"HE WAS MORE THAN JUST ONE SOLDIER": NARRATING NATIONAL IDENTITY IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

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-	Chair

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IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

Abstract

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This case study is based on rhetorical analysis of a two-month sample of local, regional,

and national newspaper texts referencing the September 2004 death of Army Sergeant Jacob H.

Demand of Palouse, Washington, in Mosul, Iraq. My literature review discusses Benedict An-

derson's (1983/1991) formulation of imagined community and related critical theories of nation-

alism, and suggests ties to Walter Fisher's (1984) narrative paradigm that sensitize close readings

of the sample texts. Rhetorical findings comprise emergent themes that characterize the nature

of the conflict in Iraq, link sacrifice with nationalization, reaffirm the Palouse community's co-

hesion, and reconstitute Demand's ethos. Such themes suggest a "metanarrative" rooted in

Jewett and Shelton Lawrence's (1977) American monomyth. Ethnographic findings present ex-

cerpts from interviews with friends and relatives of Demand based on snowball sampling and

questions derived from rhetorical analysis. This study concludes by arguing narratives sur-

rounding Demand's death allow his hometown's loss to acquire heroic significance, suppress

local debate about the Iraq War, and heighten national identity.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the many communities that have lost servicepersons in America's War on Terror, and to my parents, Raúl and Claudia Moreno.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Already much has been said about the contours of a post-September 11 America. Respected voices from government, the media, the academy, business, and other sectors are quick to offer arguments as to how the attacks and the ensuing War on Terror have fundamentally altered this nation. With each passing year, even as rituals commemorating September 11 recede from the front pages of major newspapers (Fitzgerald, 2004), mention of the date continues to generate retrospection and resonance with past engagements ranging from Pearl Harbor to Vietnam. Public interest, too, has seized upon the kinds of "ultimate terms" that shape and order thinking about collective experiences (Burke, 1989). On July 4, 2004, for instance, retired corporate executive Nick Snider unveiled a new National Museum of Patriotism in Atlanta—an 11,000-square-foot, brightly-lit showcase for American symbolism. Why, one might ask? "Because there is a center of our country, of America, that says we speak to what America is about," said Levs. "We make the sacrifices that we do and we have to build this country to be what it is" (Levs, 2004).

Cultural critics are somewhat more skeptical of the rising tide of shared sentiment. David Altheide (2004) suggests that

popular culture and mass media depictions of fear, patriotism, consumption and victimization contributed to the emergence of a *national identity* and *collective action* that transformed the meaning of terrorism from a strategy to a condition: terrorism world (emphasis added). (p. 290)

Tactics aside, Altheide's work mirrors tacit consensus among social scholars and pundits of both political persuasions that the violent milestones of the new millennium's first presidency stimulated a kind of national consciousness, albeit much divided (Li & Brewer, 2004). *New York Times* White House correspondent David Sanger (2004) confirms the involvement of such consciousness in the outcome of the 2004 election year:

There was one other message that struck me just traveling with the president as often as I did. Every place he went, in every speech, after he was done with all of those messages, he had a riff on the overwhelming power of a mission of freedom. And it put Iraq, terrorism, into this much broader, almost Teddy Roosevelt-like context. And it was evangelical in its own way, but in a much more political and *nationalistic* way. And it resonated with people. It resonated with people in a way that I don't think the Kerry campaign ever caught onto. Because when John Kerry talked about Iraq, when he talked about our missions abroad, he never managed to quite put it into a bigger context of *where America was going* (emphasis added).

What comments like "where America was going" overlook, however, is the very question of nationalism, a struggle for definition that has eluded historians and textual analysts for decades.

- What constitutes a nation and how does "it" arise?
- From a rhetorical perspective, what kinds of narration characterize the production of national identity?
- Do American mythology and local heroism augment this process?
- In light of calls (e.g. Confino, 1997) for studies showing "how people pull themselves from local affairs into national affairs," what ethnographic insights can the hometown community of a soldier lost to the Iraq War offer?

The first portion of this study reviews contemporary critical scholarship addressing questions of nationalism and narration, particularly the work of sociologist Stuart Hall (1992), cultural historian Benedict Anderson (1983/1991), and narrative scholar Walter R. Fisher (1984). Secondly, I examine the rhetorical construction of a single war casualty in U.S. newspaper texts, and suggest narrative means by which those mourning the soldier become nationally identified. More specifically, my analysis focuses on themes emerging from recent coverage of the death of 29-year-old Army Sergeant Jacob H. Demand of rural Palouse, Washington, in the Iraq War. A third portion of this study describes an emerging "metanarrative" of Demand's heroism by exploring its monomythic context (Jewett & Shelton Lawrence, 1977). Next I refine and interrogate this archetypal story by incorporating excerpts from ethnographic interviews with residents of Palouse. Finally, this study outlines reasons why narration and national identity become interwoven, and suggests disturbing implications for the suppression of political debate about going to war in small-town America—a quintessential but routinely ignored bastion of Western democracy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before approaching the problem of nationalism directly, one needs at least a rudimentary understanding of the intellectual framework surrounding issues of self-construction and collective belonging. There is perhaps no better guide to the "cultural turn" in studies of discourse and history over the past few decades than the work of sociologist Stuart Hall (1992), who places modern thinking about nationhood within a broader context of postmodern identity, a field experiencing, in an era of globalization, nothing short of revolutionary change.

Conceiving of Cultural Identity

Writing as the dust of the fallen Soviet empire had barely settled, Hall (1992) rather presciently acknowledges a vigorous debate in social theory regarding the nature of identity, a wideranging conversation among scholars that continues to this day. "In essence," writes Hall,

the argument is that the old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject. This so-called 'crisis of identity' is seen as a part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world. (p. 274)

Succinctly speaking, Hall's contribution to this debate is to suggest that the transformation underway centers not only on identity but on millennial societies in general, so that in the postmodern world, "we are also 'post' any fixed or essentialist conception of identity," that our formulation of self draws instead from an incessantly fluctuating medley of allegiances (p. 275).

Modernity's dislocation and fragmentation follows, in simplistic terms, on two previous consensuses of thought with regard to identity. "The Enlightenment subject," explains Hall (1992), "was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose 'centre' consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born," and remaining essentially the same throughout the individual's lifespan (p. 275). Such notions incorporated, among other influences, French philosopher René Descartes' reduction of metaphysics to "spatial" and "thinking" substances, with the rational subject placed at the center of the mind realm. As colonial societies grew more complex, however, the Cartesian subject and classic, liberal theories of government based on individual rights and consent, "were obliged to come to terms with the structures of the nation-state and the great masses which made up a modern democracy" (Hall, 1992, p. 283). As the Enlightenment's individualism "became enmeshed in the bureaucratic administrative machineries of the modern state," a more social conception of identity materialized—based in part, posits Hall, on the work of symbolic interactionists who focused on "stable reciprocity" between inside and outside, the presentation of the self in different social settings, and the individual's negotiation of social roles (p. 284). Meanwhile, however, a corollary "figure of the isolated, exiled or estranged individual framed against the background of the anonymous and impersonal crowd" emerged and came to haunt veins of literature and social criticism that characterize the "unique experience of modernity" (Hall, 1992, p. 285).

More to the point, Hall (1992) highlights five major "de-centerings" of the Cartesian subject that have produced the disjointed identities prevalent in postmodern communities: (1) the

reinvigorated traditions of Marxist thinking, specifically the argument that "men [sic] make history, but only on the basis of conditions which are not of their own making" (Marx as cited in Hall, 1992, p. 285); (2) Freud's recognition that identity is something forged through unconscious processes over time, rather than being endowed at birth, that there is "always something 'imaginary' or fantasized about its unity"; (3) structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's argument that "we are not in any absolute sense the 'authors' of the statements we make or of the meanings we express in language, since meaning "arises in the relations of similarity and difference which words have to other words within the language code" and "the individual speaker can never finally fix meaning—including the meaning of his or her identity"; (4) the isolation of "disciplinary power" by French scholar Michel Foucault, a kind hegemonic authority aimed at bringing the lifework of individuals under surveillance and control; and (5) the impact of feminism, which challenged, among other principles, classic distinctions between private and public and "the notion that men and women were part of the same identity—'Mankind'—replacing it with the question of sexual difference" (p. 287-290). With such crises of selfhood afoot, Hall turns to what he considers the most pressing question of the day: "how this 'fragmented subject' is placed in terms of its *cultural* identities," particularly *national* identity.

For Hall (1992), national identity amounts to yet another kind of discourse, "a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves" (p. 292-293). He cites Benedict Anderson's (1983/1991) provocative "imagined communities" as a byword for the manner in which national cultures assemble identities "by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can *identify*; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it" (Hall, 1992, p. 293). For Anderson, differences among nations stem from

the way in which they are imagined. This argument, however, glosses over a functional component of discursive nationalism only partly explicated by his rendition of imagined community—to be explored in detail in the following section. Exactly how are modern nations imagined? In other words, "What representational strategies are deployed to construct our commonsense views of national belonging or identity?" asks Hall, echoing a criticism of equal importance to recent scholarship (p. 294).

Hall (1992) answers his own question by positing five "main elements" involved in catalyzing what he dubs the "narrative of national culture": (1) "First there is the narrative of the *nation*, as it is told and retold in national histories, literatures, the media, and popular culture" (Hall, 1992, p. 293). In keeping with Anderson's (1983/1991) thinking, these texts "provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for, or *represent*, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation" (Hall, 1992, p. 293). Hall's remaining four elements magnify other important tenets of nationalism that should aid the reader's navigation of my case study: (2) "there is the emphasis on *origins, continuity, tradition, and timelessness*. National identity is represented as primordial"—and perilously accepted as such by more traditional scholars (e.g. Geertz, 1963/1996); (3) the "invention" of traditions that "appear or claim to be old" but are in fact fresh affirmations of dominant values (Hobsbawm & Ranger as cited in Hall, 1992, p. 294); (4) "a foundational myth: a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not 'real,' but 'mythic' time"; and (5) "National identity is often symbolically grounded on the idea of a pure, original people or 'folk'" who straddle "the temptation to return to former glories and the drive to go forwards ever deeper into modernity" (p. 294-295).

As mythically-bounded nations hurtle into postmodernity, suggests Hall, a confusing pattern of effects emerge: "National identities are being *eroded* as a result of the growth of cultural homogenization," while "*new* identities of hybridity are taking their place" and "other 'local' or particularistic identities are being strengthened by the resistance to globalization" (p. 300). Consideration of the effects of globalization on nationalism deserves further attention at the conclusion of this study, once we have examined the present-day construction of national and local identities in a small-town community. Having reviewed the nature of cultural belonging and previewed Hall's qualifications of Anderson's nationalism, this chapter can now attempt a richer understanding of imagined community.

The Nation as Imagined Community

In breaking with normative thinking (e.g. Smith, 1989), which would "hypostasize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-big-N" and "classify 'it' as *an* ideology," Anderson (1983/1991) proposes a startling definition of the latter enigma: "an imagined political community," one of recent scholarship's most prized coinages (p. 5-6). "It is *imagined*," explains Anderson, "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). To be fair, Alon Confino (1997) suggests that Anderson's imaginative brilliance was somewhat predated by Kantorovitz's (1951) work on medieval political thought. Still, Anderson's model offers an attractive description of imagined communities as (1) limited, because "even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic borders"; (2) sovereign, "because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic

realm"; and (3) communal, because despite its inequalities, "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (p. 7). In other words, this widely-acclaimed approach to nationalism centers on a view of the imagined community as a kind of fellowship of believers, a reconfigured, secular faith marked by the collective sentimentality of its members. Summarizing the academy's reexamination of national identity in the early 1990s, American studies scholar Ed White (2004) notes that "popularity and influence" of Anderson's work "has been tremendous and unavoidable, with practically every study of the nation offering the obligatory and often oblique reference to 'imagined communities'" (p. 50).

Perhaps what allows Anderson's (1983/1991) model to endure is his ability to reconcile two entrenched viewpoints on nationalism summarized here by Marouf Hasian, Jr. and Lisa Flores (1997): some scholars "assume that nations come into being following some major diplomatic division based on demographics, conquest, or geographic boundaries...a 'people' are not treated as members of a nation until a particular name is placed on an atlas"; other critics, however, "believe that the very notion of 'nation' is a rhetorical trick used by elites to hegemonically control subalterns...within this perspective, all discussions of nationality or statehood simply provide us with evidence of false consciousness, where dominant communities engage in deliberate fabrication in order to advance particular political agendas" (p. 91). By focusing attention on so-called imagined community, Anderson achieves a middle ground; he acknowledges "the importance of power and politics" while at the same time agreeing that "these symbolic edifices are in fact fabrications," though not necessarily in the pejorative sense of the latter term (Hasian & Flores, 1997, p. 92). Anderson's nationalism, explain Hasian and Flores, "can be seen as a 'cultural artifact' that allows communities to believe they are part of a nation or state" (p. 92).

Anderson's (1983/1991) juxtaposition of nationalism and calcified religion—"the imagined community of Christendom," for instance—typifies the narrow theoretical ridgeline upon which his thinking rests (p. 42). In arguing that nationalism be understood by alignment with "the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being, "a comment that strays dangerously close to primordialist theories of nationhood, which stubbornly assume that fixed nations emerged linearly from the mists of early history (e.g. Geertz, 1963/1996; Smith 1989), Anderson reminds us that classical communities were thought to be linked to the gods by codified languages. Written scripts such as Arabic, Latin, and Middle Kingdom Chinese allowed followers to imagine themselves in geocentric terms, as the sacred nexuses of humanity (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 12). Confino (1997) agrees, arguing that nationalism's ability to transcend diversity and hostility only becomes clear when considering this force as a kind of religion. As subsequent discussion will point out, however, recent studies suggest that casual comparisons of religion and nationalism as well as community and nation may—by Saussure's logic—carry troublesome "images of uniformity, cohesion, consensus, and cooperation" that unnecessarily romanticize depictions of fragmentary, postmodern nations (Creed, 2004, p. 57).

Furthering Anderson's (1983/1991) model, the religious communities of old differed from the shared visions of modern nations in certain respects. Early proselytizing colonizers believed language to be sacred but transformative; it was "vastly better," on the whole, for natives to be "half-civilized," to be of mixed blood, as opposed to fully barbarian (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 13). Anderson thus suggests that truth-languages carried "an impulse largely foreign to nationalism, the impulse towards conversion," so that the "whole nature of man's being," according to antiquity's imaginings, became "sacrally malleable" (p. 14-15). Although Anderson declines

to extend his logic to the present day, the insinuation here is that national imaginings, unlike religion, tend toward essentialist notions of membership, bristling at immigrants seeking to "naturalize" and only becoming "meaningful" says sociologist Anna Triandafyllidou (1998), "in contrast to other nations" (p. 599).

Sacred languages cannot account for the emergence of the first broadly-imagined communities, as "their readers were, after all, tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 15). Still, the ability to read and write God's word created cosmological hierarchies, power structures that allowed priests, monks, imams, and clerics to mediate between sacred texts and local tongues, "between heaven and earth" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 16). Ultimately, suggests Anderson, the demystification of language contributed to the weakening of religious communities after the late Middle Ages. Explorations of far-off lands—and, I would add, the papacy's wringing of hands over Galileo's heliocentricity—challenged the known world to include new conceptions of humankind. The subsequent decline of Latin "exemplified a larger process in which the sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized"—the first whispers, it seems, of Hall's de-centering of modernity (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 19). Here, in the waning of one cultural apparatus, lay the imaginative framework for another.

A second cultural system—the dynastic realm, which preceded the imagined political communities of late—deserves mention before a proper foundation for the emergence of Anderson's (1983/1991) nationalism can be laid. Antiquity's kingships were, too, a kind of imagined communalism, but one in which "states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 19). Such territorial amorphousness, suggests Anderson, coupled with strategic concubinage and the

marrying of unwilling princesses to distant royalty for political advantage, allowed monarchs to sustain loose control over their lords, fiefdoms, and peasantry for generation upon generation. "As late as 1914, dynastic states made up the majority of the membership of the world political system, but...many dynasts had for some time been reaching for a 'national' cachet as the old principle of Legitimacy withered silently away" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 22). Enter the keystones upon which Anderson's theory of nationalism rests: novels and newspapers.

In pre-Gutenberg times, argues Anderson (1983/1991), Christendom and other imagined communities assumed their universal forms "through a myriad of specificities and particularities: this relief, that window, this sermon, that tale, this morality play, that relic" (p. 23). In other words, the aural and the visual imaginings of the Cross constituted a far-flung congregation "variously" manifested to disparate peoples "as replications of themselves" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 23). More importantly, "the mediaeval Christian mind had no conception of history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations between past and present" [sic] (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 23). Anderson describes the faithful masses as convinced that the end times were upon them, that Christ's second coming was near, envisioned here in the final pages of the New Testament:

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books...He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.' (Yancey & Stafford, 1992, p.1389)

Even according to modern translation, the book of Revelation demonstrates in stark terms early Christianity's steadfast logocentrism, as well as what Anderson calls "a form of consciousness" that viewed time as "a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present" (p. 24). This medieval conception of time was replaced in the eighteenth century by new chronologies characteristic of novels and newspapers, "in which simultaneity is...marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 24).

The printing press, in Anderson's (1983/1991) view, provided the structural and technical means by which imagined communities became nations. By the 1700s, growing numbers of readers in both hemispheres could share visions of characters embedded in societies that allowed their members to coexist in relative connection with one another, without ever becoming acquainted. Such likemindedness among the literate public, argues Anderson, constituted a new form of consciousness: "The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) through history" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 26). In applying this notion to early nationalistic literature ranging from nineteenth-century Mexico to twentieth-century Indonesia, Anderson points to the use of plurality in generalized depictions of landscapes and their peoples, casual shifts between tenses, tonalities assuming cohesion between author and reader, chronological orderings of events, and the sense of a typical and representative protagonist belonging to a collective audience. Such literary devices sustain assumptions necessary for shared visions of nationhood, providing "hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 27). Again, it this assumption of communal uniformity that vexes contemporary critics.

