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What is This?

Accounts of violence from Arabs and Israelis on Nightline

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ABSTRACT. The North American network, ABC-Television, broadcast the news-panel program, *Nightline*, from Jerusalem during the beginning days of the Second Intifada. One of the main themes of this discussion was the violence, pain and trauma – the civilians killed or wounded, the military's actions, and how it all started. Even the horrible facts of violence must be told or narrated and discussed for their morality, causes, consequences, responsibility and political ramifications. In this sense, violence is discursive. How violence gets told, how versions get constructed or contested, is our focus. Participants used the communicative practices of invoking membership categories and activity terms and formulating events in support of their evaluative viewpoint. These membership categories were often presented by the use of conflicting positionings in referencing persons or events. The 'conflict' between descriptive terms draws attention to something problematic. Talk of violence also makes relevant reports of affect/feeling. In reporting violence, affect/feeling is reconstructed by participants as both a consequence and a cause of action, to intensify a condition, to raise moral issues, as an obstacle to be overcome, as a shorthand condition to ascribe of another to invite a telling of the events, or to ascribe as an opponent's political strategy. Such discursive uses of affect/feeling help to make concrete the human costs of violence. In addition, the panelists' answers were designed not only for the interviewer or fellow panelists, but to multiple audiences, including millions of TV viewers in the USA.

KEY WORDS: *accounts, affect, broadcast news interviews, discourse of violence, Middle East conflict, positioning*

Your army, as an occupation army, has shot and killed a hundred people, a hundred Palestinians . . . you have a moral dimension that you must address, you have a culpability that you must admit. (Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian legislator)

Unfortunately the blame is on those who ignited this flame of terrorism and violence. (Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister)

Look, the bottom line is that over a hundred people have been killed and thousands have been injured, and as we're talking and as we're speaking there are more riots and violent, violent attacks on citizens, and this cannot continue, it doesn't make any sense whatsoever. Now if we spend the rest of this evening blaming each other over who started it, and how, then we are condemning everyone in this area to much worse violence because what we've experienced . . . in the past few weeks is a promo if we don't get back to the negotiating table. (Naomi Chazen, Israeli Knesset member)

These epigrams are taken from the North American television news program, ABC's *Nightline*, broadcast from Jerusalem on 10 October 2000. The prediction made in the third epigram proved to be all too prescient as we look back over the past five plus years. A recent body count from the Middle East conflict since the beginning of the second Intifada (29 September 2000 to 19 December 2005) reports 3751 Palestinians and 992 Israelis killed (Middle East Policy Council, 2005). Violence takes many forms: from Palestinian stone-throwing youth and suicide bombers to Israeli armed settlers and the military use of heavy armaments. Both sides use references to violence to portray in-group members as victims or unjustified recipients, while out-group members are positioned as the aggressor or perpetrators of atrocities. Such reports serve as blame or accusation against the opposing side. Both Israelis and Arabs avow that they have been victims of various horrible atrocities, so the cycle of revenge continues. The rhetoric of violence often plays a galvanizing role in discussions of this conflict.

This study examines accounts of violence from Arab and Israeli participants on the US news interview program, *Nightline*. The facts of violence – shootings, killings, the number of people dead or wounded – are something that needs to be told. Tellings of suffering, pain or trauma from the violence puts these events into context to make them more concrete, tangible. Even these horrible realities of violence require interpretation; the events get further elaborated on, discussed or contested. We examine the *communicative practices* whereby participants *tell violence* and *position themselves and others* with regard to moral or political accountability. In particular, we focus on participants' *portrayal of events or discursive uses of affect/feeling in positioning.*

Discourses of the Middle East conflict

Israeli-Jews and Arabs are locked in what Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) term an 'intractable ethnonational conflict'. Intractable conflicts are resistant to resolution because they are fundamentally concerned with basic needs such as recognition and security, the fulfillment of which is essential to the survival of each group. Such conflicts are characterized by violence ranging from regular low intensity conflict to full-scale war. The parties to intractable conflicts see their positions as zero-sum and irreconcilable. Each group makes claims to victimization, stereotyping, persecution and historical injustice (cf. Eidelson and Eidelson, 2003). Israelis and Palestinians maintain motivational processes that allow for biased

information including biased selection of information, interpretation and elaboration (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Rouhana, 1997; Stephan and Stephan, 1996). Trauma and emotions, then, become a resource for expressing the conflict such as narrative construction, blaming and justifying.

The conflict becomes an epistemic base that penetrates the social fabric of the community. Leaders, publics and institutions become saturated with the conflict as each becomes inundated with a conflictive ethos. Public space, architecture, scholarship and daily life become politicized. The totality and comprehensiveness of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is underscored by the clash of narratives between the two societies. The two communities disagree about the root causes of the conflict, its historical development, and the role played by each group. The conflicting narrative extends to discrepancies in meanings of events, language, political figures and even street names (Wasserstein, 2003).

In the interactional realm, language use is not a mere epiphenomenon of one's position in the intractable conflict, but becomes the central feature in the production and reproduction of social relations and social structure (Giddens, 1984; Ellis, 1999a). There is a body of research that traces the logical connections between the micro details of interaction and macro structural phenomenon such as gender, ethnicity and class (Ellis, 1999a, 1999b). People's interactional behavior and structure (stable patterns of social systems) are not disparate. They are interdependent, such that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict becomes a resource for people's interaction, and these interactions in turn result in emergent outcomes. We focus on the details of sequential interaction as a vehicle for social action, and as a means by which macro social structures are produced and sustained. A social context is considered to be a dynamic site in which participants produce interactions that are part of an ongoing context, but are also context renewing. Thus, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is a central social resource that shapes the interaction between the participants and, in turn, the particular context renews the conflict.

