craving for revenge; above all, resentment and the need for pseudo-ethical self-righteousness: the opponents must be slandered and accused of heresy. The external rewards are adventure, victory, booty, power, and spoils. (1946, 125)

The implication of this statement is that beneath the surface of the higher, ultimate ends claimed by those who advocate and execute violent means to political ends are the lower, baser motives of hate, revenge, and righteousness. Moreover, as Weber points out, the political leader must appeal to the “real” motives of his followers, albeit cloaked in the rhetoric of ultimate ends, to carry out his project.

But this insight, largely derived from Nietzsche, can be only a point of departure. It begs the fundamental question: How are the motivations of “hatred and the craving for revenge” actually generated and given form in violent action? How, in short, is it possible to motivate people to kill and die?

Psychoanalytic psychology has consistently addressed itself to questions of violence and motivation. Since Freud’s ground-breaking work at the beginning of the 20th century, the discourse on death, anxiety, and defense has been a central feature of psychoanalysis. No one familiar with Freud’s primary texts can deny the centrality of violent impulses and revenge to his formulations. The Oedipus complex implicates violence at two levels – the murderous impulses of the son toward the father (death wish), and the idealization of the father in the sons’ mourning of the fantasized murder of the father (guilt and reparation) (Freud 1950; Rieff 1974, 78-108).

Freud distinguished two processes of thought. The primary process is imaginary and governed by the pleasure principle. It takes the form of hallucinatory wish-fulfillments (= desire). A secondary process of thought develops through socialization and the impact of the reality principle. It takes the form of language or a conversation with the self. The development of the Oedipal conflict is a result of emotional ambivalence, the love and hate of the father as a symbol of authority. The desire to remove the father (= coercive authority, dominance) conflicts with the desire for the father’s love and protection (= moral authority, submission). The sense of guilt, the internalization of moral authority, is a response to an imaginary murder. Mourning is Freud’s model of internalization. Reparation is accomplished through the repression of the death wish and the projection of “evil” impulses into the Other. Freud was the first to describe how the superego can disguise the murderous impulses of the id in the cloak of moral righteousness and high purpose. In his later work, he postulated the existence of a death instinct and argued that anxiety is the psychological content of the biological tendency (Freud 1959). “Death” and its symbolic equivalents communicate terror and