Nevertheless, Anderson (1983/1991) finds the same mechanisms at work in the first European broadsheets, an information technology that followed on the heels of the 1455 Gutenberg Bibles by less than two centuries:

What is the essential literary convention of the newspaper? If we were to look at a sample front page of, say, *The New York Times*, we might find there stories about Soviet dissidents, famine in Mali, a gruesome murder, a coup in Iraq, the discovery of a rare fossil in Zimbabwe, and a speech by Mitterrand. Why are these events so juxtaposed? What connects them to each other? Not sheer caprice. Yet obviously most of them happen independently, without the actors being aware of each other or of what the others are up to. The arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition...shows that the linkage between them is imagined. (p. 33)

Moreover, says Anderson, this imagined linkage depends on two features of the modern newspaper: (1) the datelines and calendrical references that adorn every story of every page of every edition, reminding readers of the "steady onward clocking of homogenous, empty time" along a plotline that (like characters in a novel) may or may not include certain nations at a particular moment, but that assumes their existence for all time; and (2) the relationship between newspapers (as a further innovation of the print industry) and the market, whereby printed materials became the first "modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity" of a distinct, self-contained nature, as opposed to indistinguishable quantities of spices or textiles (p. 33-34). The daily, widespread consumption of newspapers enacted "an extraordinary mass ceremony" of religious proportions, "a substitute for morning prayers" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 35).

Having laid the basis for print-capitalism's replacement of evaporating religious and dynastic communities, the imaginative framework for political communities, Anderson (1983/1991) turns to the question of nationalism becoming a popular force by noting that the "vernacularizing thrust of capitalism...contributed directly to the rise of national consciousness" (p. 39). More specifically, the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism developed a close alliance with print-capitalism, which generated "large new reading publics—not least among merchants and women, who typically know little or no Latin—and simultaneously mobilized them for politico-religious purposes" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 40). Secondly, the "slow, geographically uneven" spread of certain vernaculars (Spanish, English, French) became useful "instruments of administrative centralization," replacing sacred terminology (Latin) and rising above other dialects to achieve print status (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 40).

Anderson (1983/1991) makes clear that these languages-of-power had begun their administrative machinations before the printing press and the Reformation came to their aid, and that nationalistic impulses did not prompt the ascendancy of modern-day vernaculars. Rather, "the 'choice' of language appears as a gradual, unselfconscious, pragmatic" phenomenon that nonetheless "laid the bases for national consciousnesses" by making new reading publics aware of their fellow citizenry (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 42). Moreover, administrative vernaculars materialized in print the images of antiquity—the "invented traditions" put forward by Eric Hobsbawm (1996)—so necessary for the national *identification* of community members.

Probing Imagined Community

Before taking up pointed criticisms of Anderson's (1983/1991) nationalism, an argument by identity theorist Philip Schlesinger (1991) for distinctions among terms already familiar to readers deserves attention. A cursory review of the volumes of literature referencing imagined community will show that historians and textual critics alike routinely conflate the terms *nation*-

alism and national identity—often ascribing, for instance, national identity to imagined communities, when in fact Anderson consistently employs the term nationalism: "the central problem posed by nationalism," and "the modern culture of nationalism," to cite but two examples (p. 7-9). Schlesinger, pushing for an explicit delineation, defines nationalism as "a particular kind of doctrine... the sense of a community mobilized (in part at least) in the pursuit of a collective interest," while relegating national identity to a "mythico-cultural apparatus" symptomatic of nation-states with political boundaries (168). One can appreciate Schlesinger's reasoning without wholeheartedly adopting his articulation of the terminology in question; by maintaining such distinctions, national identity "may be invoked as a point of reference without thereby necessarily being nationalistic" (p. 168). Hitherto this analysis has used nationalism and national identity in accordance with the terms chosen by studies at issue—while Anderson prefers nationalism, Hall (1992), understandably, narrows his explication of cultural identity using derivative language: "National identity is represented as primordial" (emphasis added, p. 294).

The challenge at hand comes in choosing which terms to employ when charting new analytical ground. On this point Schlesinger (1991) urges us to conclude that

the sole category of 'nationalism' is too large a receptacle to do justice to the range of variation of collective sentiments within the confines of the nation-state, and, in the contemporary context at least, 'national identity' as an analytical term is of potential utility. (p. 168).

Still, judging from Anderson's (1991/1983) omittance, purposeful or otherwise, of *national identity* from his formulation of imagined community, it seems that the latter term can also have utility for scholars concerned with upwellings of likemindedness and patriotism that no doubt sometimes accompany the construction of imagined community. The post-September 11 senti-

ments discussed in the opening of this study provide one such example. In the end, a measure of conflation seems unavoidable—Anderson uses the terms *nation*, *nationalism*, *national consciousness*, and *national imaginings* with little distinction, while Hall (1992) speaks similarly of *national culture* and *national identity*. My own writing will employ *nationalism* and *national identity* with as much due cognizance to the variations in meaning suggested by Schlesinger and other critics as possible.

Turning to criticism of Anderson's (1983/1991) nationalism, readers will recall the image of communion employed in the formulation of imagined community; Schlesinger (1991) takes issue with Anderson's parallel, arguing that

the rather overworked Catholic metaphor of general communion in collective representations needs countering by a refreshingly skeptical measure of attention to the socially located sources of division, and the place of contending views of what properly makes up the field of national imagery. (p. 165)

Schlesinger's discomfort is mirrored by a more recent comment from Langthaler (2002): "an essentialist background shimmers through the constructivist argumentations" of imagined community, in that "the imaginary, 'artificial' continuity and coherence of modernity is contrasted with the seemingly real, 'natural' continuity and coherence of pre-modernity" (p.788). Indeed, as forecasted, anthropologist Gerald Creed (2004) raises complementary concerns about studies of Anderson's work having "focused almost solely on the imaginative qualities of nationalism without attending to the foundational notion of community," which may explain "why established nationalisms often generate new exclusions or why nationalism produces such different consequences in different places" (p. 56). Since the dangers that spring from nationalism—xenophobic patriotism, the subjugation of minorities, religious intolerance, and unbridled

industrialism, for example—seem "not due simply to its imaginary quality, but to the fact that it is imagined *as a community*, in which the notion of community carries romantic expectations," argues Creed, "we need to examine community as a culturally contingent notion and document what it means to particular people in local and historical contexts" (p. 57).

Heeding Schlesinger (1991) and Creed's (2004) calls for investigation into local divisiveness, the fault lines that destabilize outwardly seamless communities, this rhetorical and ethnographic analysis aims to describe cohesions and tensions that underlie "national imagery" in a particular local context—a Northwest farming town—and avoid sweeping statements about the ties that bind each and every citizen to his or her imagined community (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 165). This discussion would be remiss, however, not to further scrutinize Anderson's (1983/1991) work. Returning to White's (2004) deconstruction of Anderson's treatment of early American creole nationalism, and bearing in mind the involvement of the American West in my own study, we find another salient complaint:

there has yet to appear any sustained reckoning with that portion of Anderson's own argument dealing with the United States; the historical foundations of the American 'imagined community' have been largely ignored even as critics have embraced selected conclusions or corollaries. Complementing this historiographic silence has been an equally noticeable theoretical neglect, with little sustained examination of Anderson's critical underpinnings. One easily gets the sense that his theoretical commitments are either transparently obvious or mysteriously elusive, though in any event somehow ecumenical enough to accommodate a wide range of approaches. (p. 50)

White seizes on the transposition of imagined community to the New World, and what he perceives as a broader insensitivity to the nuances of "the great sacral cultures"—Islam, Christian-

ity, and Buddhism—in arguing that Anderson over-commits "to 'structural and material analyses' of print-languages and capitalism, which "establish the sense of space and time in which the nation emerges" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 12; White, 2004, p. 53). By avoiding particularistic arguments, mingling distinctive religious hierarchies, and amalgamating the circumstantial, revolutionary narratives that first spawned Anderson's "large new reading publics" in Europe and elsewhere says White, "this analytical framework challenges any first emphasis upon cultural differences *within* the national community, insisting instead that the existential structures of space and time precede and encompass such local differences" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 40; White, 2004, p. 53). In sum, White suggests that imagined communities become "less a cultural system of thick descriptors and more a fairly stark relational network" (p. 53).

Does Anderson's (1983/1991) model hold up under such critique? Can we glean useful insights from the architecture of imagined communities, while also taking into account tangible descriptions of identity, such as Hall's (1992) elements of national culture? White poses similar questions, maintaining that his "intent is not the wholesale dismissal of Anderson's work, for in his theoretical development of the concepts of *simultaneity* and *seriality* we find valuable critical tools for understanding the national imagined community" (emphasis added, p. 50). Specifically, Anderson's treatment to time and space refocuses "our attention to how community members existentially define and situate themselves in history, and how they locate the scope and boundaries of their community" (p. 60). Consider White's reiteration of Anderson's *simultaneity*:

The novel provides a primer of sorts for this experience of simultaneity: while characters A and B act together here, C and D act together there, and later A and C may interact; in the logic of simultaneity, this sequence ultimately connects "A to D" even if they have never met. It is worth noting that the specific 'content' of A, B, C, and D's activities

doesn't really matter here—it is rather the "form" that makes it possible, even unavoidable, to imagine their activities within a coherent, bounded community. Of course, the more important form of 'book' here is the newspaper, in the reading of which the national imagined community takes shape. (p. 60)

To this account White adds "unbounded seriality," a reconfigured term somewhat less relevant to this study, whereby imagined communities model themselves on universal terms through "the formation of new institutions or via analogy and translation," even though "there will be local specificities that rule out any strict identity across totalities" (p. 51). The important point here is that White finds enduring value in the structural processes that gird Anderson's national imaginings, even if our understanding of the substance of nationalism leaves something to be desired.

To be sure, Anderson's (1983/1991) imagined communities offer a useful accounting of the nation's reification, while retaining more critical weight than most historians would allow in that nationalism comes about through new communication pathways and erratic shifts in collective thinking—not essentialist legacies. A comment from cultural theorist Etienne Balibar (1991) puts it more bluntly: "under certain conditions, *only* imaginary communities are real" (p. 93). Still, a weakness highlighted by Confino (1997) lingers: we lack studies showing "how people pull themselves from local affairs into national affairs...how people internalize the abstract world of the nation to create an imagined community" (p. 4). Creed's (2004) call for documentation of what community means to particular people in local and historical contexts further illuminates this narrow but important gap in scholarship (p. 57). Lastly, Langthaler's (2002) historical analysis of local heroism in rural Austria—a study closely allied with my own—offers a similar query: how do "imagined communities and realms of memory become

cultural representations?" (p. 788). In concrete terms, "how does the story of the local hero become a cultural representation of the village memory?" (Langthaler, 2002, p. 790).

Hobsbawm's (1996) unpacking of tradition—the development of republican-principled education, the invention of public ceremonies, the mass production of public monuments—provides some guidance on internalization. Moallem and Boal's (1999) deconstruction of U.S. presidential inaugurations, for example, that "moment of convergence between the political regulation of the disembodied, abstract citizen and its popular reframing through the construction of 'national phantasy,'" helps in this regard (p. 245). Such inventions, explain Hobsbawm and Ranger, entail "the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past which belong not only to the world of specialist investigation but to the public sphere of man as a political being" [sic] (as cited in Schlesinger, 1991, p. 169). What does this say about individuals becoming part of an imagined community? That the production of nationalism constitutes a never-ending project undertaken not only powerbrokers but by the average citizen as well.

Because "the elaboration of national identity is a chronic process," adds Schlesinger (1991), the imagined relationship between community members and their immemorial past must be one "mediated by the continual, selective reconstitution of 'traditions' and 'social memory'" (p. 174). In this way "the imaginary singularity of national formation is constructed daily, by moving back from the present into the past"—and in keeping with the linearity of Anderson's (1983/1991) calendrical time and Hall's (1992) temporal continuity, I would add, *forward* into an imagined future (Balibar, 1991, p. 87). In sum, nationalism is always under construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction—a practice flexible enough to redefine standards of membership, adjust common goals, and accommodate the ironies and contradictions inherent to attempting a shared vision of community.

We have, then, important but partial answers to Confino's (1997) question of internalization. Hall (1992) posits five characteristics of national cultures, including narratives, timelessness, myths, invented traditions, and pure "folk." Anderson (1983/1991) offers print capitalism and the daily communion of newspaper readerships to explain the emergence of nationalism as imagined community, a theory of cultural systems criticized, as of late, by Creed (2004) and Langthaler (2002) for romanticizing community and avoiding the production of local identities. White (2004) demonstrates how Anderson's work, despite its flaws, can offer structural insight into the "scope and boundaries" of imagined communities (p. 60). Meanwhile, invented traditions fill in the substance of shared imaginings; in cooperation with Schlesinger (1991), Hobsbawm (1996) emphasizes the perpetual refiguring of Confino's "the abstract world" to better integrate local and national affairs and "forge a chain of identity between past and present" (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 174). Still, I suspect Confino's call for "a method that can tell us about the way people devise a common denominator between their intimate, immediate and real local place and the distant, abstract, and not-less-real national world" is perhaps better answered by a rhetorical theorist not solely concerned with nationalism (p. 4).

The Narrative Paradigm

It is no coincidence, I think, that Hall (1992) suggests the "narrative of the nation" as the foremost characteristic of national culture: "As members of such an 'imagined community,' we see ourselves in our mind's eye sharing in this narrative. It lends significance and importance to our humdrum existence, connecting our everyday lives with a national destiny that preexisted us and will outlive us" (p. 293). Consider too this passage from anthropologist Yiannis Papadakis' (2003) analysis of political commemorations in divided Cyprus, which gets at the deficiencies of

substance and differentiation inherent to imagined community: "If history and identity are the two major components of nationalism, narrative provides the overarching structure for the expression (and comparison) of different constructions of nationalism" (p. 253). Later Papadakis suggests that the "narrative form allows the nation to be imagined as continuous, even if commemorations focus on a small number of specific events with large gaps in-between" (p. 254). In other words, stories—and most any historian worth will agree on this point—allow "the interlinking of discrete events into a meaningful history" (Papadakis, 2003, p. 254). Presuming the codependence of nationalism and narration, then, a new question of identity arises: what meaning do stories have for Hall's (1992) fragmented, postmodern subject?

Walter Fisher's (1984) pioneering work on the narrative paradigm, a theory of human communication that conceives of all persons as *Homo narrans*, draws its inspiration from philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre: "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal" [sic] (as cited in Fisher, 1984, p. 1). By "narrative," Fisher refers not to a fictive composition with less-than-relevant propositions about a make-believe world, but rather to "a theory of symbolic actions—words and/or deeds—that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (p. 2). And by "paradigm," Fisher means "a representation designed to formalize the structure of component experience and to direct understanding and inquiry into the nature and functions of that experience" (p. 2). Here I would suggest a link be forged to Confino's (1997) search for a "common denominator," a narrative connection between locality and nationality, the basis upon which particular experiences become imbued with collective significance (p. 4).

Fisher (1984) elaborates his theory by retooling two postulates from theologian Stanley Hauerwas: (1) "The meaning and significance of life in all of its social dimensions require the

recognition of its narrative structure," and (2) "Any ethic, whether social, political, legal, [national] or otherwise, involves narrative" (p. 3). Taking narration as the "master metaphor" for the human experience holds serious implications for a school of thought more familiar to Western scholarship, the "rational-world paradigm," which privileges argumentation, epistemology, self-evident propositions, demonstrations, and proofs (Fisher, 1987, p. 59-62). The predication of intelligence on classical reasoning troubles Fisher (1987) because "being rational (being competent in argument) must be learned," and as such, "the historic mission of education in the West has been to generate a consciousness of national and institutional community and to instruct citizens in at least the rudiments of logic and rhetoric" (p. 60). Fisher's thinking contrasts wonderfully with Hall's (1992) Enlightenment subject, whom readers will recall was assumed to have been "endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness, and action, whose 'centre' consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born" (p. 275). Comparatively, the narrative paradigm suggests that our identity depends less on rational sensibilities—learned or otherwise—than on the recursive appraisal of stories.

Note the resonance of Fisher's (1987) foregoing statement with critical theories of nationalism. Take Papadakis (2003), for example: "The 'nation' provides the moral centre through which events are judged and the narrative thus acquires meaning as say a happy or sad story" (p. 254). Here at home, Moallem and Boal (1999) call attention to the "narrative of American identity embodied in Western Civilization courses" (p. 248). Indeed, Balibar (1991) argues that every "social community reproduced by the functioning of institutions is imaginary, that is to say, it is based on the projection of individual existence into the weft of a collective narrative" [sic] (p. 93). In the headlong rush to engender nationalism systematically, perhaps Western pedagogy has unwittingly ignored "a metacode, a human universal on the basis of

which...messages about the shared reality can be transmitted" (White as cited in Fisher, 1987, p. 65). As narratives transcend cultures, this might also explain the emergence of Anderson's (1983/1991) imagined communities in times and places where conventional intellectualism was noticeably absent.