Argument is the essential tool of interactional conflict. It is the primary mechanism by which societal conflict is represented in the discursive realm. Conflicting parties lay claim to legitimacy through the use of argument. More specific analyses of argument between Israeli-Jews and Palestinians by Maoz and Ellis (2001) and Ellis and Maoz (2002) have shown how conflicting parties deploy resources to manage the ideological dilemmas of the political conflict. Moreover, Johnstone (1986) and Zupnik (2000) have discussed how historical and cultural experiences call forth speaking strategies, argument styles and culturally based communication codes (e.g. Katriel, 1986) that are rooted in historical group experiences.

Data and analytic method

The data for this study comes from a televised ABC *Nightline* town hall meeting from Jerusalem, entitled 'The Holy Land: Moment of Crisis', aired on 10 October 2000. The panel, moderated by Ted Koppel, is composed of three Israeli-Jews seated to the left of the moderator, and two Palestinians and an Israeli-Arab[1] seated to

his right. In addition to the question–answer format and exchanges between the panelists, questions are taken from a live audience.

A videotape recording of this *Nightline* is used as data. ABC makes transcripts available online. These transcripts were corrected where necessary and relevant sections were transcribed in more detail using a Jefferson-like format (see Appendix for transcription conventions). The transcripts were read numerous times along with watching the videotape.

For analytic method we draw on discursive analysis (Buttny, 2004) and positioning theory (Langenhove and Harré, 1999). We focus on the practices by which violence gets told, how it is taken and how it is interactionally evaluated by participants. Through such tellings, accounts and narratives, participants strive to position themselves or their group, or position the other as individual or aggregate. Positioning involves a person's stance towards him/herself, towards the interlocutor(s) or towards others. Positioning is both a structural and an interactive construct. Positioning is structural in that persons bring pre-existing qualities (e.g. as part of one's identity or reputation). Positioning is also interactive in that it may emerge or change through an encounter – 'positioning in action' (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2003). One may be said 'to position oneself' or 'be positioned by others'. Persons can attempt to change their positionings and re-position themselves. Ascribing contradictory positions of another can work to formulate a problem about that person or group (Davies and Harré, 1999). One's actions may be seen to be inconsistent with one's positioning.

Positionings and their attributes can be used as a resource to notice something about oneself or another – such as affect or feelings (Parrott, 2003). In the second part of this study we examine how affect/feeling is avowed as one's own, ascribed of an interlocutor, or attributed to a third party. Positionings become particularly salient in contested encounters; they matter in how persons are seen in terms of accountability within social or moral orders (Harré and Slocum, 2003).

Our focus will be on *how violent events get interactionally formulated or contested by interlocutors*, and *how participants position themselves in relation to these accounts*. To approach these questions, we examine the *communicative practices* interlocutors use in formulating, ascribing and accounting for problems.

Nightline *from Jerusalem as a communication event*

The news panel format of *Nightline* allows the interviewer, Ted Koppel, to raise questions to both the Israeli and Arab participants and allows participants to answer, not only to the interviewer, but to respond to one another in a kind of informal debate. The panel interview makes for some lively discussions between opposing sides. '[O]ne of the attractions of the panel interview format is that it promotes adversarialness without necessarily compromising neutralism' (Clayman and Heritage, 2002: 322). The panel interview is now the most popular format for broadcast news interviewing (p. 335). With this format, interviewers need not ask all the questions; they can step back and moderate the discussion and let the panelists address the questions and respond to each other.

As will be seen, this panel discussion between the Israeli and Arab leaders soon escalated from a question-answer interview initiated by Koppel to more confrontational exchanges between the participants. As an overall gloss, the disagreements soon became heated; raised voices and extended overlapping speech resulted in shouting matches.[2] At certain points, Koppel intercedes to restore order. Our interest here is not in how the talk changed from panel interview into conversational argument (cf. Clayman and Whalen, 1988/9), but in how participants tell of the violence.

This *Nightline* program was aired on 10 October 2000, 12 days into a new cycle of violence, what has since come to be called the Second Intifada, or the Al-Aksa Intifada (Quandt, 2001: 369–72). These events are prior to the emergence of the suicide bombers and also before 11 September 2001. The Palestinians and the Israeli-Arabs have been the primary recipients of the violence. According to a graphic aired by *Nightline* when going to a commercial break: 'People killed in the last 12 days: 74 Palestinians, 13 Israeli-Arabs, 3 Israelis'. At this time Israel is facing an international relations disaster for its military actions against civilians, epitomized by a videotape of the shooting of a Palestinian boy, Muhammad al-Durah, in his father's arms.

Another aspect of the context for this discussion is conveyed in *Nightline*'s set-up piece shown prior to the panel interview. As we learn from the set-up piece, the program was almost canceled due to a dispute between Israeli security guards and the Director of the Jerusalem YMCA (the location for the broadcast) over the possibility of guns being in the auditorium. Edited selections of this dispute are shown in the set-up piece: the YMCA Director and Ted Koppel explaining the situation to the audience, and audience members arguing and contesting different proposals. Koppel reports that they negotiated behind the scenes for nearly two hours before a solution was reached. Koppel frames this as how difficult it is to negotiate anything in the Middle East.

The second part of this set-up piece is a historical retrospective of events in the region from the past 12 years and clips from an earlier *Nightline* panel discussion from Jerusalem aired in 1988 during the first Intifada. This earlier *Nightline* shows vehement disagreements and exchange of insults. As the voice-over narrator comments, 'the language of deadlock was depressingly similar on both sides'. But we also see the panelists converging on some common goals. The set-up piece's narrative then turns to a chronicle of subsequent historical events: the meeting in Madrid, the signing of the Oslo Accords, the breakdown of Camp David, and most recently, Ariel Sharon's visit to the Al-Aksa Mosque sparking this new round of violence over the last 12 days. This second part of the set-up piece foreshadows the two main themes which arise from the discussion: the new violence and the question of what went wrong with the peace negotiations.