In sum, Fisher's (1987) paradigm holds the world to be a set of stories permeated by value-laden "good reasons," and that narrative beings coalesce around stories heuristically, not by way of formal education (p. 65). This "process of continual re-creation" integrates remarkably well with the perpetual construction of national identity (Fisher, 1987, p. 65). In seeking identification with others, all people depend on "their inherent awareness of *narrative probability*, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing *narrative fidelity*, whether or not the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives" (Fisher, 1987, p. 64). While laypeople are considered capable of judging stories alongside elites, Fisher recognizes every community's tendency to produce "key storymakers/storytellers" who may refine the principles of narration and craft better resonating stories than others (p. 67). For example, the "most compelling, persuasive stories are mythic in form," says Fisher, "stories reflective of 'public dreams' that give meaning and significance to life"—another affirmation of Hall's (1992) five-fold tenets of nationalism (p. 76).

Critics wedded to traditional modes of analysis (Rowland, 1989) charge that such a narrative approach "has little application to works that do not explicitly tell or clearly draw upon a story" and may in fact "obscure the critical significance of some works" or "a far simpler explanation of rhetorical effectiveness" (p. 51). At best Rowland reminds us that "narrative as a method" may not suit every attempt at describing and evaluating a text (p. 52). But case studies examining narration from across the disciplinary spectrum (Frentz, 1985; Harris & Hills, 1993;

Hollihan & Riley, 1987; Murphy, 2003) have disproved his assertion that the narrative paradigm "fails to provide an adequate method for evaluating the epistemic quality of stories" (Rowland, 1989, p. 52). Moreover, Fisher's (1989) belief that "all forms of human communication can be seen fundamentally as stories" seeks not to reject the rational-world paradigm, but to subsume argumentation as one manifestation of narrative rationality (p. 57).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH RATIONALE

By integrating Anderson (1983/1991) and Fisher's (1984) accounts, nations constitute imagined communities that invent narratives about a shared past, present, and future—among them, printed stories that resonate with our storytelling sensibilities. Can this model endure contemporary scrutiny? Amid the nationalistic oratory and superheated politicking stemming from the attacks of September 11, 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2004 election year, do imagination and narration still hold sway? In a world that feels saturated not only by novels and newspapers, but by a smorgasbord of new communication technologies, does Anderson's theory need updating? Schlesinger (1991) takes up this last point:

The newspaper is singled out for its insertion of the 'imagined community' into a simultaneous mode of address. But that has long been the effect of radio, and latterly, of television. However, where Anderson mentions radio and television it is only in passing...Others would argue...that competitive multilingual broadcasting within the confines of a single state may under some circumstances reinforce separatist tendencies rather than cement identification with one overarching national identity...To observe this is to say that Anderson's general approach is in principle capable of accommodating such qualifications. However, first, much more attention need to be paid to the specific analysis of the various media. (p. 164-165)

Some of these concerns have been addressed by research on identity construction in television (Hartley, 1987; Hogan, 1999), quantitative work on newspaper coverage of identity conflicts (Shah & Thornton, 2004), content analyses of post-September 11 identity projects (Altheide,

2004; Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeaux, & Garland, 2004), and theorizing about the new media's role in national identity (Poster, 1999; Waisbord, 1998). However, little qualitative case work demonstrating the catalyzation of imagined community by newspapers—the keystone of Anderson's theory— has emerged.

I should note that a limited number of discourse studies have yielded findings on the confluence of identities and newspapers. Specifically, Brooke's (1999) investigation of the heightening of identity in communities under threat, Shaw's (1996) work on the role of war coverage in the construction of national identity, Steyn's (2004) focus on the rehabilitation of lost identity demonstrate that print media and collective belonging often become closely interwoven. Textual analyses of narration in print media have been somewhat more common. Staller's (2003) longitudinal research on the construction of "runaway youth" in newspapers of the 1960s and 1970s, Peterson's (1991) analysis of motivational myths in published interviews with farmers of the West, and Harris and Hills's (1993) examination of narration in newspaper coverage of a collegiate basketball tournament speak to the pervasiveness of Fisher's (1884) storytelling sensibilities. As might be expected, the combined study of cultural identity and narration in newspaper texts constitutes a slim field that might include folklorist Russel Frank's (2003) work on the "community experience" narrative in journalistic accounts of a northern California earthquake: "When newspapers set themselves the task of weaving individual anecdotes into the collectives story of the communities they serve, they do on the macro level what all of us do on the micro level when we tell each other stories—help us make sense of our experiences" (p. 172).

On the whole, assert media critics, local issues affecting small communities said to be woven into the fabric of Americana go virtually unnoticed in the mainstream press (Ververs, 2004). Unnoticed, that is, until a story deemed to have national significance projects locality into

nationality, when "people internalize the abstract world of the nation to create an imagined community" (Confino, 1997, p. 4). Even in this rare instance, however, the space and time constraints of national print and broadcast outlets, and their inability to capture backstories and nuances, dictate that local and regional print media are left to integrate rural narratives with collective identity. Columnist Steve McClure (2004) of the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, which covers the southern Idaho-Washington border, illustrates this point with regard to war casualties:

The war came home for a lot of people this week when we learned of two men who lost their lives in the Army in Iraq. It didn't ride into town with footage from a news channel or the rhetoric of a campaign bus. It arrived through phone calls to two families. (p. A1) Although local television news has been edging out newspapers as a primary news source since the 1960s (Stempel & Hargrove, 1996), agenda-setting studies indicate that local newspapers still tell readers "how to think about" local issues as well as "what to think about" (Kim, Scheufele, & Shanahan, 2002, p. 7). For many communities, "local" television news hardly lives up to its name. And while cable and network news leads in audience numbers, newspapers continue to set long-term news agendas (Wanta & Hu, 1994) and better determine news salience (Belle, 2003).

How might newspaper coverage of rural America's involvement in the Iraq war engender national identity? What role does narration play in this process? And what do small-town residents have to say about it? At the risk of further frustrating Schlesinger (1991), this analysis seeks to examine the confluence of Anderson (1983/1991) and Fisher's (1984) theories with a rhetorical analysis of newspaper texts addressing the September 2004 death of a single U.S. soldier in Iraq, Army Sergeant Jacob H. Demand of Palouse, Washington, a farming community of roughly 1,000 nestled in the southeastern corner of the state. Once a narrative understanding of

what Demand's death has meant to Palouse has been achieved, this study will incorporate ethnographic interviews with friends and family members of Demand, in order to better illuminate the story of his passing and present one community's view of "what properly makes up the field of national imagery" (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 165).

CHAPTER FOUR

RHETORICAL METHODS

While the literature girding the rhetorical component of this study originates in disparate fields, much of the work relies on similarly grounded methodological approaches to analyzing newspapers in the contexts of identity and narration. Qualitative methodologists Thomas Lindlof and Bryan Taylor (2002) speak of "a need to categorize and code after a rich data set has begun to build up" (p. 214). Categories, henceforth referred to as themes for purposes of this study, comprise "an array of general phenomena: concepts, constructs...and other types of 'bins' in which to put items that are similar" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 214). Fleshing out themes for rhetorical analysis amounts to a balancing act. On one hand, "The literature can be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity to clues of meaning in the data" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 214). Hence Anderson's (1983/1991) link between imagined communities and the literary conventions of newspapers, Hobsbawm's (1996) profile of invented traditions, and Fisher's (1987) narrative paradigm will serve to sensitize close readings of the texts.

On the other hand, "A priori theory can sensitize one to what *could* be important, but it should not override or overshadow the meanings that the researcher discovers" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 215). Many qualitative researchers feel "a strong current of inductive thinking" should guide a process of "open coding," whereby texts are examined line by line and marked in chunks that suggest a theme (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 215-219). While allowing for induction, this analysis will pay particular attention to *narrative* themes, a story dimension described here by rhetorical critic Sonja Foss (1996):

A theme is a general idea illustrated by the narrative; it is what a narrative means or is about and points to the significance and meaning of the action. A narrative's theme might be that good triumphs over evil, oppression is unjust, everyone can succeed with hard work, and violence is sometimes justified. How is the theme articulated in the narrative—through the depiction of setting, characters, or events or through the narrator's commentary? (p. 405)

The findings and concluding sections of this study will differ somewhat from conventional textual analysis by integrating detailed descriptions of emergent themes with rhetorical arguments about mythology and identity construction.

The texts selected for this study were accessed via the Lexis-Nexis online database, newspaper collections of Washington State University's Holland Library, and an archival website providing access to Palouse, Washington's hometown paper, *The Boomerang!* (http://www.smalltownpapers.com/). With the aim of capturing texts making direct reference to Demand—who reportedly died of wounds sustained during an ambush in northwestern Mosul, Iraq on September 14, 2004 (Gilbert, 2004b)—guided news searches were first conducted within Lexis-Nexis for a two month period following his death. This allowed sufficient time, in my estimation, to capture most texts recounting the firefight that cost Demand his life and the mourning process that immediately followed, as well as texts reporting on other war casualties. Under the category "U.S. News," searching for the terms "Jacob Demand" or "Jacob H. Demand" in full text fields produced a total of 26 distinct results, with 22 texts published in the subcategory "Western Regional Sources," two texts published in "Northeast Regional Sources," two texts published in "Southeast Regional Sources," and no texts published in "Midwest Regional Sources."

Neither the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, with a daily circulation of 8,000 spread throughout Palouse and neighboring towns ("Moscow-Pullman," para. 11), *The Daily Evergreen* and *The Argonaut*, student papers of nearby public universities, nor the Palouse community's *Boomerang!* are included in Lexis-Nexis archives. Thus I conducted manual searches of Washington State University's library collections and SmallTownPapers.com's online archives during the same time period. Combing these newspapers page-for-page allowed for a more exhaustive search for references to Demand not possible with Lexis-Nexis. For example, one text's only mention of the casualty omitted his name: "News that two local soldiers were killed this week brought to life everyone's fears" (Bacharach, 2004, para. 22). This process produced an additional fifteen texts.

Altogether the data set consists of 41 texts: five report the immediate news of Demand's death, five concentrate on the mourning of his friends and family, three profile his life and death as features, three appear to be paid obituaries, three report on a hometown parade in Demand's honor, six offer tributes or opinions related to his death, seven make passing reference Demand as an Iraq casualty, two offer messages related to Demand in advertisement form, and one corrects a photo caption describing a memorial ceremony in Demand's honor. The final six texts, in my estimation, hold special significance as they list Demand alongside other Iraq war casualties from around the nation and come from sources outside the Northwest. Internet news searches for Demand's name indicate that the Lexis-Nexis search did not capture every casualty list that included mention of Demand; however, the texts selected do provide a representative sample.

The following analysis centers on emergent themes, many of them linked through narration, with examples provided from across the data set. In the course of analyzing iteratively more than three dozen sample newspaper texts referencing Demand, with an eye for confluences

of nationalism and narration, over 30 possible themes emerged. Twenty-one of these were deemed to be significantly interrelated and capable of contributing to a larger "metanarrative" about the perceived heroism and sacrifice of Jacob Demand—a story loosely modeled upon what Jewett and Shelton Lawrence (1977) refer to as "the American monomyth." Metanarrative, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, comprises "Any narrative which is concerned with the idea of storytelling," especially "one which alludes to other narratives, or refers to itself and to its own artifice," as well as an "archetypal story, which provides a schematic world view upon which an individual's experiences and perceptions may be ordered" (Simpson, J., et al., 2001).

Among the emergent themes included in the findings: ambiguity in meaning, narrative remembrance, resonance with past conflicts, the quagmire, conceptions of culpability, the lexicon of war, toy soldiers, implied continuance, the national web of loss, sacrificial nationalization, community ties, struggle for membership, community service from grief, rituals of commemoration, contextualizing sacrifice, humble roots, moral steadfastness, being born to serve, the all-American boy, the town prankster, the benevolent warrior, an idyllic future lost, and the hometown martyr. So that readers may better understand how the aforementioned themes coalesce, differ, and embellish the larger metanarrative, this study's rhetorical findings have been collapsed into five structural perspectives. In descending order, these categories include overarching themes, the Iraq war, national identity, Palouse community, and Jacob Demand. As will become apparent, when examined holistically my findings produce an archetypal plotline with important implications for the Palouse community.

Lastly, throughout this analysis key portions of the exemplar texts have been italicized in order showcase the language's resonance with particular themes. Some themes draw upon excerpts already referenced by other themes, because texts tend to generate compound meanings.

Quotations from sources used by the authors of the texts appear alongside descriptive prose in this analysis, and secondary sources are not generally attributed. However, for clarity and in keeping with grammatical conventions, secondary quotations are always encased in extra quotation marks. For reference purposes, all citations contain paragraph numbers corresponding to the format in which the texts were printed. Although a majority of my illustrations refer to Demand, some pertain to other servicemen described in texts that mention Demand's name elsewhere.

Jacob H. Demand

Before reviewing my rhetorical findings, readers will benefit from a short biographical profile of the subject of this study. According to news reports and interviews, Jacob H. Demand was born September 9, 1975, at a naval hospital in San Diego to Keith and Charlene Demand, who divorced shortly thereafter. In 1985, Charlene, the single mother of four children, married Bruce Baldwin, her teammate on a local softball team in Pomeroy, Washington. Jacob attended grade school in Pomeroy but his parents soon moved to Palouse, a dry-land farming town on the Idaho border and a bedroom community for nearby land grant universities. Young Demand "drove truck" for area farmers, excelled at sports, and graduated from high school in 1995. Two weeks later, after talking to a campus recruiter and with his parents away on vacation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and completed basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Jacob later served tours of duty in Saudi Arabia and Korea, and learned to command new Stryker vehicles based at Fort Lewis, Washington. Jacob was nearly discharged in 2003, but due to the military's "stoploss" program, he somewhat reluctantly deployed to Iraq in January, 2004. Nine months later, as his platoon relaxed in a Mosul alleyway, gunmen opened fire, severely wounding Jacob, who moved to protect a civilian interpreter and later died in an American hospital.

CHAPTER FIVE

RHETORICAL FINDINGS

Overarching Themes

Ambiguity in meaning, perhaps the foremost theme emerging from this analysis, concerns nebulous terms that gird descriptions of lost loved ones, combat injuries, the Iraq war's significance, and the American lifestyle Demand is said to have fought to protect. These ambiguities provide useful demonstrations of Fisher's (1984) narrative rationality, with regard to probability as well as fidelity. Narrative probability, an intrinsic capacity to anticipate coherent stories, allows readers to fill in details missing from such familiar plotlines as "A civilian-looking military vehicle pulls up in front of the office, *and then you know what happened*" (Graham, 2004a, para. 7). Further examples of include "You never think *it's* going to happen to you" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 7; Barber, 2004a, para. 20) and "Then when *it* does happen, *it's* a dose of reality for them and they understand how precious life is" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 20). The details supplemented by readers may differ somewhat depending on the context—"what happened" suggests uniformed officers relayed news of a loved one killed in action, while "it" could refer to either injury or death.

That the particulars of individually imagined stories may differ ensures that narratives about soldiers like Demand maintain fidelity with stories readers know to be true in their own lives. For instance, "I knew *what my son wanted*, and most families know *what their sons want*" (Graham, 2004b, para. 8). Other vacuous phrases allow the meanings of war and nationalism to resonate with individual sensibilities: "our *way of life*" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 4); "what they're fighting for" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 17); "the *deeper meaning* in dying for one's coun-

try" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 11); "Some kids understand *why* they're there" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 19). As readers browsed their morning papers, instinctively supplying meanings that accord with probability and fidelity, they may have assumed fellow community members imagined similar narratives, thereby enhancing shared identity.

"In the midst of the sadness over their friend's death, they also laughed as they swapped *stories*" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 12). Rhetorical analysis suggests that reconciling Demand's death produced a theme of "narrative remembrance," whereby those connected to him offered the imagined community anecdotes and recollections about Demand's life that ring true with an overarching story of heroism (Fisher, 1987). These symbolic acts of participation are chronicled by several texts: "Fister stood on the sidewalk, *reminiscing* with friends about Demand" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 9); "*Memories* of the boy Jake filled the streets that he once strolled after school" (Sudermann, para. 5); "She also told *stories* she had heard from Demand's family...Other *stories* and *memories* came from farmers that Demand had worked for during high school" (Doyle, 2004a, para. 8-10); "Attended by an estimated 200 people, classmates, former employers and other friends shared many *stories* about Jake, bringing chuckles amidst the tears" ("Sgt. Jake Demand," 2004, para. 6). One hometown eulogy evokes Demand's mother: "wasn't it only yesterday she was rocking him in her arms, telling him *stories*?" (Nisse, 2004, para. 4).

Iraq War Themes

How do the texts sampled narrate the conflict in Iraq? To start with, certain phrases and anecdotes seem to recall collective memories of other wars, a "resonance with past conflicts" theme. For example, "at a military field hospital" calls to mind the expeditionary atmosphere of the World Wars. (Breslin, 2004, para. 27). Drawing from Vietnam conflict and the infamous

1969 issue of *Life*: the university "paid tribute to its *fallen* soldiers Thursday morning" (Mills, 2004, para. 1). "[W]hat the military called a precision strike" resonates with the first Gulf War ("Attacks," 2004, para. 7). And "a U.S. military helicopter fired into a crowd of civilians who had surrounded a burning Army armored vehicle" sounds remarkably like the ill-fated American incursion into Somalia in 1993 ("Attacks," 2004, para. 1). Lastly, as an echo of various daily peacekeeping missions of the 1990s: "one Marine was killed in action" ("Daily U.S. casualties," 2004, para. 1).

Building upon resonance with history, reports of developments in Iraq that accompany mention of Demand's death tell a dismal story of war—the "quagmire" theme so dreaded by policymakers. "U.S. soldiers discovered the decapitated bodies of three Arab men Wednesday" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 4); "A suicide bomber slammed into a line of police cars" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 5); "The other, a Stryker brigade infantryman, was shot by a sniper" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 4). Summary statements about the conflict bolster this theme, for example: "When I read the bloody headlines from Iraq these days" (Neely, 2004, para. 1); "Politics aside, the news is not good regarding both military and civilian casualties in Iraq" (Tomfohr, 2004, para. 1); and "several bleak scenarios for the future of Iraq" (Neely, 2004, para. 8). Understandably, Demand's passing becomes linked to this narrative: "His death is a reminder that it has been a bloody year" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 11).

When violence abounds in Iraq, use of the passive voice in news reports contributes to a perceived lack of responsibility for actions taken on a distant battlefield: "The incident is under investigation" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 3). Instead of naming perpetrators, texts comprising the "conceptions of culpability" theme often refer to inhuman and seemingly uncontrollable forces that wreak havoc on U.S. troops and civilians alike. For example: "his patrol came under attack

by small-arms fire" (Barber, 2004b, para. 5); another soldier was "killed by an explosion" (Breslin, 2004, para. 11); "Car bombings, mortar attacks and clashes...killed at least 59 people across Iraq" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 1); "Stahl died when a bomb hit the vehicle in which he was riding" (Barber, 2004a, para. 21); "Armeni was torn apart by a rocket-propelled grenade" (Gilbert, 2004c, para. 4); "a gunner was hit by a bomb-carrying truck" ("Lance Cpl. Michael," 2004, para. 23); and "Demand...was shot while serving in Iraq" (Hansen, 2004, para. 12).

When texts do point to culprits, they resort to the kind of problematic "othering" that concerns scholars of ethnicity (Triandafyllidou, 1998), often in an echo chamber: "his patrol was attacked by *enemy* forces" ("Palouse soldier," 2004, para. 2; "American Deaths," 2004, para. 7; Breslin, 2004, para. 21; "Fort Lewis," 2004, para. 2). Additional dualisms that work to flatten understanding of the many actors in the Iraq theater include: "clashes between *insurgents* and U.S. and Iraqi security forces" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 1); "the virulently anti-American *city* of Fallujah" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 8); "members of an *insurgent* organization" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 9); and "U.S. forces also rounded up 63 suspected *foreign fighters*" ("Attacks, 2004, para. 10). Finally, certain casualty descriptions belittle connotatively the deadly tactics used in Iraq's ongoing civil unrest: "Their military vehicle was attacked by insurgents using *small-arms* fire and a *makeshift* bomb" ("Lance Cpl. Michael," 2004, para. 13).

In addition to branding opponents of the U.S. occupation, most of the texts in question adopt military terminology—dense, strategically-crafted language that serves to anesthetize the narration of combat operations in Iraq, even glamorize those involved. Writing in *War and the Media*, Taylor (2003) notes that modern information warfare depends on Public Affairs (PA) officers assuming key positions in American conflicts. Although many PA officers "maintain they are not in the business of influencing journalists," argues Taylor, "this is a slightly disingenuous

argument because...the selection or omission of information helps to shape the views upon which opinions can be formed" (p. 104). Moving to the sample texts, we find "Fort Lewis officials" explaining that Demand's squadron performed "reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition," which translates more directly to snooping behind enemy lines, hunting suspected insurgents with an array of covert technology, and directing air and mortar attacks against suspected safe houses ("Palouse soldier," 2004, para. 3-4; Barber, 2004b, para. 7). Missile craters and flying shrapnel equate to "what the military called a precision strike" ("Attacks," 2004, para. 7). Two U.S. troops perish "when an improvised explosive device detonated near their observation post" ("Obituaries," 2004, para. 20). And more casualties result from "a non-combated related incident" and "a non-hostile vehicle accident," revealing scant detail about miscommunication, inattention, or other circumstances that led to the deaths ("American Deaths," 2004, para. 2; Bresling, 2004, para. 17). Lastly, Washington state's Fort Lewis dispatches "elite Special Operations troops"—better known, in my estimation, as particular squads of taciturn husbands, fathers, and sons who disappear for months on end to carry out clandestine missions in undisclosed locales (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 21). Such jargon contributes to the "lexicon of war," another narrative theme.

Demand's membership in the Fort Lewis "Stryker brigade, which takes its name from its fast, high-tech infantry vehicles" (Barber, 2004a, para. 27) generates a similar air of celebrity, a "toy soldiers" theme. Texts tend to regard the brigade as a status symbol, and Demand's rank as vehicle commander a definitive part of his ethos: "He *was* the commander of a Stryker armored vehicle" (Graham, 2004a, para. 2) and "His unit...which is *in charge* of military operations in northern Iraq...*includes the Stryker brigade*" (Lynn, 2004, para. 4). Another text calls to mind a toy action figure: "Demand was a striker commander who *operated a machine gun turret* from

the roof of a Striker High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle" [sic] (Ferguson, 2004, para. 2). One mother of a GI serving in Iraq provides a different description of the vehicle: "a Beverly Hillbillies truck with machine guns on top" (Neely, 2004, para. 3). In most texts, however, membership in the Stryker brigade allows Demand to join the prestigious ranks of fallen Stryker servicemen. For example, "Demand became the *18th Stryker brigade soldier* killed since the unit deployed to Iraq" (Lynn, 2004, para. 5) and "Demand's was the *18th Stryker Brigade death*" (Graham, 2004a, para. 11).

The final Iraq war theme concerns connotations embedded in the language of national and regional casualty reports. These texts become significant in that they suggest a never-ending story, a theme of "implied continuance." For instance: "The latest deaths reported by the military" ("Daily U.S. casualties," 2004, para. 4); "As of Wednesday, 1,019 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq campaign in March 2003" (Bresling, 2004, para. 1); "As of Thursday, 1,027 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003" ("Daily U.S. casualties," 2004, para. 1); and "Two Fort Lewis soldiers were killed this week in Iraq" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 1). To borrow from Anderson (1983/1991), the "steady onward clocking" of the death toll means that for readers, an imagined Iraq war rumbles on in perpetuity, claiming lives yesterday, today, and tomorrow (p. 33).

National Identity Themes

A major finding of this study concerns the textual manner in which Demand becomes assimilated into collective identity. More specifically, the only mention of Demand's death by newspapers outside of the Northwest comes in casualty listings that immerse his name and hometown into a string of casualties from around the nation. For instance, *The Tulsa World*:

"The latest identifications reported by the military...Drew M. Uhles, 20, DuQuoin, Ill....Tyler H. Brown, 26, Atlanta...*Jacob H. Demand, 29, Palouse, Wash.*...Kevin M. Shea, 38, Washington, D.C....Mathew D. Puckett, 19, Mason, Texas...Adrian V. Soltau, 21, Milwaukee" ("Daily U.S. casualties," 2004, para. 6-12). Another example from the *Los Angeles Times*:

American military personnel killed in Iraq...Tyler H. Brown, 26, of Atlanta...David A. Cedergren, 25, of South St. Paul, Minn...Lauro G. DeLeon Jr., 20, of Floresville, Texas...*Jacob H. Demand, 29, of Palouse, Wash.*...Christopher S. Ebert, 21, of Mooresboro, N.C...Michael J. Halal, 22, of Glendale, Ariz...Benjamin W. Isenberg, 27, of Sheridan, Ore. ("Obituaries," 2004, para. 3-9)

As with the Stryker tally, in death Demand joins a higher order. These listings seem to epitomize the recasting of Demand and his hometown as part of a greater imagined community. The discursive juxtaposition of "Palouse, Wash." with a host of other towns and cities conjures up a theme I will refer to as the "national web of loss," an expanding grid that confers shared identity on the deceased and their local communities. One tangible example of this theme's impact: a message from an out-of state reader that appeared Demand's hometown paper. "I was so sad to read about the death of Jacob Demand, and I've lost track of how many letters of condolence I have written to families in Washington," writes the New Yorker. "I didn't know him, and now never will, but as a mother, I want to acknowledge somehow that each of these war deaths is a loss to every one of us" (Caporael, 2004, p. 13).

Some of the language that suggests a continuum of Iraq casualties also tells a story of collective sacrifice made in pursuit of war: "1,027 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003" ("Daily U.S. casualties," 2004, para. 1) and "The state's *contribution* to the *nation's casualty list* of more than 1,000 military deaths in Iraq since

the war began in March 2003 grew to 51" (Barber, 2004a, para. 4). On a smaller scale: "In Washington state alone [Demand and six other servicemen] died during August and September" (Tomfohr, 2004, para. 2) and "this week...we learned of *two men* who lost their lives while serving in the Army in Iraq" (McClure, 2004, para. 2). *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* columnist McClure's (2004) description of how collective sacrifice impacts the home front echoes Anderson's (1983/1991) imagined communities: "it seemed to pepper the area around us, but most were unknown names with unknown friends and families" (para. 9). In sum, these excerpts suggest a theme of "sacrificial nationalization"—a quantifiable, human price for American pride paid by particular states and municipalities.

More often, however, the texts referencing Demand describe individually narrated sacrifice, with local ramifications. For instance "Palouse's *first* combat death of the war touched *every home*" (Graham, 2004a, para. 3); "*Jake* was remembered in a variety of ways *by the community*, as stunned friends of the popular young man and his parents...struggled to accept the news" ("Sgt. Jake Demand," 2004, para. 2); "'It makes it so even the smallest of communities *like Palouse* cannot escape the war" (Graham, 2004a, para. 4); "'It brings the war *so close*'" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 14). Another example smacks of past wars, when mothers of lost sons were honored as domestic heroes: "Susan Henderson, whose son became *the first* Spokane-area resident to die in the Iraq war" (Graham, 2004b, para. 1).

Sources referenced in the texts also ask that sacrifices not be forgotten: "Johnson expressed his gratitude to those who had made *the ultimate sacrifice* and implored those in attendance never to forget" (Mills, 2004, para. 11). One father emphasized "'I don't want *Scott's sacrifice*...to be forgotten *by the society* he made it for'" (Gilbert, 2004c, para. 111). The latter pleas hint at compelling links between individuality, locality, and the imagined nation. In a par-

allel to the national web of loss, when texts describe individual sacrifice in relation to collective narratives, local community members have the potential to seize upon discursively reconstructed ties to a hometown hero and enhance their own national identification. Examples: "We want the *nation* to have the opportunity to be *as proud of him as we are*" (Gilbert, 2004c, para. 112); "the conditions under which *he* served go far beyond what *the greater society* will ever have to endure" (Tomfohr, 2004, para. 5); "He was a great young *American* with a great heart" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 9); and from Demand's mother, "He was *more than just one soldier* who died" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 24).

Lastly, in order for individual sacrifice to allow localities the discursive potential for heightened national identity, the casualty's bond with the community must be strengthened through the kinds of narratives detailed below. Attempts to bolster such connection include: "The U.S. Army *and this community* have lost a great man" (Graham, 2004a, para. 27); and "Jake's *link*, despite his passing, will never be broken" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 12).

Palouse Community Themes

How do the texts in question conceive of ties that bind communities? While the narration of wartime sacrifices can work to strengthen nationalism, evidence of locally enhanced identity within of the Palouse community also emerged from the newspapers sampled. Some examples: "There's *a lot of connection* in these small towns, particularly" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 16); "where *each resident* not only knows but cares about *everyone else*" (Graham, 2004a, para. 3); "the great town of Palouse, where *everyone is linked*" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 22); "She talked about *the fellowship* of a community" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 13); and "every person who plants their feet in this *community is linked*" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 12). The fact that the

town of Palouse shares its name with the surrounding pastoral landscape—a region originally populated by native tribes, now known for rolling hills of wheat shaped by prehistoric winds—may have allowed the community to become emblematic of the region: "so many people on the Palouse" (McClure, 2004, para. 6). However, the loss of a soldier in neighboring Garfield or Colfax might well have meant just as much to the area's newspaper readership.

Talk of Demand himself also evokes community: "'He graduated a long time ago, but *it is a closeness* you just don't lose'" (Graham, 2004a, para. 18); "*a community gathered* to honor Army Sgt. Jacob H. Demand" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 2); "Through the silence, the community found *its voice*" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 11); "in a small *community like Palouse*, everyone knows everyone and many are saddened by Demand's death" (Doyle, 2004b, para. 21). Demand's mother also becomes emblematic for the community: "the impact of her son's death is *still growing*" (Barber, 2004b, para. 23). In her own words: "We just want to be *with the town* today'" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 3) and "People have been really wonderful in this community. We know they support us" (Bacharach, 2004, para. 19). Demand's hometown paper goes further, claiming local solidarity to be uniquely American: "It's something *'they'* don't have, and never will. If we ever give up *our* neighborliness, our community spirit, 'they' will have won" (Barstow, 2004, para. 3).

In addition to explicit references to communal ties, the texts studied utilize pluralities, possessive pronouns, and other literary conventions cited by Anderson (1983/1991) as fundamental to national imaginings. References to plurality include "he worked summers driving trucks for *area farmers*" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 3); "Since word of her son's death reached *the farm towns* around Pullman" (Barber, 2004b, para. 18); "The streets were filled with high school *friends*…and…his *teachers*, his *coaches*, his *neighbors*" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 4); "the *hun-*

dreds of townspeople pouring forward" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 10) and "Soldiers held a memorial ceremony for him Wednesday at Fort Lewis" (Gilbert, 2004a, para. 13). Pronouns such as "Many in the parade crowd could be seen wiping their eyes" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 21), and "So we got together a lot of grain trucks in his memory" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 4), also help readers envision their community.

Although Demand's memorialization seems permeated with hometown values, this analysis uncovers discursive tension regarding identity and membership within the community of Palouse. Narrative probability (Fisher, 1984) plays a key role in this "struggle for membership" theme. For instance, reading that "Jacob was born...at the Navy Hospital *in San Diego*" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 3), that "He leaves three children...who live *in Indiana* with their mother" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 9), that Demand's "mother...lives *in Pullman*," not Palouse (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 13), and that "His father, Keith Demand, *lives out-of-state*" (Graham, 2004a, para. 23) challenges the narrative cohesion of Demand's nativeness.

Several texts resolve this inconsistency by recounting Demand's past connections to Palouse: "the new family *moved to Palouse* that week" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 3); "Demand grew up in Palouse, Whitman County" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 12); "'Jake's family *was into agriculture*, and he worked summers driving trucks *for area farmers*" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 3); Demand was a "1995 graduate of *Garfield-Palouse High School*" (Hansen, 2004, 12); and "as a soldier" he would "come back to *his hometown* and seek out friends" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 6). Lastly, the town's wholesale affirmation of Demand's identity serves to repair the narrative: "*Residents of Palouse, Wash.*, are mourning the death of Army Sgt. Jacob H. Demand" (Hansen, 2004, para. 12).

As affected communities grapple with such loss, several texts show residents transforming their grief into service. For one mother, setting up a scholarship fund in her son's name was "a way of making something positive out of a negative from the loss of a young life just realizing self-actualization" (Barber, 2004a, para. 15). Another mother "is now devoting herself to other sons and daughters in the military, by helping their families send them care packages" (Graham, 2004b, para. 5). Those who knew Demand "plan to set up a trust account for donations to help his children" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 10) and "have organized a memorial for Demand" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 16). In some texts exemplifying the "community service from grief" theme, there's little to do but offer support: "the school staff...have lent their shoulders to cry on" (Barber, 2004b, para. 21). But in another, "time does help, especially when you use it to help others" (Henderson 2004b, para. 5).

An additional collective therapy portrayed in the texts concerns special ceremonies and rituals commemorating heritage and sacrifice, of which there were several for Demand. "This weekend's Palouse Days to honor the area's farming foundations already have been amended to include a memorial for Demand" (Barber, 2004b, para. 19); "Special Tribute to Jacob Demand during parade" ("Palouse community," 2004, para. 1); "A tribute in his memory was quickly put together...with many of his family and friends adorning their shirts with small, yellow ribbons" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 7); a nearby university "paid tribute...with a solemn, fog-shrouded ceremony on its ghostly quiet campus" (Mills, 2004, para. 1); donations are collected for "a tree to be planted in Demand's honor" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 26). In keeping with Anderson's (1983/1991) discussion of sacred language, local officials even construct a textual memorial to Demand: "She then read a proclamation from the county commissioners, naming Demand a Whitman County Hero of Freedom" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 19).

At graveside, other war casualties mentioned in the texts are the subject of much pageantry imbued with icons of nationally constructed history:

Yesterday, mourners filled University Presbyterian Church for Rintamaki's 1 p.m. memorial service...the late-afternoon trip to the cemetery to see him laid to rest...A Marine honor guard escorted his casket. Seven Marines fired three times for a 21-gun salute...Taps was sounded...Three flags were folded...Rin-tamaki's...family...wore yellow ribbons, buttons with his Marine Corps photo and copies of his dog tags. [His father] also had gold copies of Rintamaki's dog tags placed in his son's coffin. (Barber, 2004a, para. 8-9)

Such displays of tradition are made more poignant by occasional symbolic hardships borne out by the mourners: "friends and relatives held a candlelit vigil *in the rain* at Holy Cross Cemetery in Spokane, where Benson is buried" (Graham, 2004b, para. 14).

Having lost what locals remember as an upstanding young man, and despite acts of service and commemorative rituals, the community of Palouse harbors doubts about the lasting significance of Demand's death. One teacher "pondered Demand's sacrifice and what it meant to his little town" (Graham, 2004a, para. 21). The texts produce a mixed bag of answers, some more impassioned than others; each excerpt in this vein, however, contributes to a theme I will refer to as "contextualizing sacrifice." The teacher concludes "Now you understand what's happening out there" (Graham, 2004a, para. 22). From the same text, "He worked for nearly every farmer in Palouse during his high school years," a mournful reminder that Demand's sacrifice should be meaningful to all (Graham, 2004a, para. 25).