A crucial feature for understanding this *Nightline* as a communication event is that it is broadcast on one of the major US television networks, ABC, and is watched by millions of North Americans. US public opinion is seen as extremely important by both sides since it can impact funding or even influence American diplomacy in the negotiation process (Quandt, 2001; Wasserstein, 2003).

Broadcast news interviews can be heard as talk designed for an overhearing audience (Heritage, 1985). Panelists may be addressing the moderator, but their discourse can be heard as oriented to the viewing US audience in various ways. The most explicit way of orienting to the US audience is when specific North American references are made. For instance, the Israeli panelist Ehud Olmert compares the Israeli democracy to that of the USA, and later Olmert cites President Clinton to bolster the Israeli account for why the peace process broke down. Or the Israeli-Arab panelist Azmi Bishara compares his actions to those of a liberal American during a conflict. Most of the panelists' answers, accounts or descriptions do not contain such explicit North American references. Nonetheless, a sizable portion of the panelists' responses can be heard as designed for US audiences[3] in less explicit ways.

The panelists are oriented not only to the US viewers, but also to local audiences – their fellow panelists, those Palestinians, Israeli-Arabs and Israeli-Jews in the YMCA auditorium, and their own constituencies. Particularly on the Israeli-Jewish side, there are a range of political views, from hard-liners to peace advocates to critics. The Arab panelists appear more unified in their condemnation of recent Israeli actions.

Portraying violence and positioning

From repeated viewings of the videotape and reading the transcripts, two recurring themes emerged: accounts of what went wrong during and after the Camp David peace negotiations, and secondly, accounts of violence against civilians. While both of these themes are interconnected, for this study the violence theme is selected for investigation. Violence can be a powerful elixir, so each side is concerned with how they present their version of these troubling events. Violence can be traumatic for a people (O'Conner, 1995) and even transformative (LaCapra, 2004). Such events demand a telling or a narrative of that violence and its impact. Accounts of violence invoke systems of culpability, accountability and political responses that are typically further discussed or contested (Tilly, 2003). Further, given *Nightline* as a broadcast news program with the North American audience, the rhetoric of violence can potentially mobilize sympathy or support for each group's cause. *How do the participants on this televised program discursively use accounts of violence to portray events and position themselves or others?*

Consider how violence becomes raised and presented in the very opening exchange of the interview.

(1) (Participants: Ted Koppel, host; Azmi Bishara, Israeli-Arab Knesset member)

01   Koppel: I would like to begin if I may:? at the far end with <u>you</u>, these have been:
02   particu<u>lar</u>ly troubling days for you ↑have they not as- as an Israeli Arab?
03   but also personally because I gather there were-.hh there has been an
04   attack on your home?
05   Bishara: Generally for the Arab minority in Israel eh it hasn't been a: (0.7) good
06   time the last ten days ((clears throat)) ah: not only because of the pt way

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07        the state dealt with the Arabs as if they are enemies by shooting live
08        ammunition (0.7) into their demonstrations and killing 14 young
09        people and injuring hun:dreds: (0.9) eh but also because after that the
10        Israeli >residents bursted out< into the streets and eh ↑rioters actually
11        started attacking Arabs and Arab individuals everywhere (0.6) burning
12        Arab shops in mixed towns (1.1) and eh one (0.8) of the events was a mob
13        of three hundred four hundered Israeli racists (1.2) eh >de↑claring on the
14        radio that they're coming to burn my house< (0.6) and after midnight
15        organizing beating Arabs that they meet in the streets (.) and they come
16        with torches to my house after midnight to burn it (.) now it reminds of
17        some Hollywood films I think (.) eh eh in certain places in the world, now
18        I happen to be careful:: because a lot of incitement has been done against
19        me personally (.) and I have a pregnant wife and a little baby so I- we
20        weren't in the house, and we can't go back to the house anymore because
21        it's now happening every second night.
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Let's start with the moderator, Ted Koppel's, opening query, which invites a troublestelling from Azmi Bishara. Koppel's query intimates a personal narrative by the locution, 'particularly troubling days for you'. Bishara addresses Koppel's query by starting with an 'abstract' (Labov and Waletzky, 1967) of what is forthcoming in his narrative: 'Generally for the Arab minority in Israel eh it hasn't been a good time the last ten days' (lines 5–6). Bishara's way of putting it, 'hasn't been a good time the last ten days', echoes Koppel's locution, 'particularly troubling days'. Bishara proceeds to unpack his initial overall assessment with a listing of specific violent incidents.

While Koppel asks about the recent troubles for Bishara 'personally', Bishara answers by initially describing violent events that happened to the Arab community. Bishara begins by citing a recent case of the Israeli military/police shooting at the Arab-minority's demonstration and killing and wounding many people (lines 6–9). This account uses the category term, 'the Arab minority', along with the description of events, 'the state shooting live ammunition (0.7) into their demonstrations and killing 14 young people and injuring hun:dreds:' (lines 7–9). Bishara can be heard to be simply reporting what happened and leaving the inference of blameworthiness to the audience.

As Bishara continues listing the recent shootings and burnings against the Arabs, he comes to the incident that affected him personally. This is the incident to which Koppel was referring in his opening query. Bishara narrates that 'a mob' of hundreds of 'Israeli racists' with torches came to his house after midnight to burn it down (lines 12–21). Since he was protecting his wife and child he was not at the house. This violence is portrayed not as an isolated incident, but as an ongoing problem: 'we can't go back to the house anymore because it's now happening every second night' (lines 20–21). Also, the violence is not just happening to him, but is part of a broader pattern of Israeli intransigence. Bishara's selection of membership category terms ('rioters', 'mob', 'Israeli racists') and action descriptions ('attacking Arabs . . . burning Arab shops', 'coming to burn my house', 'beating Arabs they meet in the street') works to position those Israelis as hateful and violent against the Arab minority.