Furthering the search for meaning, the grain trucks that became a central feature of the Palouse Days parade offer thanks to the soldier, insisting "We couldn't be here safe today with-

out you'" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 7). Demand's hometown paper paints a heroic picture: "When his country was called up to take down a tyrant who was massacring his own people, torturing them, killing them, holding them down into the gutter—Jake was ready" (Nisse, 2004, para. 11). After listening to a speech at a Veteran's Day ceremony, Demand's mother also wants to believe her son died for "good reasons" (Fisher, 1987): "It *rang true* what [he] said, that we are doing good over there. Jacob felt that way too" (Mills, 2004, para. 18). Among the texts, however, the most telling signifiers found fused to Demand's sacrifice concern community: "Jacob died to help the rest of us maintain the life we have" (Barber, 2004b, para. 24); "The greatness of this fellowship is what gives Jake's death meaning" (Barstow, 2004, para. 5).

Jacob Demand Themes

Finally, how do the sample texts conceive of Demand himself? With the lost soldier's ties to Palouse confirmed—and in keeping with the heroism of ordinary citizens embodied in American mythology—a primary theme of "humble roots" quietly embellishes Demand's story. "On a shaded back street in Pullman, a faded yellow ribbon waits for a soldier who is not coming home" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 1); "Jake Demand's military service 'began without a headline'" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 8). Again, the commonplace virtues of Demand's hometown maintain strong narrative fidelity (Fisher, 1984) with his ethos: "To this *small* community...Army Sgt. Jacob H. Demand who died in Iraq Tuesday was *simply* Jake" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 1); "A big piece of why Jake was a *great kid* was that he had the privilege of living in the *caring* town of Palouse'" ("Sgt. Jake Demand," 2004, para. 5); "In such a *small* town like this, it's really upsetting" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 11). Interestingly, Sudermann (2004) of the regional *Spokesman-Review*, based in metropolitan Spokane, Washington, makes a special point of emphasizing

the community's rural qualities that borders on exoticism: "the Palouse Days parade, a spare assemblage of children, dogs, horses, trucks, the high school band, and the town's representative princesses ferried on four-wheelers" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 7); "The drivers, mostly farmers and their families, climbed out to join the hundreds of townspeople pouring forward to stand around the color guard" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 10).

Eccentricities aside, as the Palouse community commemorates a new hero, the "moral steadfastness" of Demand's character takes shape. Reconstituting Demand's ethos in uniquely righteous and universally likeable terms provides "good reasons" (Fisher, 1987) for accepting the narrative of his passing as nationalistically tragic, as a lasting reminder of "what else 'they' might do to us" (Barstow, 2004, para. 2). Thus Demand becomes "A youth who liked to help others, someone you liked to be around" (Graham, 2004a, para. 5); "an unusually friendly person and a fantastic son" (Graham, 2004a, para 24); and "a loving father, a bright, funny friend and a dedicated soldier" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 4). His obituary declares "Jake's joyful spirit was well known and appreciated by all who knew him" and that "he was noted for his positive attitude" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 3). Those who knew him also bolster his ethos: "Jake was a stand-up kid, a guy you'd just like to be around'" (Graham, 2004a, para. 17). The publisher of his hometown paper claims "There wasn't a soul around who didn't enjoy his company" (Nisse, 2004, para. 2). In short, "He was just one of those people, where if you met him, you'd never forget him'" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 13).

Stories told about the town champion also conceive of a boy destined to serve his country. "Jacob was born...at the Navy Hospital in San Diego" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 3); "Demand...joined the Army fresh out of high school" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 12); "Following his graduation, Jake enlisted in the U.S. Army" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 1). Says one ob-

server, "I don't think most people could have *imagined* Jake doing anything else" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 8). Following in the footsteps of President John F. Kennedy, Senator John McCain, and other American heroes whose ancestors fought in wars or became public servants, Demand's "born to serve" theme seems preordained: "Demand presented the flag to his grandmother...in honor of his grandfather's military service during the Korean War" ("Jacob H. Demand," 2004, para. 6).

Demand's appetite for sports, outdoor pursuits, private enterprise, and other hallmarks of American individualism further his ability to become symbolic of national identity: "He was the good-natured kid who hunted with friends, did odd jobs for local farmers, and could be counted on for the high school baseball team," writes the *Spokesman-Review* reporter (Sudermann, 2004, para. 2). Considering his post-graduation Army enlistment, Demand's entry into manhood becomes eerily representative of national ideals: "Jacob Demand is pictured with a baseball cap, a bat in hand and a football helmet to the side of him in his 1995 senior yearbook from Palouse High School" (Doyle, 2004b, para. 1); "He had tested himself in school sports—football, basketball, baseball—and loved hunting and fishing" (Barber, 2004b, para. 11). And in keeping with narrative probability (Fisher, 1984), the "all-American boy" theme reemerges in Iraq: "It wasn't long before they were talking about the same old things they always talked about back at Fort Lewis: fish stories, hunting trips" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 10).

Several texts noting Demand's love of Americana also recount a mischievous sense of humor characteristic of memorable protagonists—a "town prankster" theme:

Demand and his brother went to the river, caught a frog, and brought it home. Their mom told them they couldn't keep it and had them return it to the river. They then came back with a turtle, then a duck. All were taken back to the river. (Doyle, 2004a, para. 8)

Another text asks readers to imagine Demand "up the hill where one time he and a friend dragged old tires to let loose to roll straight down into town" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 5). While Demand's exploits generate colorful tales, the pranks remain harmless enough to generate boyish consequences that pose little threat to his general credibility: "He was over at the swimming pool, where a joke with a candy bar got him and a few other guys barred for a summer" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 5). Once again, reports from Iraq allow readers to accept Demand's narrative coherence: "His friends said he had a reputation for practical jokes…Demand got on the roof of the troop headquarters one day and hit his buddies with a barrage of water balloons as they fueled their Strykers" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 16-17).

Demand's good-naturedness also resonates with textual portrayals of American troops in Iraq as chiefly performing humanitarian missions: "his Super Soaker squirt gun was a big hit with local kids in the oppressive Iraqi heat" (Gilbert, 2004b, para. 19). Despite likely having been killed by Iraqi dissidents, Demand becomes a soldier who

'really enjoyed most of the people of Iraq. He talked of their support for the troops, about how little children would wave and smile. I sent him packages with little toys and stuff for Iraq children that he would hand out.' (Barber, 2004b, para. 16)

Another text claims Palouse's good-natured sergeant "had a special affinity for the children of Iraq, who he constantly went out of his way to help" (Mills, 2004, para. 19). Similarly, Demand's love for his own children extended to "the children in a faraway land, for whom [he] was trying to provide a better life" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 13). As might be expected, for many sources quoted in texts contributing to this "benevolent warrior" theme, "it is important to realize American soldiers are in Iraq to help people" (Mills, 2004, para. 16).

One of last chapters in the story of Demand concerns heartwarming opportunities envisioned for the everyman hero and soldiers like him upon their return from service in Iraq. "Demand hoped to find work with the U.S. Forest Service near Pomeroy, where his grandparents...live" (Ferguson, 2004), says one text. Accounts of this "idyllic future lost" from mothers of servicemen killed in action surface in several texts, and their testimony adds narrative weight to each sacrifice. From Demand's mother: "he talked about his children, his plans for the future and how excited he was that his year at war was coming to and end" (Barber, 2004b, para. 2); "we were planning his party for when he got back. His tour would have been up. He was almost home" (Barber, 2004b, para. 4). From other mothers: "her son had his heart set on marrying a girl he'd met while working at a restaurant after high school" (Barber, 2004a, para. 24); and "I'll never see him become the man he could have been. I'll never see grandchildren from him" (Graham, 2004b, para. 3).

Finally, the sudden death of Demand in the line of duty fulfills an epic story of "hometown martyrdom." In the words of his mother: "'Our family feels he was a hero protecting our way of life'" (Ferguson, 2004, para. 4). The previous theme touches on a key element of the archetypal martyr: the hero's youthful demise, exemplified in the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the deaths tens of thousands of American GIs in wars past. "'Of course, the rest of us feel his life was too short," says Demand's mother (Barber, 2004b, para. 23). Martyrs must also realize "the deeper meaning in dying for one's country" (Sudermann, 2004, para. 11) and "know that sometimes they must die" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 18). Most importantly, however, this tradition mandates that their deaths not be in vain. In the days and weeks following his death, crucial details began to emerge about Demand's last firefight in Mosul: "Demand, of Palouse, used his body to shield the civilian translator who was traveling

with them" (Doyle, 2004a, para. 2); discursively, this means "He gave his life so children, his and others, will have a better chance" (Heisinger, 2004, para. 24). For Palouse—a local community interlinked by powerful myths of American sacrifice and benevolence—Demand's final act of valor on the battlefield guarantees his status as a fallen hero to whom everyone should be grateful.

CHAPTER SIX

ASSEMBLING THE METANARRATIVE

Before offering a summary description of the metanarrative stemming from newspaper coverage of Demand's death—and in light of the emerging importance of such archetypal themes as humble beginnings, battlefield heroism, and communal sacrifice to renditions of the Palouse community's loss—this analysis will benefit from additional literature on what philosophers Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence (1977) have termed the American monomyth. Recall that Hall (1992) posits "a *foundational myth*: a story which locates the origin of the nation" as a central tenet of nationalism, and that Fisher (1987) holds the "most compelling, persuasive stories" to be mythic in form, "stories reflective of 'public dreams' that give meaning and significance to life" (Hall, 1992, p. 294; Fisher, 1987, p. 76). Similarly, philosopher Joseph Kupfer (2004) suggests that "hovering above and embedded within the apparently conventional story is a second-order subject," the metanarrative, which is "meant to give instruction, to be an edifying narrative" (p. 3). That said, what mythic influences surface in the metanarrative of Demand?

The American Monomyth

Emblazoned on the cover of Jewett & Shelton Lawrence's (1977) classic text, we find a rough encapsulation of Demand's story: "The American monomyth is the myth of an Eden-like society helpless in the face of evil but rescued by an outsider, a superhero, who then disappears again. This powerful theme pervades our popular entertainment—with startling implications about ourselves." References to variants of this particular subtext by a variety of scholars in re-

cent decades speak to the fact that the American monomyth is no fleeting fabrication of cultural critics (e.g. Lang, J.S. & Trimble, P., 1988; Brookey, R.A., & Westerfelhaus, R., 2001; and Sutton, D.L. & Winn, J.E., 2001).

On the contrary, the monomyth's roots lie buried in an older myth, that of the yeoman farmer championed by populist President Thomas Jefferson at the dawning of the nineteenth century (Peterson, 1991). Complementing Jefferson's disdain for the burgeoning industrialism of European cities and the corruptibility of centralized government was his belief in what became a fundamental national dream: the right of every able-bodied American to own land enough for a farm. From his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "According to these laws, when an individual wished a portion of unappropriated land, he was to locate and survey it by a public officer...its breadth was to bear a certain proportion to its length...and the lands were to be improved in a certain manner" (Jefferson, 1781/1993, p. 262).

With such God-given privileges weighing heavily on the minds of the nation's forefathers, the park-like woodlands and fertile meadows of colonial New England were soon bought, swindled, conquered, and otherwise expropriated from Algonquian-speaking Indian tribes, and later, Native peoples of the South and West. In the name of Manifest Destiny, frontier territories were first auctioned to upper class Euro-American buyers; eventually, however, the Homestead Act of 1862 ensured that hardworking settlers of modest means could earn 160-acre farms by having "improved" the land (Merchant, 2002). In short, Jeffersonian democracy proposed that the very fabric of American society rest in agrarian hands:

The poor who have neither property, friends, nor strength to labour, are boarded in the houses of good farmers, to whom a stipulated sum is annually paid...I never yet saw a native American begging in the streets or highways. A subsistence is easily gained

here...While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff...Besides cloathing the earth with herbage, and preserving its fertility, [the cultivation of wheat] feeds the labourers plentifully, requires from them only a moderate toil, except in the season of harvest, raises great numbers of animals for food and service, and diffuses plenty and happiness among the whole [sic]. (Jefferson, 1781/1993, p. 259-293)

The inability of smalltime farmers to prosper on the arid frontier, however, resulted in most original homesteaders losing their claims by way of "adverse conditions" embodied in the Dust Bowl of the 1930s—and later, faltering crop prices, corporate buyouts, and the globalization of food production (Jewett & Shelton Lawrence, 1977, p. 173). Indeed, Pat Collier, one of the Palouse area farmers who hired Demand to harvest hay on leased land outside of town, explains how contracting eventually became more profitable than running the family farm:

Well, I was raised on a cattle ranch in Central Ferry. And Dad come up to this area and custom-swathe lentils, and I run his swathe for him nights and got to know people around here. And in 1980 I leased land over here and started farming and farmed here for 17 years and then sold out and kept my drill and tractor and just...now I just go around and custom no-drill seed...and oh I kept a few cows and keep meat on the table [sic]. (personal communication, March 30, 2005)

Despite its cultural pervasiveness, then, Jefferson's agrarian ideal has largely been unable to weather the test of time.

For purposes of better understanding the monomyth that girds depictions of rural Palouse, readers should consider Jewett and Shelton Lawrence's (1977) take on the American West in the context of another writer. William Kittredge (1987/2002), whose *Owning It All* memoirs recount

ranching in southeast Oregon during the 1940s, several hundred miles south of Palouse country, offers a similarly critical perspective on pastoral mythology. The latter term, says Kittredge, "can be understood as a story that contains a set of implicit instructions from a society to its members, telling them what is valuable and how to conduct themselves if they are to preserve the things they value" (p. 64). Again, Jewett and Shelton Lawrence suggest that the national monomyth centers on "a small community of hard-working farmers and townspeople living in harmony" who suddenly experience a disruption in normalcy that "must be eliminated by the superhero, before the Edenic condition can be re-established in a happy ending" (169-170). If these scholars have accurately captured America's archetypal story, then we must understand toilsome tranquility, that modest way of life characterizing the story's outset, to be very the state of affairs for which community members in crisis pine. Moreover, Kittredge envisions such mythology as

...a lens through which we continue to see ourselves. Many of us like to imagine ourselves as honest yeomen who sweat and work in the woods or the mines or the fields for a living. And many of us are. We live in a real family, a work-centered society, and we like to see ourselves as people with the good luck and sense to live in a place where some vestige of the natural world still exists in working order...Lately, more and more of us are coming to understand our society in the American West as an exploited colony, threatened by greedy outsiders who want to take our sacred place away from us... (p. 64) Who better, then, to guard against such intrusion than a gallant hero who promises to restore the

pursuit of happiness to the township's good and faithful servants?

Demand as Hero

Jewett and Shelton Lawrence (1977) offer an equally insightful description of the American monomyth's central protagonist, although readers will note that this profile differs markedly from the narrative qualities of Jacob Demand:

In retrospect, the monomythic superhero is distinguished by disguised origins, pure motivations, a redemptive task, and extraordinary powers. He originates outside the community he is called to save, and in those exceptional instances when he is resident therein, the superhero plays the role of the idealistic loner. His identity is secret, either by virtue of his unknown origins or his alter ego, his motivation a selfless zeal for justice. By elaborate conventions of restraint, his desire for revenge is purified. Patient in the face of provocations, he seeks nothing for himself and withstands all temptations...The purity of his motivations ensures moral infallibility in judging persons and situations. When threatened by violent adversaries, vigilantism is the answer, restoring justice and thus lifting the siege of paradise. (p. 195-196)

Foreign origins, an idealistic loner, a secret identity, the ability to withstand all temptations, vigilantism—these descriptors hardly seem to encompass Jacob Demand, the boisterous hometown boy so cherished, in retrospect, by Palouse residents. Still, Demand's sudden departure from the fold after graduating high school, the specialized Stryker brigade training of which he was so proud, his high-minded commitment to protecting the freedoms and liberties enjoyed by the Palouse community, and the moral reconstitution of his character by narrative remembrance all point to limited resonance with the ethos of American superheroes.

Perhaps Kittredge's (1987/2002) description of another brand of heroism, one that permeates the storied history of the American West, comes closer to the archetypal character embodied by Demand:

Heroes are defined as individuals who go out into the world, leaving home on some kind of quest, endure certain trials of initiation, and come home changed, seeing the world in a fresh way, bearing the wisdom of their experience as news that serves the stay-at-homes in their efforts toward making sense of themselves and of what they are attempting to make of their lives...we all dreamed of going away to such heroism. (p. 41)

Here we find as authentic a rendition of Demand's heroism as one could hope to locate, with the exception that instead of returning home from his quest, our small-town champion transmits the glamour of battling foreign enemies from the grave. Judging from the sample texts, news of Demand's valor in the face of death most definitely serves the residents of Palouse in their efforts toward "making sense of themselves" in the midst of grief. Having thus revised Jewett and Shelton Lawrence's (1977) profile of the American monomyth to include Kittridge's (1987/2002) reflections on heroism, and by drawing upon the emergent themes previously outlined, I can now better describe Demand's story in generic terms.

A child is born to parents raised by families rooted in the American dream by blood, sweat, and tears. The boy lives out his childhood in Western farm country, fishing creeks and excelling at sports under open skies. He pulls pranks and talks his mouth off, as boys will do, but always takes responsibility for his mischief, and there's never any harm done. As the boy strives for manhood, people around town begin to respect his work ethic and polite manner, so they cheer for him at football games and hire him on to buck hay come summer. But the young man is restless, he wants to see the world, and soon he runs off to sign up for the Army without telling

his parents. Mom and Dad are a little upset, but very proud of their son, who only wants to serve his country and earn a little college money. Besides, times are tough, and there's no sense in trying to make a living on farming. Years pass, and the boy becomes a handsome man in faraway lands, the Orient and the Middle East, places not talked about much back home. He shows up on holidays, sporting a crisp uniform and cracking that big grin everyone remembers.

Trouble comes in the form of a war overseas, and the hometown soldier is called to duty. Trucks in the little town sport yellow ribbons, and everyone watches the bombing on television. Before long some military officers show up on Main Street, and everyone knows what that means. News reports tell of an ambush, with a handful of servicemen killed and wounded. There's a big parade downtown, with people hugging and crying in the streets, and swapping stories. The soldier's mother gives a speech, thanking the community for lending their support and telling residents how lucky they are to live in a special place where people know one another. Her son was a good man who loved children, and he died trying to protect American freedom and democracy. Everyone feels a little closer that day, and there's talk of raising a memorial so that the hometown hero will never be forgotten. Afterwards the local newspaper reminds readers that terrorists will never succeed in defeating their neighborliness, while national casualty lists mention the fallen soldier's name alongside dozens of other war dead.

Kupfer (2004) and other scholars of narration would rightly point out that the above synopsis constitutes a "conventional" or first-order narrative, because most of the details pertain to Demand's singular legacy. The second-order metanarrative underlying what is by now a familiar story to readers, on the other hand, can be summarized much more succinctly:

The native son of a hardworking farm town earns the respect of his elders, sheds the confines of home to prove his manhood, and dies fighting terrorists who oppose freedom

and liberty. News of the hero's demise bring the townspeople together in a ritual of remembrance, and by virtue of their camaraderie the community perseveres and vows never to forget what becomes a sacrifice on behalf of the greater nation.

Finally we achieve a metanarrative that appears to summarize in ontological terms the moral essence of Demand's death, what newspapers implicitly suggest the event has meant to the Palouse community. By drawing on mythology and heroism grounded in the history of the American frontier—and championing a distinctive set of values for society—this archetype could mostly likely be applied to any number of rural casualties in the Iraq war.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

With the first and second order narratives stemming from newspaper accounts of Jacob Demand's death and remembrance firmly established, this analysis turns to semi-structured interviews with select members of the Palouse community. Comparing firsthand accounts of the boy and the soldier with aspects of Demand's story that newspaper reporters and columnists chose to emphasize will provide valuable insight into themes which might have been shadowed or overemphasized in print. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) illustrate this point:

Interviews allow us to hear people's stories of their experiences...Critical events that al-

ter the course of a community or a person's life are not always captured in eyewitness reports. And because official histories, if they exist at all, often reflect the interest of power holders, interviews can tap a wider field of voices and memories and thus help to inscribe a more nuanced understanding of past events [sic]. (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 173-175) As a qualitative researcher, my suspicion at the outset of the interview process was that due to the structural demands of the newspaper medium, backstories, anecdotes, cultural subtleties, opinions of the media, tensions within the community, and the veiled feelings of sources quoted often failed to surface in articles mentioning Demand's death. This final portion of my analysis represents an effort to recover some of those subtexts, so as to refine and interrogate the narratives of heroism and loss that emerged from rhetorical analysis, understanding that views expressed by interviewees will likely evolve over time and become rooted in collective memories of how the Iraq war affected Palouse.

Many communication scholars endorse the use of interpretive methods to uncover meaning systems within local communities (Anderson, 1987; Peterson & Choat Horton, 1995; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In a paper exploring the rhetoric of ranchers, a rural subculture bearing similarity to the dry-land farming community examined in this study, Peterson and Choat Horton (1995) argue that

since each person constructs reality differently, a methodology that captures this uniqueness must drive the process of data collection. Because the face-to-face interview provides one of the most powerful methods for understanding how people order and assess their everyday world, Peterson et al. (1994) suggest qualitative interviewing as an appropriate method for research into cultural meaning systems. (p. 145)

In-depth interviewing particularly suits rural communities because "the cultural differences between farmers and non-farmers lead them to divergent meaning systems," and while this study does not seek to dwell on differences, "identification of the need to conduct research that is cognizant of a communication gap between rhetor and audience is helpful" (Peterson & Choat Horton, 1995, p. 145). Granted, not all of the subjects interviewed for this study qualify as farmers, but close readings of the sample texts selected for rhetorical analysis reveal the degree to which agrarianism has conditioned the Palouse community.

Biernacki and Waldorf describe snowball sampling as a purposive technique used exclusively in interview settings, a method that "yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 124). Situations that merit the use of snowball sampling include engaging "people about a sensitive subject" as well as studying "subcultures or dispersed groups of people who share certain practices or attributes" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p.

24). This method thus seems ideally fitted to the task of interviewing people who live in Palouse and retain memories of Demand, friends and family members who have been personally affected by the soldier's death and the community's "Tribute to a hometown hero" (Nisse, 2004, p. 3). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) suggest that researchers utilizing this technique first locate one or more persons willing to be interviewed and to provide of names of potential new interviewees who match the criteria for the study sample. New interviewees, in turn, provide additional names, so that these "chains of referral create an expanding pool of respondents—a 'snowball' growing larger over time" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 124).

As for the nature of the interviews themselves, this study utilized a flexibly "semi-structured" format that combines genuine ethnography, the "most informal, spontaneous form of interview" in which the researcher stays "alert to situational cues even as they go into the field with an outline of questions in their heads," with respondent interviewing, which traditionally carries the goal of clarifying "the meanings of common concepts and opinions" and follows "a standard order for all interviewees so that responses can be directly compared across the entire sample" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 178). Interestingly, much of the recent scholarship specifically involving semi-structured interviews relates to qualitative health research. Examples include social network analysis of Kenyan street children (Ayuko, Odero, Kaplan, De Bruyn, & De Vries, 2003); narrative research on trauma surgery patients (Rich & Grey, 2003), analysis of the subjectivity of virginity loss in the United States (Carpenter, 2001); interviews with gay and lesbian physicians in training (Risdon, Cook, & Williams, 2000); and research on alcohol policy in Hungary (Varvasovsky & Mckee, 1998).

With the aim of collecting background information as well as memories and opinions central to the Demand metanarrative among members of the Palouse community, I developed an

interview guide based upon the themes that emerged from this study's rhetorical analysis, and received oversight approval from Washington State University's Institutional Review Board to digitally record my research. Qualitative methodologists L. Lofland and J. Lofland (1995) suggest that an interview "guide is *not* a tightly structured set of questions to be asked verbatim as written, accompanied by an associated range of preworded likely answers. Rather, *it is a list of things to be sure to ask about when talking to the person interviewed*" [sic] (p. 85). Hence my list of queries was designed to encourage narrative responses rather than terse replies. While freely allowing for divergence from the questions asked, I intended redirect interviews back to the guide once each respondent seemed to have exhausted a particular topic. Likewise, if certain comments invited further exploration, I was prepared to offer follow-up questions. A cross-section of the approved interview questions:

- How long have you lived in the Palouse?
- Where do you go for news about the local area?
- What does the word "nation" mean to you?
- How would you describe the Palouse community?
- How much do you think about terrorism?
- What are your feelings toward the Iraq war?
- What kind of person was Jake?
- When you first heard of Jake's death, how did the news affect you?
- What were your impressions of the Palouse Days parade?
- What do you think Jake's death has meant to the nation?

Towards the end of interview I planned to show each interviewee sample texts from the newspaper coverage of Demand's death, particularly to elicit impressions of the editorials that appeared in Palouse's hometown paper, as well as the proclamation from a local board of county commissioners declaring Demand "a Whitman County Hero of Freedom" (Whitman County Board of Commissioners, 2004, p. 3).

In keeping with the snowball sampling method, my first round of interviews included persons mentioned several times over in the original data set: Charlene Baldwin, Demand's mother, who moved to nearby Pullman, Washington, shortly before her son's death but continues to work in Palouse, and Matt Atkinson, one of Demand's closest friends since childhood. Both respondents agreed to be interviewed and identified for research purposes, and to suggest additional interviewees. Demand's mother proved to be a particularly crucial gatekeeper of further research, in that each subsequent respondent sought Baldwin's approval of the study before agreeing to be interviewed. The first round of interviews took place in early March 2005, nearly six months after Demand's passing—an appropriate emotional distance, in retrospect, from what was for most of the interviewees a profoundly tragic event.

Time constraints on the ethnographic data collection and transcription allowed for five additional interviews involving six respondents. These included Pat Collier, a Palouse area grower who employed Demand as a farmhand and was drafted into Army during the Vietnam War; Robert Atchison, another one of Demand's childhood friends and a voluntary veteran of the Navy; Jim Stewart, Demand's former high school math teacher and baseball coach; Mary Kernan, president of the Palouse Chamber of Commerce and a friend of the Baldwin family; Jack Doebler, also a Navy veteran and Demand's former school bus driver, who suggested that Palouse area farmers organize the memorial truck parade; and a former editor of Palouse's *The Boomerang!* who declined to be identified for this study. Each of the seven interviews lasted roughly an hour and took place at locations most convenient to the respondents, including

homes, a library, a museum, a school, a tavern, and a restaurant. In total, the eight respondents generated enough audio to produce nearly 150 pages of interview transcripts for analysis.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ETHNOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

The findings gleaned from the interviews are presented here in much the same format as the rhetorical data: emergent themes highlight excerpts from across the transcripts that point to both resonance and dissonance with the narratives derived from the newspaper texts. In this case, a process of sensitized coding (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) produced the following six themes: conceptions of "ultimate" terms (Burke, 1989), judging the journalism, attitudes toward war, recollecting Demand, hearing the news, and negotiating local meaning. This approach to understanding how Demand's death has affected collective identity and the production of meaning within the Palouse community follows on previously cited studies utilizing qualitative interviews. In analyzing the comments of rural landowners, for example, Peterson and Choat Horton (1995) found such themes as common sense, independence, and human-land connection (p. 149-152). While the wealth of interview data in this study precludes referencing all of the comments that pertain to the aforementioned themes, the excerpts included below provide a representative sample.

Conceiving of Ultimate Terms

Rhetorician Kenneth Burke (1989) describes "ultimate" terms—nation, community, hero, and terrorism, for example—as exhibiting a "hierarchy, or sequence, or evaluative series, so that, in some way, we went by a fixed and reasoned progression from one of these to another, the entire group being arranged developmentally with relation to one another...in that there would be a 'guiding idea' or 'unitary principle' behind the diversity of voices" [sic] that defines the concepts

in question (p. 196). Such charged language becomes important to communities such as Palouse because "it can organize one's attitude towards the struggles of politics, and may suggest reasons why one kind of compromise is, in the long run, to be rated as superior to another" (Burke, 1989, p. 196). The interview data reveals a range of orientations with regard to ultimate terms that sustain the Demand metanarrative.

With Burke's (1989) implications in mind, consider how Demand's mother defined *nation*: "Community. The community of our country in particular, but also other countries" (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005). Jim Stewart, who has taught at Garfield-Palouse High School over 18 years, expressed similar sentiment: "Gosh, nation...shared community, I guess. People with shared values, and people working together for a common good" (personal communication, April 20, 2005). Here the synthesis of the national with the local reinforces Anderson's (1983/1991) theory of imagined community. With regard to national identity in America, Baldwin felt that

we're the luckiest people in the world. I do, with our freedoms. I think that we do play a role as world leaders in helping set a standard and showing people a good way of life, and values...I feel like each of us an individual takes part with our identity with our country in different ways, and that's part of what's great about our country is we can express it negatively or positively or however we feel. But having that freedom. (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005)

Though their attitudes toward the Iraq war appear to coincide, Baldwin's approach to nationhood differed markedly from Robert Atchison, who after graduating high school joined the Navy a year before Demand entered the Army. "Nation," according to Atchison, meant being

unified. Unified. I'd say, you know you look at a nation and you think everybody's there for one purpose one reason...I think [the American nation has] gotten way too political. You know, I mean when I was growing up, you'd see an African American, you'd call them black or whatever...you know, and like Orientals or whatever, what do you call them. No, you know it's just, it's getting too...yeah, too political. Everything has to be politically correct now. You can't just say 'hey guy' or you know, you've got to say the right thing and if you don't you're ostracized or I mean cast out because you know you're not correct. (personal communication, April 2, 2005)

What becomes evident is that personal impressions of ultimate terms speak volumes about the sociopolitical leanings of Palouse residents. Dominant definitions of the American nation, community, national identity, and other enigmas seem to have pronounced influence in shaping the ideals for which Demand stood proud.

Respondents expressed more agreement when commenting on heroism and American heroes, terms that sometimes brought Demand's name to the fore. Pat Collier, who recommended Demand as a good hay hand to area farmers looking for summer help, felt that *hero* meant "a person you can look up to. And you respect. That's earned your respect...Jake, I don't know. I'm kind of—I respect a guy if he works hard. And that's one thing about Jake, he really worked hard...He gave his ultimate there, and he's a hero" (personal communication, March 30, 2005). Similarly, Baldwin immediately defined *hero* as embodying her son and fellow service-persons deployed in Iraq: "Well, right now Jake. But everyone that's over there. Anybody that puts down their life, their limb. And also, even you know on a lesser level, anybody that's an example, especially to kids. A good example, I should say...The first word that comes to mind for me is 'valor.' For an American hero, is valor" (personal communication, March 9, 2005).

Matt Atkinson, who earned a bachelor's degree in political science and now lives in Palouse, offered a broader description of the term: "A hero can come from any country...in my eyes a hero is the same...whatever country you're fighting for" (personal communication, March 10, 2005).

Lastly, queries about the words *enemy* and *insurgent* from the former *Boomerang!* editor evoked strong responses to another class of combatants not always distinguishable in combat zones or news reports. The following excerpt confirms, perhaps, the "lexicon of war" theme's ability to condition perceptions of the War on Terror:

It's not necessarily bad. They [enemies and insurgents] have a different...terrorists—
now you throw terrorists at me I'll fire you up. That fires me up. Those people [enemies and insurgents] are doing what they believe in...and it doesn't necessarily mean they're playing dirty. You know, in a sense they are but...we're doing what we think is right, they're doing what they think is right. Happens to be different than what we think. It doesn't fire me up like terrorist. Because I think they're [terrorists] are just playing dirty...Dirty pool is what comes to mind when I hear terrorism. They're not playing fair...this whole war, you know, we're following rules that they don't have to follow...and we get criticized for the least little perception of inhumanity...and they do whatever they want. (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005)

Note that the former editor's indignation at getting "criticized for the least little perception of inhumanity" mirrors Atchison's frustration with being ostracized for political incorrectness. Having plowed the fertile ground of ultimate terminology, we now turn to an assessment of respondents' consumption and opinion of the news media.

Judging the Journalism

Despite access challenges that confront Palouse residents due to the geographic remoteness of the farming town, interviews show that as with major cities, local and regional newspapers compete for news consumers' attention alongside talk radio, cable and satellite television, and the Internet. As will become apparent in subsequent themes, the biweekly *Boomerang!* paper has lasting relevance for community members, having begun publishing in 1882 under its former title, *The Palouse Republic*. Evidence of competition from other media, however, can be seen in print advertisements attempting to convince the public of the value of localism: "The reader's #1 choice for local news? Community newspapers!" ("The readers," 2004, p. 4); and "PEOPLE WHO READ NEWSPAPERS ARE BETTER PREACHERS AND TEACHERS: It all starts with Newspapers" [sic] ("People who read," 2004, p. 4).

With regional broadcast centers based between 40 and 60 miles away from Palouse, television coverage of Demand's death was short-lived at best. For most respondents, news of the death came instead from word-of-mouth sources as well as the newspaper texts analyzed, while newer media provided such context as daily developments in Iraq. For example, the former *Boomerang!* editor paid attention to "more print than broadcast, and mostly the Lewiston Tribune and the Colfax Gazette. The local ones...I'm just into my local Palouse news" (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005). Similarly, Atkinson said "I love reading the newspaper, usually on a daily basis," but also said he goes online to "look at Yahoo, either financial pages or just general news pages...and then I listen to NewsTalk 1150 all the time, on the way to and from work" (personal communication, March 10, 2005). A mile outside of town, sitting at the kitchen table of his farmhouse, Collier explained that he prefers

the newspaper, probably. And I watch...if I'm in I usually flip the...the TV on and watch news there...We've got the Dish Network. This area right here, if you can't get your antenna up more than about sixty feet, you don't get anything, so we had to go with the dish. A windstorm kind of wiped our antenna out. (personal communication, March 30, 2005).

Demand's mother, however, devastated by news of her son's death, went "through a period where I couldn't look at it because it was pretty hard to see one more soldier had passed away" (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005). When she could bring herself to digest news of the Iraq war, Baldwin typically watched "the evening news or the late night news. And we watch CNN quite a bit. And we get the *Lewiston Tribune* paper...my husband gets it at work and brings it home" (personal communication, March, 9, 2005). Months after Demand's passing, if news channels "start talking about soldiers being killed I'll not want to see that part, and I don't want anybody killed, but the soldiers are more personal to me" (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005).