Koppel as the moderator turns to the Israeli side and asks Ehud Olmert to respond to Bishara's account. Koppel proposes the assessment of what happened to Bishara as 'clearly it is unacceptable' (line 59).[4] Koppel's address term to Olmert invokes his membership category as Mayor of Jerusalem because the incidents at Bishara's house presumably occur in Arab East Jerusalem.

(2) (Participants: Ted Koppel, host; Ehud Olmert, Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem; Azmi Bishara, Israeli-Arab Knesset member)

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58   Koppel:    Mayor Olmert uhm (1.0) ↑how do you respond to what you have just
59              heard clearly it is- it is unacceptable (1.5) that a member of the Israeli
60              Knesset, let alone an ordinary cit↑izen, has to worry about a mob
61              coming and burning his house down.
62   Olmert:    Yes I absolutely (.) entirely agree that this is totally unacceptable (.) no
63              member of parliament? whether he's an Arab or a Jew? should have to
64              fear (.) and not any ordinary citizen should have to fear, either Arabs or
65              Jews, ↑now, what is the real: account (0.7) who was attacked (0.7) and
66              who was the attacker? we have a bit of a difference with Mr. Azmi
67              Bishara, but first of all, I want to entirely agree (.) that this is totally
68              unacceptable, however Mr. Bishara who was an Israeli member of
69              parliament (.) and by no coincidence he chose to sit on the side of those
70              who declared themselves partly in peace and partly in war with the state of
71              Israel on the other side not by coincidence (.) ↑should I have mentioned
72              the fact (.) that he is a member of the Israeli Parliament that he enjoys in
73              Israel total immunity like every other member of parliament, that he
74              chooses from- occasionally to use this immunity in order to explicitly and
75              publicly (1.3) to not just attack the state of Israel, which- of which he is a
76              citizen, but to officially side with the enemies of Israel and on one
77              occasion even, he went to an enemy land, to Syria which refuses to make
78              peace with Israel, and he advised the govern [ment and advised the =
79   Bishara:                                              [You don't want to go there I
80              assume?
81   Olmert:    = government not to make peace with this country but rather to attack the
82              state of Israel. And so he advised also the Lebanese so to- to present the
83              full picture of what Mr. Bishara is doing as a member of parliament, using
84              the immunity which is given to him by la [w as a member of parliament I =
85   Bishara:                                            [Ted
86   Olmert:    = think you have to present [the full picture.
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In response, Olmert concurs with Koppel's assessment, and even heightens it as 'totally unacceptable' (line 62). Although Olmert speaks to this, not with specific reference to Bishara as Koppel did, but in general terms. Olmert's reply uses the membership category terms – a member of parliament or an ordinary citizen, whether an Arab or a Jew (lines 63–5). He then moves to raise doubts about Bishara's version, 'what is the real account' (line 65). So Olmert can be heard to give the preferred response of agreeing with Koppel's assessment while a moment latter implicitly disagreeing that this applies to Bishara. In other words, the interviewee need not 'directly dispute the correctness of the interviewer's description' but can 'design his talk to contest it indirectly' (Roth, 1998: 99).

Olmert proceeds in positioning Bishara in a problematic way (lines 68–82). Bishara is initially described by Olmert as an Israeli member of parliament, however on this panel, Olmert observes, Bishara does not sit on the Israeli side but with the Palestinians. And he characterizes the Palestinians as partly at war with Israel (lines 68–71). Also, Bishara is said to side with Israel's enemies and even visits enemy lands and advises them to attack Israel (lines 72–8, 81–2). The obvious conflict here is between the membership categories, being a citizen of Israel and a member of parliament, and the predicates, associating and consulting with the enemy. Olmert's characterization using these conflicting positionings serves to implicitly raise doubts about Bishara's allegiances to Israel.

Koppel allows Bishara to reply to Olmert's portrayal of him. Bishara begins by returning to the burning-his-house-down incident and metacommunicatively identifying what Olmert is doing in his answer.

(3)

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105  Bishara:  Yes, but I have to- I have to make one remark yes very quick. If a Jewish-
106            if a house of a Jewish Knesset mem↓ber would have been attacked by
107            §three hundred Arabs with torches§ (.) Mr. Ehud Olmert would not try to
108            explain them I'm sure
109  Olmert:   I don't explain them
110  Bishara:  You were explaining now:
111  Olmert:   No
112  Bishara:  Why because you should have condemned period
113            You[tried to explain no, no you tried to explain and justify =
114  Olmert:       [I condemned but I said who you are.
115  Bishara:  = first I didn't hear you condemning them in the media, the Israeli media
116            never heard you, this is the first time that I hear that you condemn, ↑you
117            didn't condemn, you said it's not acceptable, ( ) you wouldn't say that
118            for three hundred Arabs attack- I don't know if they would reach that
119            house a↑live if there would have been three hundred Arab citizens with
120            torches: attacking a Knesset member's house
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Recall that Bishara's original narrative was of three hundred Israelis with torches coming to burn his house (see Excerpt 1). Bishara here imagines the counterfactual, 'if a house of a Jewish Knesset mem↓ber would have been attacked by §three hundred Arabs with torches§ (.) Mr. Ehud Olmert would not try to explain them I'm sure' (lines 105–8). In this hypothetical case the membership categories, Israeli/Jewish and Arab, are switched in referring to the Knesset member's house and the mob with torches. This reversing the membership categories is to make a point about Olmert's biased positionings. A moment latter, Bishara extends this hypothetical case: 'you wouldn't say that for three hundred Arabs attack – I don't know if they would reach that house a↑live if there would have been three hundred Arab citizens with torches: attacking a Knesset member's house' (lines 117–20). Bishara's switching of membership categories is employed to show the contrast between how the Arab minority and how Israelis are treated by the state.

Bishara's rebuttal leads to a dispute over the appropriate activity terms to characterize what Olmert was doing in his prior answer (lines 105–17). Bishara characterizes Olmert's response as 'try(ing) to explain' the incident of the mob with torches coming to his house (lines 105–8). To 'explain' the incident is a way of implicitly mitigating or softening it. Olmert immediately denies this activity description (line 109). Bishara reasserts it (line 110) and continues by asserting that Olmert 'should have condemned period' (line 112). Olmert rejoins that he did condemn and adds, 'but I said who you are,' (line 114). Olmert's rejoinder here gives a rather different nuance than 'explain'. Bishara continues that Olmert did not 'condemn' this incident in the Israeli media, insinuating that he is doing so now only for the North American broadcast audience (lines 115–16). Bishara adds that Olmert did not 'condemn'; he said it was 'not acceptable' (lines 116–17). Participants contest how their actions are described because of the evaluative character of these predicates. How one's speech is labeled by another can portray what one is doing and how that is to be understood and evaluated in terms of culpability. In this case if Olmert is heard as 'explaining', then this allows for the inference to the conflicting positionings of Olmert as Mayor of Jerusalem who did nothing to stop the recurring threats to Bishara's house.

Another instance of contesting the portrayal of events occurs when an Israeli audience member (from the youth reconciliation group, Seeds of Peace) raises questions about her recently killed friend to the Israeli Defense Minister Sneh.

(4) (Moran Eizenbaum, audience member from Seeds of Peace; Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister)

Koppel:	. . .ah young lady if you'd be good enough to stand up again you were just telling us about this friend of yours an Israeli-↑Arab (.) who was shot who was killed (1.2) AH:: obviously it's always terrible to lose a <u>friend</u>, but this has more dimensions: for you ↑ >would you talk about that a little.<
Eizenbaum:	Yes (.) well, first and foremost uhm I'm an Israeli? and I'm an Israeli girl and I'm going into the army in less than a year, ↑and I <u>love</u> my country <u>very much</u>, and I love my army that (.) is only trying to defend me as much as- as- as better as it could, (1.3) and I support that (.) but um (.) I just <u>lost a friend</u> (1.5) and I really am trying to understand <u>why</u>: (0.9) >I mean< I know some people would consider it to- to think against Israel
➔	right now but <u>I am wondering</u> how can a 17-year-old <u>child</u> (.) be
➔	any threat to the security of Israel, (1.1) and (.) my- I really wanted to ask you a question, Mr. Sneh (.) >uhm< ↑and I know what you're going to tell me I really know the answer in front, but I really want- I need to hear this from you, ↑is Israel using only the <u>minimum</u> amount of firearms that- that it- we can? are we really trying not to kill anyone, are we really trying to avoid that?

The audience member, Moran Eizenbaum, prefaces her question by identifying herself as an Israeli who loves her country and who will be entering the army soon. Positioning herself in this way works as a disclaimer for her subsequent questions which criticize Israeli policy and actions. In general terms, the Israeli panelists and audience members appear more divided as regards the use of deadly force than their Arab counterparts.

In formulating her question, Eizenbaum's use of the conflicting descriptive terms, 'a 17-year-old child' as a 'threat to the security of Israel' (see arrows), works to raise the problematic. Selecting the membership category, 'child', to characterize her 17-year-old friend heightens the conflict with her locution 'threat to Israel'. Further, her friend is identified as a single individual, in isolation from other Arab youth and their activities. The point being that the selectivity in descriptive terms and membership categories works to heighten the conflicting predicates and, thereby, the problematic character of the portrayed event and how participants are positioned (Watson, 1978).

In response to Deputy Defense Minister Sneh's explanatory account (not shown here), Eizenbaum responds by repeating and adding to the conflicting category terms in casting blame. By expanding on the conflicting descriptive terms, the teller can present it more forcefully, and by implication, claim that the prior explanation was inadequate.

(5) (Moran Eizenbaum, audience member from Seeds of Peace; Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister)

Eizenbaum: . . . these kids are acting only what they feel some of them are actually going to demonstrate with their feeling and <u>not</u> to hurt Israeli soldiers, this is a child that was in an organization called §<u>Seed</u>s of Peace§ a child that personally has talked to me and the most tolerant and reasonable way=trying to explain what he feels this is not a political organization in no way just tolerance.

Sneh: I:: [I know ↑I::

Eizenbaum: [>And he was shot< and I firmly believe

Here Eizenbaum elaborates on the incongruity between these descriptions, on the one hand, 'kids . . . acting only what they feel', '<u>not</u> to hurt Israeli soldiers', 'a child that was in an organization called §<u>Seed</u>s of Peace§', 'a child . . . the most tolerant', and on the other hand, 'he was shot'. Here again the conflict between the membership categorizations – 'child', 'kids' – and their activities, and what happened to him, 'he was shot'. The contrast between her description of her friend and what happened to him serve to position the Israeli military/police in a brutal way.

The discursive uses of affect/feeling in telling violence

In telling violence one may display or avow emotion or affect. Our interest here is in how affect and feeling work discursively in positioning self and others (Parrott, 2003). Accounts of violence sometimes involve participants telling of their negative emotions, affect or feelings. These are 'tellings' of affect or feeling. Emotion terms can designate temporary affective states (e.g. the feeling of anger) or dispositions (e.g. enduring anger at another) (Alston, 1967). Typically emotions are alluded to, though in certain marked situations emotions can be described through first-person avowals (Besnier, 1990: 428). Talk of affect/feeling involves appraisals of persons, events or states-of-affairs (Coulter, 1986; Harrè, 1986; Solomon and Stone, 2002). The rhetoric of emotion draws attention to appraising

the causes or consequences of the emotion. It is no longer just a statistic or body count but, in an instance of a tragedy, even a moral transgression. Telling of negative affect/feeling can make concrete the horror of violence in human terms, for instance, in how it affects the narrator as to sorrow, pain, trauma and the like. As such it can make for intense appeals to audiences.