Heated criticism of the mainstream news media's coverage of the Iraq war explains to some extent Palouse residents' deference to firsthand news of Iraq, and in the case of at least one respondent, the desire for a more patriotic press. Matt Atkinson:

You know, you always watch the news, or you know when they have the reports, when the reporters are embedded there and stuff you always think 'God, maybe I'll get a glimpse of him [Jake] or something'...it just seemed like the few things I actually got from Jake...compared to the news seemed like there was two different—completely different things going on over there...it seemed like Jake knew what he was over there for, he was proud to be a soldier, and he knew he had to do his duty...but it didn't seem like it

was as bad as the news was portraying. I mean, obviously yes, urban warfare...but I mean geez...I guess to Jake it's a job. (personal communication, March 10, 2005)

Meanwhile, Atchison perceived the same tendency by the broadcast media to overemphasize negative news from Iraq, as well as a growing insensitivity to daily casualty reports:

You know, it's becoming so commonplace ...It's like putting toast in a toaster...You don't hear much unless something major happens, you know like a major bombing...like I said I watch *Good Morning America*, you know, and all you see is those sub-screens, like three from the fifth whatever, you know, got bombed today and died. But there's no coverage on it whatsoever...What are reporters paid for? They got to find the story, and unless something really just miraculous happens like say Jake or something like that...all they're going to do is be able to find well, this guy...ran over a landmine or whatever. (personal communication, April 2, 2005)

Stewart, who taught and coached Demand, Atkinson, and Atchison, tended to agree: "Gosh, like I say I don't watch it on a daily basis, but like most news on TV it's highlights...there's a lot more to a baseball game than the one dive and catch, but I see the dive and catch and the homerun a lot so I'm sure there's more going on than meets the eye" (personal communication, April 20, 2005). The unvarnished truth, in Baldwin's view, came from visiting servicemen who had served alongside Demand in the Iraq war: "I think we hear more of the bad news than the good news. And that's personal words from the men that were here at Thanksgiving, from Jake...the joy on kids faces, the children that are going to...school for the first time. We don't get to see enough of that" (personal communication, March 9, 2005). A comment from Jack Doebler seemed to epitomize the general opinion of Palouse residents: "the media has made this Iraq War a circus as far as I'm concerned" (personal communication, April 5, 2005).

As with conceptions of ultimate terms outlined above, what seems the most vociferous opinion expressed by interviewees on the news media's treatment of the Iraq War came from the former *Boomerang!* editor, who helped direct the paper's coverage of Demand's death:

I also will say that I'm pretty dang disappointed with the media...I think that they're giving us a bad rap...I think they need to keep their mouth shut sometimes, and I think the media needs to have a little pride in the nation and be supporting and I think they're tearing us down. Some of the crap they put in the papers...it just infuriates me, and actually I read less now because it just makes me mad. They are not supporting our country...they're putting stuff in and getting us in trouble with other countries ...they just piss me off...I think the editors need to use a little common sense and national pride.

(Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005)

In the context of such comments, motivations underlying the rousing praise of Demand's freedom mission in Iraq that appeared in *The Boomerang!* during the weeks following his death become readily apparent.

Attitudes toward War

Although this study finds widespread disdain for the steady stream of pictures and reports from Iraq conveyed by cable news channels and newspapers during the months surrounding Demand's death, those opinions belie deep rifts within the Palouse community about U.S. justifications for going to war. The respondents interviewed expressed both pro and antiwar positions regarding post-September 11 American invasions as well as earlier wars referenced in the "resonance with past conflicts" theme—and in doing so hinted at an aftereffect of Demand's death

that rates as perhaps this study's most significant ethnographic finding. First consider the following exchange with Atchison regarding the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003:

ROBERT ATCHISON: About [expletive] time.

INVESTIGATOR: Really.

ROBERT ATCHISON: Yes, about time.

INVESTIGATOR: You wish...

ROBERT ATCHISON: Oh, I think they should have finished it the first time...I mean we went in there, we kicked ass, took names, and said 'Okay, well,' you know...I think the election was going on at that time. I think it was that [George H.W.] Bush...wanted to go further, that's my opinion, you know, but I think he was thinking, well, my popularity's going to go down, and I'm not going to get reelected again. (personal communication, April 2, 2005).

When asked whether U.S. investigators' inability to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq changed his view of the war, Atchison replied "Not really. Not really... You know, I mean plain and simple the guy [Saddam Hussein] was a sick, sick person... Something had to happen, and if we wouldn't have done it, who knows if they would have come after us, or one of our allies, or you know, who knows?" (personal communication, April 2, 2005).

Baldwin expressed similar ambivalence about the missing weapons of mass destruction, invoking global security, the authority of her deceased son, and Iraq's dismal human rights record in justifying the U.S. invasion:

I thought, probably for the betterment of the world, that regime needed to come down...there are some places that our presence is needed...My personal opinion [on WMD] was they're hiding them, or they're smuggling them to another country...they

probably were there. And even if they weren't, the atrocities were...I have some pictures that came in Jake's stuff of piles of things. Not mass destruction type weapons, but lots of weapons that he had taken pictures of...I believe they will find weapons for a long time to come. (personal communication, March 9, 2005)

In contrast to concern about threats from abroad, a local undercurrent of resistance to war seems rooted in past conflicts. After voluntarily serving in the Navy during the late 1960s, Doebler's opinion has changed considerably, partly as a result of what he perceived as the Palouse community's cold embrace of Vietnam War veterans. With regard to Iraq, Doebler said

I don't support the war at all...We have no reason to have our young men over their being killed, and it's political but it's also war's good for business. I didn't agree with some of the speeches made on Palouse Days, and that's just my opinion. But I'm a Vietnam vet...and it was a very unpopular war, and this is an all-volunteer army, and it makes a difference. They are doing a job, and they do know that risk. And the fact that it happened to a local guy...now during Vietnam...three people from Garfield-Palouse area were killed...we weren't here at that time, but they did dedicate, finally, ten years ago, a flagpole...But yeah, that took 20 years, 25 years, for them to get that recognition. And they got a little plaque on the flagpole. (personal communication, April 5, 2005)

Mary Kernan, Doebler's spouse and another opponent of the Iraq War, explained how her opposition to the conflict related to the national politics of the Vietnam era:

I think Vietnam was the war that changed things...in World War I, World War II...if you were a young man you signed up...I don't think there was a lot of discussion...and then Vietnam...just blew everything out of the water...with the Agent Orange, a lot of vets walked around later with...diseases, lots of cancer came from using Agent Orange. They

[defoliated] the country, they spread it, they dropped...this real strong pesticide, so that they could see the enemy, they were wiping out the jungles...but at the same time we were spraying our own soldiers, our own men. (personal communication, April 5, 2005) Baldwin agreed that "yeah, people treated the Vietnam vets when they came back in a different manner...whereas the soldiers today, you know everyone has a better understanding, and they're coming back heroes" (personal communication, March 9, 2005). However, she admits that back then "I was confused...I guess I was young enough and sheltered enough I didn't understand it well enough" (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005).

The offices of *The Boomerang!* lie across Palouse's Main Street from Doebler and Kernan's family-run art boutique. Once again, the newspaper's former editor interviewed for this study expressed one of the most fervent attitudes among respondents asked about the Iraq War:

I have no tolerance for people who are protesting this war and the president. I think that even if you don't agree with the war, that's where we are. That's what our country is doing. And you need to support it...you don't have to like it, but you have to support it. And nothing frosts me more than people who...I mean we got kids over there that we know and to be protesting the war is wrong. We need to be sending them goodie baskets and making it easy for those guys. They may not want to be either, but that's the choice our country has made, and I think that we need to be there and we need to support them, even if we don't like. And not be saying negative comments about it. (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005)

As this study's metanarrative has demonstrated, instead of leading the Palouse community to question the trends in foreign policy and decisions by government officials that ultimately sent Demand to fight and die in a faraway land, one soldier's sacrifice seems to have allowed staunch

patriotism to dominate local discussion of the Iraq War. For instance, in recalling internal disagreement with "some of the speeches made on Palouse Days," Doebler felt compelled to diminish his feelings as "just my opinion" (personal communication, April 5, 2005). Later he remarked "everybody was together on it because it was a local son. Whether they agree with the politics of his death or not, they came together for the family, and to make sure that they community could grieve together" (J. Doebler, personal communication, April 5, 2005).

However, not everyone who listened to speeches and read editorials commemorating Demand's last firefight in Iraq felt comfortable masking their antiwar views:

The one thing about having a view against the war in Iraq is that people think you're unpatriotic, and that riles me because I feel very patriotic, I very much love this country and I am very much proud of being an American. And to have a view against the war...so many people hold it against you that maybe you are being unpatriotic, that you're not going with the present establishment, and that's the only thing that bothers me when I talk to people is that they—just because I'm against the war, you know I feel very proud of what Jake was doing, he did his job, and he served his country, and you know what I mean? (M. Kernan, personal communication, April 5, 2005)

Still, Kernan mirrored her husband's restraint in not speaking about the war publicly. "For Jake's memorial...I didn't get into any political discussions," she said. "It wasn't even present. It was more like we were all feeling such loss...it was a feeling of sorrow, and so it was nice politics was just left way behind" (personal communication, April 5, 2005). Having seen "some of those guys come back changed people" from the Vietnam War, and feeling similarly conflicted about Demand's death in the Iraq War, Stewart recalled that

They had a service here at the school...both sides of the gym were pretty well packed...I'd never been to a military service. It was kind of interesting, the pomp and the circumstance, and stuff. But yeah, people were there to support him. And the people that came went up to the microphone and said things, you know his friends from the military, friends from high school. It was just pretty touching...even though I didn't care much for the politics of the war, Jake was so special that you were there for him...*My views on the war don't count. Jake's views on the war do, at this point I think.* And anything that you can do to remember him and to help his family are good things (emphasis added). (personal communication, April 20, 2005)

Lastly, in commenting on the reaction of the Palouse community to the September 11 terrorist attacks, Atchison confirmed the presence of a dominant ideology that appears to have stifled voices of dissent in the Iraq debate: "I guess around here [the attacks] really [pissed] a lot of people off...I would say mostly...you got two different things...we're—it's extremely Republican around here. I mean extremely. I mean there's some liberal views, there's some liberal people in here but mostly it's pretty conservative" (personal communication, April 2, 2005).

Recollecting Demand

Memories of Demand offered by interviewees add narrative weight to the characterizations found among the sample texts, which tended to emphasize Demand's boyish charm, universal likeability, and goodwill toward the people of Iraq. In drawing out Demand's many positive attributes, most interviewees echoed the pristine image of the yeoman hero discussed in the metanarrative chapter, while others offered a more nuanced profile. "When I define a hero as somebody who gives of himself," remarked Stewart, "Jake always gave of himself. So he was a

hero before he ever went anywhere" (P. Stewart, personal communication, April 20, 2005).

Having coached Demand as an algebra student and an outfielder, Stewart described his friend as the kind of guy I always hoped would come back to the area so he could...he'd be around...He was just a fun person to be around. I knew that if he got a chance to come back he'd come to batting practice for me a couple days a week. You know, he'd help out, and you talk about community and volunteers, and people that make a community strong. Jake would do that. (personal communication, April 20, 2005)

In keeping with the benign "town prankster" theme, Demand's mother explained her son's penchant for mischief by likening him to a Mark Twain character: "He worked for…a lot of the farmers, he was in sports, so you know he had that connection. One of my close friends referred to him as Huck Finn because he would much rather be out fishing or hunting than schooling" (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005). On a similar note, Atchison referred to Demand as "a character…He could light up a room. I mean, he's just a jokester, a prankster, just funny. Nicest guy you probably ever met" (personal communication, April 2, 2005).

During another interview, the former *Boomerang!* editor wondered aloud about "how it always seems like the good guys are getting killed in the car wrecks or fluke things and I don't know why that is. Yeah, [Demand] was a good guy" (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005). Asked whether the glowing profiles of Demand that appeared in *The Boomerang!* and other newspapers paint an excessively positive portrait, the former editor replied that "they don't strike me as being embellished…knowing the people who have been quoted throughout this, knowing them well, they're not embellishers. And when I read the stories they don't strike me as being fluffed" (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005). Fur-

thermore, the twin editorials printed under the banner "Tribute to a hometown hero" in Palouse's community paper touched a special chord with Demand's mother:

This one helps me grieve...It does. I read it and it helps me cry...*The Boomerang!* was the only news that we asked if they wanted to come to the memorial, because it was the town paper...part of it is bringing back the Palouse Days and all that happened there...the personal touches, the people that knew him that are writing about him...it makes a difference, compared to other reporters that didn't really know him...You know, these people knew him. And then also too, the part that Janet wrote where she took the whole speech that I wrote that I read at Palouse Days and wrote the whole thing down, which to me personally felt like Jacob helped me with that...most of the other media took bits and pieces of it...to me this was so personal, and just to have it in a print form was really nice. We have a copy of it that we put next to his picture. (C. Baldwin personal communication, March 9, 2005)

When asked whether the same articles mischaracterize Demand, Atchison expressed slightly more skepticism: "Not at all. It's just, you know...everybody has a wicked, wild side when they're younger" (personal communication, April 2, 2005). Atchison explained that if he were to pass away suddenly "this is the way I'd want my daughter [to remember me]...I wouldn't want her to know about the other stuff that maybe we had done...or [Demand] did or whatever, or get any bright ideas" (personal communication, April 2, 2005). He added that when Demand came back to Palouse for a visit after years in the Army "he'd changed a lot. Oh yeah. You know, you could still tell he was the same guy, but very militarized, I guess. You know, the cussing was there...He'd grown up a lot" (R. Atchison, personal communication, April 2, 2005).

Following on earlier remarks about the politics of war, Demand's persona, it seems, also transcended divisions of opinion among Palouse residents. As a former high school bus driver, Doebler remembered the boy "for his antics and what he did on the bus and trips and stuff like that. He was just kind of the top—the king of the hill kind of guy. You know, he was always the loudest and the longest" (personal communication, April 5, 2005). Over lunch, Doebler recalled one anecdote about Demand that failed to make the newspapers:

One night he led me on a wild goose chase cross country from Colfax. He just was swearing up and down that this was the shortest way because he'd hunted down through there and this, that, and the other thing and all the sudden I'm going along this little rutty dirt road with the busload of kids and Jake running his mouth a mile a minute about 'yeah, this comes out here' and 'don't worry about that.' And, you know I should have never had a bus on that road...He probably drove his jeep down there and never thought about a 66-passenger bus. (personal communication, April 5, 2005)

On the whole, however, such extended anecdotes from respondents asked to recall memories about Demand were rare within the interviews. This came as something of a surprise considering the wealth of stories Palouse residents were reported to have offered at the Palouse Days parade and other memorials referenced by this study's "narrative remembrance" theme.

In researching cultural identity in local legends, Bird (2002) offers some insight on the latter point:

One of the problems with local narratives is that they are elusive and not at the forefront of people's minds most of the time. People remember them when asked, but then the telling can often be somewhat artificial...In everyday discourse, the stories emerge when

the time is right...tales like these are unlikely to emerge unbidden in the course of an interview (p. 524).

After referencing Demand's "wicked, wild side," for instance, Atchison chuckled and fell silent. I inferred that he couldn't "exactly go into that," to which he replied "yeah, exactly" (personal communication, April 2, 2005). Matt Atkinson also seemed disinclined to offer particular stories of his friend's service abroad:

You know he just loved to engage in everything Iraq had to offer. Whatever it had to offer, you know. I mean he would, God, so many stories from that guy, I mean just endless...He would talk about the unit he was in and he would talk about, ah—the types of spiders and bugs and big old spiders they had there and he would talk about, ah—some of the dumb things they did when they were there, I mean some of the pranks he would pull and stuff...just to make it fun, you know and how hot it was...But never anything specific (emphasis added). (personal communication, March 10, 2005)

Thus for most respondents the natural atmosphere in which to offer tales about Demand came not in prearranged, recorded interviews but amongst fellow community members who felt called to celebrate the soldier's life. This tendency to limit and generalize narratives about Demand in structured settings likely also explains why his ethos has risen to such heights. The extemporaneous conditions necessary for the divulgence of narratives about the boy and the soldier arrived in the wake of his death, a time when tradition dictates that recollections about the deceased be laudatory.

Hearing the News

While respondents generally avoided nuanced stories about Demand, several related intensely personal narratives about first getting word of the death of their son and friend. Demand's mother, for instance, told an archetypal tale of the military arriving to inform her and her husband, Bruce Baldwin, who works for a Palouse farming cooperative, about the loss. Once again, the breadth of this backstory prevented it from appearing in print form until now:

Well, when they pulled up in front of Bruce's office they had a client in the office and he said 'Boy that's kind of weird, you don't see this very often, you know, a vehicle with some Army people coming out,' and then he said 'Oh, my gosh, I have a kid in Iraq,' and then it kind of sunk into him. When they came in they couldn't tell him because he was the stepfather. So they had to drive up to the school, and of course the whole time in the car he's hoping and praying that maybe Jake's hurt, and not—hasn't been killed. So when they got to the school...my principal came down and found me, and I was working with a student and she said that I was needed at the office. And you know, the first thing I said was 'Boy, this doesn't happen, you know, you're making me a little nervous here.' And she said 'Well, I think there's a problem.' And the first thing I said was 'It's not Jake, is it?' And she said that Bruce and three officers were in the office. So I had this sinking feeling, and I only had to walk through the halls thinking 'Oh, I hope he's just hurt.' So, when I got there then...they had a standard procedure saying that they regretted to inform us that Jake had been killed in action... I asked if he'd suffered and they didn't have a lot of information, they just knew that he'd been shot like in the lower abdomen...and that he had made it to an American hospital. (C. Baldwin, personal communication, March 9, 2005).

The full story of Demand's act of heroism in the line of duty—which earned him a posthumous Bronze Star and Purple Heart from the Army—did not surface for the Baldwin family until some two months after his death overseas, when fellow Stryker brigade members from Fort Lewis paid a Thanksgiving visit. Holding back tears, Baldwin narrated the final minutes of her son's life:

They were sitting on the stairs drinking water out of their canteens, you know just winding down from this patrol, when this vehicle pulled up at the other end of a kind of deadend alley, and opened fire on them. So they were kind of sitting ducks, just sitting ducks. And what happened was for Jake, he had been sitting down...and he took the time to turn and push the interpreter off the stairs, before he started to rise to shoot. And so that's how he saved the interpreter...instead of just protecting himself...he was the squad leader so it was his job...he did that first. The only other person that wasn't injured in this group was on the other side of the stairs and had rolled off...Jake was the only one killed. But he was shot in both femoral arteries...so he didn't live a long time, but as...at least one of the letters does say...he tried to stand and didn't quite make it all the way but he returned fire until he had no bullets left...One of the kids...that carried Jake out...said that when he tried to get up...and start returning fire as well, he could see that Jacob was just soaked in blood. And he carried him, and so then one of the things that was important to us was we wondered if he said anything...and what he said was, and this was a real typical Jake...when he was frustrated or angry about something a lot of times he would make this little growling noise...He did this 'RRR' because he was mad that they caught him. (personal communication, March 9, 2005)

Bearing a story that seems to leap from the pages of a combat novel, we see how easy it becomes for Baldwin and others to envision Demand as a mythic hero bound to freedom even in death.