Turning to the data, we searched for cases where verbal expressions of affect/feeling were used and how this worked in the telling of violence. Here our investigation will be circumscribed to talk of affect/feeling in telling violence, rather than to affect displays (such as indicated through intonation) (Edwards, 1999). Instances of affect/feeling occur much more in the mid to end portions of the panel discussion, as the disputes escalate, though the initial instance occurs during a follow-up question with the first interviewee.

(6) (Azmi Bishara, Israeli-Arab Knesset member).

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38   Bishara:   . . . but what's happening now in the West Bank and Gaza
39              starting with what happened in Jerusalem last Friday (.) the massacre (.)
40              that was (.) actually done there, and the painful- the very painful
41              §decolonization process that our people is going through§
42              in the West Bank and Gaza (1.1) eh with a lot of victims, ↑raised our
43              ((plaintively)) sympathies. . .
```

This account of a 'massacre' ends with the reported feeling of increased 'sympathies'. The account of citing violent events followed by a report of affect/feeling fits the canonical form: 'social event ➔ emotion ➔ action response' (White, 1990: 47). For the third part of this sequence, the 'action response', Bishara tells of the Arab minority's demonstrations (not seen in this excerpt). Discursively these feelings of 'sympathies' arise as the result of violence, and also lead to the response of Arab demonstrations.

Bishara does not speak of his own individual feelings; instead he employs the first-person plural, 'our sympathies', in speaking for the Arab minority. The other term of affect/feeling used here is 'painful'. The feeling terms, 'the painful – the very painful', are used to characterize the 'decolonization process' (lines 40–1). These feeling terms intensify and humanize the abstract notion of the 'decolonization process'. Given that the latter is presented in conjunction with the formulation, 'the massacre' in Jerusalem (line 39), the emotional response needs to be articulated in a heightened way.

While the use of affect/feeling seems most obviously associated with events of being the recipient or victim of violence, this is not invariably so as seen in the following case. Here the Israeli Defense Minister Sneh is asked about the Palestinian boy who was shot while in his father's arms. A videotape of this shooting was shown on news outlets worldwide.

(7) (Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister).

```
01   Sneh:   Well, I think that everyone was shocked to see the terrible – the terrible –
02           the terrible death of the boy that you just described. He and his father were
03           trapped in a cross fire between Israeli position in Nassalium (ph) Junction,
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04        and Palestinian soldiers who attacked the place. He was caught in the
05        middle. I saw all the − all these came in the pictures, how it happened, but
06        now to this boy the facts are no more important because he is not with us,
07        and we all mourn him. But you have to ask your- yourself, besides the
08        very emotional point, why- who has the interest to ignite this wave of
09        violence? Who- who has the interest? And I tell you the political answer.
10        Unfortunately, when Chairman Arafat came to a point that he had to go
11        the extra mile, and to accomplish the agreement with us, that we were
12        so close, which in order to evade, and to avoid the necessary last
13        concession, he took the way of violence
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Affect/feeling can be drawn on, not only when one's in-group is the victim, but also in attempting to explain the event. Sneh begins with the affect/feeling term, 'everyone was shocked' (line 1). He proceeds to explain what happened: the boy and his father were caught in a cross-fire after the Palestinian soldiers attacked as he saw in the pictures (lines 2–5). He concludes the account with the assessment that 'the facts' are not important, and returns to the statement of affect/feeling, 'we all mourn him' (lines 6–7). So in this account we see the rhetorical contrast between cognition and emotion (Edwards, 1999: 282). On the one hand, Sneh reports the shared emotion of seeing a boy being shot on videotape. On the other hand, we get the cognitive report of 'the facts' of what happened − the cross-fire and the implication of an accident or shared blame.

Sneh accounts by placing the violence in a broader frame − as the political strategy of the Palestinian leader, Chairman Arafat (lines 7–13). Sneh draws a further contrast between emotion and cognition: 'besides the very emotional point' (lines 7–8) then contrasted with the attribution of Arafat's political strategy (lines 8–13). So Sneh's accounts concede the affect/feeling of the boy being killed, but he contrasts this to 'the facts' of how it happened within the broader Palestinian political strategy. The avowal of affect/feeling works as part of the concession for shooting the boy, while simultaneously reframing it as a consequence of Palestinian actions.

The most sustained use of affect/feeling comes after a heated dispute with considerable overlapping speech (not shown here). The moderator, Ted Koppel, intercedes and then gives the floor to Hanan Ashrawi, who has not yet had a chance to speak.

(8) (Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian legislator; Azmi Bishara, Israeli-Arab Knesset member; Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister).

```
03  Ashrawi:  first we lost sight of the fact that all of us are
04            wearing black today (0.8) because your army, as an occupation army (0.6)
05            has shot and killed a hundred people, ↑a hundred Palestin:ians: (0.5) not
06            anonymous people, it's [the Israeli Army that =
07  (Bishara):                       [°civilians°
08  Ashrawi:  = shot and killed Pal [estinians ON ↑PALESTINIAN LAND (0.6) and =
09  (Bishara):                       [>°civilians°<
10  Ashrawi:  = there are children ↓not because we are racist Mr. Sneh, (.) not because
11            we have no feelings the way Ben Alisar said last time, that we don't
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12          under- I'm a mother (0.5) and we have feelings and we cry: every night
13          (0.6) when we see children die=it's not because you kno:w Asel that he is
14          important, it's not because Israelis recognize Asel, I recognize every
15          single Palestinian child kid adult woman (.) the baby girl Sarah that was
16          shot in her father's arms as well I recognize them all because they are our
17          children, they are human be⟨ings:, ↑and there is equal value to all human
18          ↓beings. (.) ↑And you cannot shoot our children and get away with it and
19          blame us (0.6) again.
20  Sneh:   You have to be blamed, [ YOU have to be blamed.
21  Ashrawi:                       [Blame us for shooting our children!
22          §I've never heard anything more racist in my life.§ we are in mourning
23          we are in deep pain you have lost touch (.) with the human essence.
24  Sneh:   You ig [nited the violence and ↑unfortunately you people paid the price.
25  Ashrawi:      [When you talk about- you have a moral dimension that you must
26          address you have a culpability that you must admit. (0.9) our children are
27          human beings, we feel the pain we feel the suffering (.) you have been
28          shooting on our own land. ↑what brings you to Palestine?. . .
```