Negotiating Local Meaning

Narratives such as the one just offered begin to explain ways in which Palouse residents have made sense of Demand's passing—imbuing it with meaning—in the weeks and months following what has already become a singular sacrifice in the history of a community neglected by a nation no longer enamored with frontier farming. The former *Boomerang!* editor described, for example, the significance of the Palouse Days memorial occurring within days of the casualty news reaching the Baldwins:

The grain trucks were just so cool. I wish you could have seen... some people took a while to understand and it's kind of hard to explain why it was so neat...but it's part like Palouse is an agricultural town, that's what it's based on, it's always been an agricultural town. I mean and agriculture, to the country, is...the base, the solid, what you always come back to...and of course Bruce being with Grain Growers, that was another tie. But it was so neat to see those trucks coming down Main Street. And so many of them...you know everybody we called...'You bet, I'll be there,' you know and the little sign that just said 'Jake.' (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005)

As has been suggested by this study's "rituals of commemoration" theme, the grain trucks parade became more than a heartwarming spectacle of local pride in the war. For the former editor, the memorial represented what those who had killed Demand threatened to take away:

I did think many times that the things like Palouse Days...those sorts of events are the sort of things we are fighting to continue to be able to do...and that's what I said there, that it was fitting...likewise if it had been at a county fair or something—that's the sort of thing that we could have not been able to do anymore. Not necessarily Palouse, but it's still the same, the same gist of having a large crowd...that people care about each other.

Ah, I think that we show a great strength when a small community comes together to honor Jake, and not let it go by. That united us. It's not like we did anything for the war or anything but it united us and it made us strong...Everyone was way more patriotic. It's kind of fading now, but people thought a whole lot more about their country and their neighbors...all of that. (Anonymous, personal communication, April 20, 2005)

Atchison found similar solace in the community's celebration of Demand. Note his allusion to a bombing tactic used in the 2003 assault against Baghdad: "I guess it was *the shock and awe* factor...that 'Oh my God, he's really not coming back'...Seeing the Palouse Days thing...it was like you felt not relieved or whatever but kind of put it to bed a little bit. So that...you weren't as emotional...I think that it helped everybody in the community" (emphasis added, R. Atchison, personal communication, April 2, 2005). As a veteran, Atchison explained Demand's death in terms of an occupational hazard: "It's war, and war isn't supposed to be fun...and that's what he joined the military for. That's what he was trained to do, plain and simple. I mean he was in the military to go in harm's way" (personal communication, April 2, 2005).

In coming to terms with Demand's death, and in contrast to the former editor, Matt Atkinson said he now harbors less hostility towards the men halfway around the world who killed his childhood friend. His reasoning also parallels that of Atchison:

I don't really blame anybody. I guess just being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and you know I certainly think that that insurgent that opened fire there...if he would have known Jake he probably wouldn't have done that...just knowing what kind of person Jake was. I understand they're over there, they're fighting for their cause, and war happens and people die. And that's an unfortunate consequence to what happens when you sign the bottom of the sheet. But I don't blame anybody...I just put the shoes on the

other person's feet...and I think what would I do if somebody was in my city and they were riding around and I mean who knows, there's obviously these factors...initially, yeah. I was just shocked and angry about it...but...after I thought "geez...who knows really what—the surrounding circumstances...Who was that guy? Was he an insurgent? Was he somebody part of that Republican Guard?" You know, whatever...It was just unfortunate that it had to be Jake (M. Atkinson, personal communication, March 10, 2005) Asked whether Demand's death could have the silver lining of bringing the Palouse community closer together, Collier offered this sobering veteran's perspective:

Oh, I can't speak for the other people, but it sure is a loss not having that big smiley face around, for me...I'm just sorry that it had to happen, to Char and Bruce...there's no silver lining in death....Taking a big, strong, healthy kid and having him die is—or be killed—is wrong. It's just a bad situation. He was doing his duty, what he loved, and he paid a high price. (personal communication, March 30, 2005)

For Kernan, whose son teaches high school in poverty-stricken southern Texas, the high price became ever more relevant as Demand's name joined a national casualty list topping 1000: "They have a display case, usually like at our school it's full of sports awards...their whole display case is young men right now that are serving over in Iraq," she said. "It's like a daily reminder...and these kids are there...a lot of small town kids...that come out of poverty sign up...I think every school should have a wall like that...just a reminder that...when they sign up, you know their life is completely changed" (M. Kernan, personal communication, April 5, 2005).

Moving to yet another veteran, Doebler emphasized the Palouse community's ability to rally around the loss—at the expense, some might argue, of questioning the nature of the war in which the Demand had fought:

There was so much going on all at once...Palouse Days is a big deal and all of the sudden there's this huge—for the people a huge catastrophe. One of their own is dead...People weren't arguing in the streets, I mean about the war, but...certainly everybody had their own feelings about it. But the solidarity of it was that here was a native son, he was killed, let's all come together and support no matter what. (personal communication, April 5, 2005)

Throughout the mourning process, that intended support was much felt by Demand's mother, a close friend of Doebler, who had suggested a parade of farming trucks as "just a spontaneous idea...like what would make a big impact" (personal communication, April 5, 2005). After some deliberation as to whether they should attend Palouse Days amidst so much grief, Baldwin recalled that "we went pretty early...you know, everyone we saw was hugging us and telling us how sorry they were and how proud of Jake they were...it was part that event, that Palouse Days event, it kind of changed it" (personal communication, March 9, 2005). Her voice wavering, Baldwin described first seeing the dusty caravan turn the corner: "the grain trucks, that was so...impactful. That was, that was...amazing to have them. You know...most of them, all of them had a sign that said 'Jake' and then some had other signs on the side about the troops or our freedoms...but it was hugely touching" (personal communication, March 9, 2005). For a soldier's mother and those joining arms around her, it was the beginning of a search for meaning.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

Scholars championing the so-called "cultural turn" in critical studies of discourse and society assert that the once-cohesive identities perpetuated by classical institutions and hegemonies have been crumbling for some time, and that postmodern understandings of the individual subject must take into account competing demands for identification, some of which arise from the decline of fixed nations. In contextualizing the fragmentation of national cultures, Hall (1992) reminds us that Enlightenment's Cartesian subject became "enmeshed in the bureaucratic machineries of the modern state," producing a more systemized being obliged to negotiate an assortment of social roles (284). As the foundations of modernity continued to shudder under the weight of such thinkers as Darwin, Marx, Freud, Saussure, Foucault, and Beauvoir, *national* identity came to be understood as a kind of discourse—a way of deriving meanings and mobilizing, if not manipulating, self-conceptions. Anderson's (1983/1991) imagined communities epitomize, for Stuart, the contingent nature of national cultures, which usually involve an overarching narrative, the sense of continuity and perpetuity, a set of Hobsbawm's (1996) invented traditions, certain foundational myths, and an anointed people.

Narrowing our gaze to Anderson's (1983/1991) influential model, we find that nationalist imaginings emerged amidst the withering of two cultural systems that dominated antiquity: religious and dynastic communities. The demystification of the printed word, brought on by the mass production of texts in concert with the spread of certain dominant vernaculars, allowed readers to imagine themselves in communal terms. The daily communion of readership—and the pluralistic literary devices that came with novels and newspapers—brought about far-flung

collectivities that shared new sociopolitical motivations, grounded in retooled memories of the past. As imagined political communities, then, nations constitute limited groupings of sovereign people bonded discursively to one another through perpetuated visions of chronology and likemindedness.

Scholars critical of Anderson's (1983/1991) imagined communities such as Schlesinger (1991) and Creed (2004) complain that his juxtaposition of nationalism and religion avoids "socially located sources of division," and urge the academy to interrogate *community* as a culturally contingent notion that carries romantic expectations—a primary undertaking of my own study (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 165). White (2004) notes the absence of studies engaging the imagined community of America, and points to generalizations about "the great sacral cultures" as evidence of Anderson's inattention to cultural nuances within national communities—the mistaken assumption, in other words, that "structures of time and space precede and encompass such local differences" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 12; White, 2004, p. 53). Still, it seems the framework of print-capitalism that emerges from Anderson's model has much to tell us about the "scope and boundaries" of imagined communities—so long as case work examining nationalism also takes into account the particular contexts, customs, and sentiments that condition local identities. In rural communities, for instance, "how does the story of the local hero become a cultural representation of the village memory?" (Langthaler, 2002, p. 790).

In light of Anderson's (1983/1991) missteps, studies of the nation as imagined community should incorporate Hobsbawm's (1996) invented traditions, a process by which societies fabricate shared histories, intricate rituals, and public displays of remembrance to bolster shared identity. Such work fleshes out the content of shared imaginings without compromising the contingent nature of nationalism; identity formation, after all, "requires unsleeping negotiation

and renegotiation" (Moallem & Boal, 1999, p. 252). Invented traditions notwithstanding, however, modernist conceptions of nationalism seem to lack "a common denominator" that describes the movement from locality to nationality (Confino, 1997, p. 4). "What representational strategies are deployed to construct our commonsense views of national belonging or identity?" asks Hall, who in later positing "the narrative of the nation" brushes over a powerful undercurrent of discourse girding cultural systems in general. This study suggests Fisher's (1984) narrative paradigm can account for the imagined "projection of individual existence into the weft of a collective narrative" (Balibar, 1991, p. 93). It the universal capacity to judge resonant stories—via narrative probability and fidelity—that imbues localism with nationalism, that forges chains of identity between *Homo narrans* and imagined communities.

Rhetorical analysis of newspaper texts referencing the death of Army Sgt. Jacob H. Demand of Palouse, Washington, produced five categories of emergent themes characterizing one community's reckoning with local sacrifice. These include overarching themes (ambiguity in meaning and narrative remembrance), Iraq War themes (resonance with past conflicts, quagmire, conceptions of culpability, lexicon of war, toy soldiers, and implied continuance), national identity themes (national web of loss and sacrificial nationalization), Palouse community themes (community ties, struggle for membership, community service from grief, rituals of commemoration, and contextualizing sacrifice), and Jacob Demand themes (humble roots, moral steadfastness, born to serve, all-American boy, town prankster, benevolent warrior, idyllic future lost, and hometown martyr). While these findings may not immediately suggest cohesion, reordering the casualty rhetoric surrounding newspaper coverage of the Iraq War produces an archetypal plot-line.

Building upon Jefferson's misguided agrarian ideal, Jewett and Shelton Lawrence (1977) propose the American monomyth as a narrative that pervades contemporary culture. With heavy moral overtones, this story conceives of "a small community of hard-working farmers and townspeople living in harmony. A disruption in normalcy occurs, and must be eliminated by the superhero, before the Edenic condition can be re-established in a happy ending" (p. 170). Understanding the primary force at work within the monomyth to be "the state of harmony...from which the drama springs, as well as the goal of its resolution," parallels emerge with the tragedy that has befallen Palouse, a pastoral community suddenly coming to terms with Altheide's (2004) "terrorism world" (Jewett & Shelton Lawrence, 1977, p. 170). By borrowing a more useful depiction of rural heroism (Kittredge, 1987/2002)—involving a diligent son departing from home to battle demons unknown before faithfully returning to enrich his native community—this study achieves the metanarrative of Demand, an ancillary of the American monomyth: Seeking to assert his manhood, a farmer boy battles terrorists who oppose American freedom and liberty. News of the hero's death brings his hometown together in remembrance, and because they care about preserving their community, the residents carry on and vow never to forget the young man's sacrifice.

Reviewing the second half of this study, semi-structured interviews—modeled in part on a study by Peterson and Choat Horton (1995)—were conducted with eight friends and relatives of Demand in order to gather subtexts not revealed by the emergent themes and to gauge opinions of topics central to the metanarrative. Although the interview guide developed from the rhetorical analysis introduced more structure into the ethnographic data collection than Peterson and Choat Horton prefer, findings were enriched by the prompts. Nearly 150 pages of transcripts produced by recorded discussions with the respondents fell naturally into six themes: concep-

Demand, hearing the news, and negotiating local meaning. Together with the rhetorical themes, this data set provided a nuanced understanding of the Palouse community's struggles with war, politics, and the news media, and its respect for a boy and soldier who epitomized everything admirable about the farming town. Moreover, this study's ethnographic component confirmed the centrality of the metanarrative to dominant interpretations of what Demand's death has meant to his hometown and the nation.

Criticisms leveled at my analysis might concern the amalgamation of messages about

Demand that derive from news reports, obituaries, features, opinion articles, and casualty lists.

Although the majority of the texts analyzed are reportorial in nature, others do differ according to the established norms and standards of newspaper journalism. I would argue, however, that because opinions (McClure, 2004) focusing on Demand appear adjacent to news reports that reference his death (Bacharach, 2004), often with little acknowledgement, texts of different genres generate interdependent meanings for the reader. Thus the taxonomic nature of particular texts has less significance in rhetorical analysis than the styles of narration texts promote.

Another potential weakness concerns the myriad of texts not included in the data set that affect the meaning of Demand's death without referencing his name. A substantial body of discourse has stemmed from the Iraq war; searching for Demand's name was an attempt to narrow my analytical focus to those texts that specifically narrate his story. Further research in this vein might include a broader sample of texts eulogizing casualties of war. Studies of imagined community should also take up Schlesinger's (1991) query regarding construction of imagined community by the broadcast media. Lastly, my ethnographic research only focused on eight

respondents; ideally the pool of interviewees for a study of this magnitude would be enlarged so as to more accurately characterize the sentiments of the local populace.

The narrative forces that emerge from newspaper and interview accounts of Demand's sacrifice in Iraq help to answer Anderson's (1983/1991) pondering about the willingness of the multitudes to die on behalf of collective identity: "These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism...what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices?" (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 7). By wrapping individual sacrifice in a collective web of loss and championing one man's death as communally significant, Demand's story allows for local heroism to be sutured directly into national mythology. In the minds of Palouse residents, this all-American boy "stepped fearlessly into his future" and became a benevolent warrior for his nation; "He wanted to serve his country, as service was something born in him" (Nisse, 2004, para. 9-10). Thus the death of a local man on a distant battlefield that might otherwise seem tantamount to hollow bloodletting becomes predestined and purposeful. Anderson (1983/1991) would concur, adding "It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny" (p. 12).

To the extent that individual members of the Palouse community can chain themselves discursively to Demand's sacrifice, nationalism and localism become concomitantly meaningful. Building on Fisher (1984), Thomas Frentz (1985), conceives of narratives as "dramatic stories with beginnings, middles, and ends which give individual actions meaning, provide unity and self-definition to individual lives, and facilitate improvement of the impersonal good for human-kind by showing the future as potential extensions of the present" (p. 5). In sum, this case study has attempted to demonstrate *how* narratives confer fictive meanings on lives and actions that bind local communities to dominant mythologies.

What emerges as the most disturbing implication of the Demand metanarrative's work in the Palouse community concerns the muffling of dissent in neighborhood debate of the Iraq War. In the hours, days, and months that followed news of an instantaneous hero's sacrifice on a distant battlefield, common sense definitions and "good reasons" (Fisher, 1984) long stockpiled by the American monomyth went into discursive action. An archetypal story of humble beginnings, moral decency, steady toil, benevolence, heroism, and martyrdom quickly emerged in speeches and printed texts—and so gracefully rooted itself in the minds' eyes of bystanders watching the hallowed grain trucks roll down Main Street that residents who had gone to war in years past and seen friends come home changed men assumed their dissenting opinions simply did not count. In their place, voices stepped eagerly to the microphone, offering messages of praise and adulation for a soldier who deserved his Bronze Star and Purple Heart, but did not in death earn the right to speak for his native community.

We return, finally, to Hall's original question of globalization: in the postmodern era, to what extent can we expect Demand's story and other *narratives of the nation* to persist as a representational strategy? Consider this reflection from Langthaler's (2002) work on "The Rise and Fall of a Local Hero":

Since the so-called cultural turn in the historical sciences, stories like this—sagas, tales, myths, legends, epics, etc.—have aroused the interest of historians. Their aura of eternity often conceals a recent origin. We can read these narratives, so to speak, as romantic reactions to modernity, to the *acceleration* of time and *dissolution* of space in the western world over the last 200 years...Historians dealing with the question of modern identity consider the *cultural representation* of continuity and coherence as one strategy of crisishandling. (p. 788)

Hall (1992) would seem to agree, arguing for exceptions, in select corners of the planet, to globalization's erosion of national identity. While "cultural identities everywhere are being revitalized by the impact of time-space compression," writes Hall, globalization "is an uneven process" that "can go hand in hand with a strengthening of local identities" (p. 306). Such is the case with Palouse, where Altheide's (2004) "terrorism world" continues to evoke fear and trembling as to—borrowing from a local editorial—"what else 'they' might do to us" (Barstow, 2004, p. 3). Regrettably, residents' simmering trepidations regarding the acceleration of their imagined community's fragmentation have been realized in the death of one of their own. This singular event allows the broader story of Demand to boost local identification—and to conflate that solidarity, for the near future, with nationalism.

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