Ashrawi begins by drawing attention to the symbolism that all the Arabs on the panel are wearing black to mourn the hundred Palestinians 'shot and killed' (lines 3–5). In positioning herself and her fellow panelists as mourning, she implicitly positions the Israelis as the perpetrator of the atrocities. Ashrawi avows, 'I'm a mother and we have feelings and we cry every night when we see children die' (lines 12–13). She, too, uses the first-person plural, 'we', to speak, not just for herself, but for Palestinian mothers. This invoking of mothers and children as innocent victims of violence, of course, has a powerful rhetorical appeal.

In her avowal, Ashrawi asserts the obvious claim, 'we have feelings' (line 12). This avowal is part of her refuting a statement from the first *Nightline* panel from Jerusalem, shown in the set-up piece just prior to the panel discussion. In that prior program the Israeli Ben Alisar said that Palestinians do not have the same feelings about children that Israelis do. Ashrawi paraphrases this clip and then challenges it with her own and the Palestinian mothers' avowal of feelings (lines 10–13). But this avowal of feelings is, of course, not simply a statement of fact, that we are just like you, but a way to position Ben Alisar as racist.

Ashrawi's other reports of affect/feeling come in response to the Israeli Defense Minister Sneh's account and blame (lines 20–8). Backing up for a moment, one of the principle Israeli defenses is that the Palestinians started the cycle of violence. Sneh can be seen to be drawing on this rationale in the above excerpt (lines 20; 24). Ashrawi's responses combine reports of affect/feeling with charges of immoral conduct on the part of the Israelis (lines 20–8). That is, Ashrawi accuses the Israeli army of being 'racist' and immoral in shooting Palestinian children. As she says, 'our children are human beings, we feel the pain, we feel the suffering' (lines 26–7). The clause, 'our children are human beings' is much like the prior avowal, 'we have feelings' (line 12). Each of these states what is obviously true. Ashrawi makes these obvious assertions in order to implicate that the Israelis' actions belie these obvious truths; that is, that their shootings are racist or immoral. So Ashrawi is able to discursively link violence to negative affect/feeling and to charges of Israeli racism and immorality.

One of the most eloquent statements of violence and affect/feeling comes later from the other woman on the panel, Naomi Chazen.

(9) (Naomi Chazen, Israeli Knesset member [note: a portion of this excerpt is used in the epigraph])

Chazen: look §the bottom line is that over a hundred people have been killed§ (0.8)
and <u>thousands have been injured,</u> (0.5) <u>and as we're talking and as we're</u>
<u>speaking</u> (.) <u>there are more ↑riots and ↑violent</u> (0.6) <u>violent attacks</u> on
<u>citizens,</u> (0.8) and this cannot continue, ↑it doesn't make <u>any sense</u> (.)
<u>whatsoever.</u> ↑now if we spend the rest of this evening, (0.8) ↑<u>blaming</u>
<u>each</u> <u>other</u> (.) over <u>who started</u> it, and <u>how,</u> (1.0) ↑then we are <u>condemning</u>
<u>everyone</u> in this area (1.1) to <u>much worse violence</u> (.) because what we've
experienced (0.8) ↓Ted ↑in <u>the past</u> (0.9) <u>few weeks,</u> is a <u>pro:mo</u> if we
§don't get back to the negotiating table§ in my opinion ↑the <u>worst thing</u>

➡   that we can do now is get into the <u>blame game</u> (1.1) I am <u>sa:d</u> and I am

➡   <u>angry</u> and I am dis<u>appoint</u>ed and <u>I am confused,</u> and I have to <u>answer</u> (.) to
<u>billions</u> of <u>Israelis</u> who belong to the peace movement that I represent and
I h<u>ave</u> to tell them (0.6) with some conviction that we have a partner <u>still</u>
§despite what happened <u>we have a partner</u>§ . . .

Chazen also connects the report of violence to her negative affect/feeling (arrows). But she frames this along with the breakdown of negotiations, each side blaming the other, and the need to get back to the negotiations. Chazen's negative affect/feeling (arrows) comes as part of a three-part listing, 'sad . . . angry . . . disappointed', and continues with further listing in parallel structure of a cognitive state, 'confused', and then action, 'have to answer'. Unlike the prior two cases, she uses the first-person singular in speaking of her own affect/feeling. Chazen's avowal of affect/feeling arises from the violence and breakdown of negotiations. Typically accounts of violence and affect/feeling are used to implicitly criticize the other; Chazen's telling criticizes both sides.

We have seen participants avow affect/feeling for themselves or for their group. In the following we see the interviewer, Ted Koppel, ascribe affect/feeling to another. Koppel introduces a young woman from the audience:

(10) (Moran Eizenbaum, audience member from Seeds of Peace [note: this excerpt occurs immediately prior to excerpt 7])

01 Koppel: . . .<u>Be</u>fore we go to our break ↑there is a wonderful organization by
02   name of Seeds of P<u>e</u>ace:: which has: to state it very simply brought (1.2)
03   Palestinian children Israeli children Jewish children to the United States to
04   ↑sort of a summer camp where they get to meet=talk to each other get to
05   see each other as human beings, (0.7) ah we have a couple of members of
06   Seeds of Peace with us ↓<u>here,</u> (1.3) you're really in pain today aren't you
07 Eizenbaum: ((nods head))
08 Koppel: Tell us about it, ↑but <u>very</u> <u>ver</u>y quickly and then I'll come back to you
09   after the break. (0.8) >and- and< identify yourself please.
10 Eizenbaum: Uhm my name is Moran Eizenbaum? (.) I come from a city called Usha
11   Natirion (ph) and I've been a member in Seeds of Peace since the summer

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12                   of '98? (1.0) uhm.h Seeds of Peace as an organization is now
13                   mourning the loss (.) of a beloved friend (.) his name was Asel and he
14                   was ah shot: and he was killed last Monday (1.1) um in Nantz (ph) and his
15                   village of Abea (ph).
16   Koppel:         Palestinian boy?
17   Eizenbaum:      Arab-Israeli.
18   Koppel:         Arab-↓Israeli. (1.6) Ah let's leave it at that for a moment and then I want
19                   to hear: about the conflicted feelings that-you're also with Seeds of
20                   Peace- that both of you must have:, and then we'll have some of
21                   our panelists respond to that=we'll be back in a moment.
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In providing a background description of the Seeds of Peace organization, Koppel then addresses one of the members in the audience, Moran Eizenbaum, by the ascription of affect/feeling along with a tag question, 'you're really in pain today aren't you' (line 6). Eizenbaum confirms this by nodding her head (line 7) and Koppel invites her to 'quickly' tell her story (lines 8–9) which she does (lines 10–15). The ascription of another's affect/feeling can be seen as a practice to prompt an account from another (Buttny, 1993). Eizenbaum's shortened account links the affect/feeling of 'mourning' to her Arab-Israeli friend being shot and killed (lines 13–14).

Koppel uses the similar format, ascription of affect/feeling along with a tag question, in opening the interview with Bishara, 'these have been: particularly troubling days for you ↑have they not' (excerpt 1, lines 1–2). In each case the interviewee is invited to tell about the source or cause of the negative affect/feeling. So the ascription of another's negative affect/feeling works as a shorthand version for a more fully-developed account from the recipient.

Returning to Excerpt 10, Koppel closes down this portion of the interview by looking ahead to where they will pick up after the commercial. He glosses Eizenbaum's affect/feelings, 'I want to hear about your conflicted feelings' (lines 18–20). 'Conflicted feelings' is a formulation which needs to be verbally unpacked by the teller. After the break, turning to Eizenbaum, she actually does not avow any affect/feeling in her answer and question for Sneh (see Excerpt 7). To tell about her 'conflicted feelings' in answering, Eizenbaum need not actually avow any such affect/feeling.

At another point the moderator, Ted Koppel, uses the affect term, anger, to gloss the point of the program:

(11)

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Koppel:    all we're here today to do is to try to at least shed ↓a little bit of light
           (0.9) on where: the anger comes from, ↑why there is such difficulty in
           reaching a resolution
```

Again we see an affect term, anger, as a shorthand formulation for a variety of complex events: a mob with torches, shooting and killing, the breakdown of negotiations and so on. The ascription of anger works as a summary term, as a taken-for-granted way to reference this litany of political and violent events.

Also, the anger is used as impeding desired goals of negotiating peace. The implicit contrast here is between emotion and cognition; the anger prevents the cognitive effort to reach a resolution.

Ascribing affect to another can be a way to criticize or undermine their actions. For instance, positioning another as acting merely to gain sympathy is a way to denigrate these actions. We see this ascription of the other in the following excerpt. The Israeli Ephraim Sneh identifies the Palestinian political strategies as attempting to garner sympathy from the world at the cost of the breakdown of negotiations. Sneh metacommunicatively identifies a Palestinian strategy, not only on this program, but in the recent days of the violence.

(12) (Ephraim Sneh, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister; Saeb Erekat, Palestinian negotiator)

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01   Sneh:      . . .we: want to resume the talk n:ow but I must unveil (1.3) the trick (1.7)
02              which actually ↑here in this program we see how well it works, when we
03              sit at the negotiation table we talk as equals (0.7) okay? and then everyone
04              has to make some compromise in order to meet in the middle of the way,
05              (0.8) when you take the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation or dialogue from
06              the negotiation table to the street: (1.2) we are always inferiority because
07              we are the stronger (.) and then you can come: with the stories: that the
08              choppers and the tanks and everything, ↑at the moment that you start: (.)
09              the circle of violence our strength become our weakness, (0.6)
10              [ and this- and this (              ) =
11   Erekat:    [Did we send Sharon to the Haram al Sharif Ephraim
                ((skip 6 lines))
18   Sneh:      = listen to me listen to me (.) that's why (.) now you gain- you gain the
19              sympathy of the world? what we spoke just now [(.) about the most =
20   Erekat:                                                 [We're losing our =
21   Sneh:      = [Excuse me. Excuse me. Saeb Saeb
22   Erekat:    = [children! We're losing our children, we're losing our kids.
23   Sneh:      >I'm talking about your kids< What is more emotional to speak about
24              than- than killed eh children? (.) and when you talk about this ↑you are
25              always in superiority, but what you would like to gain, more sympathy? at
26              the end of the day, not on ABC and not on any other television channel we
27              should live together,
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This exchange occurs towards the end of the program. To briefly summarize Sneh's argument: the Palestinians could not get what they wanted at the negotiation table so they took the conflict to the streets. Such mobilization of the Palestinian youth ultimately leads to violence. Given that the Israelis are much stronger militarily, the Palestinians invariably suffer the consequences. The Palestinians may gain sympathy from the world, but the only way to peace is through negotiations.

Sneh's argument here addresses the Palestinians' accounts of violence on the program. Sneh attempts to deconstruct the Palestinian strategy, to 'unveil the trick' (line 1), as he puts it, of moving from the negotiations to the violence in the street. Given that the Palestinians have been the primary victims of the violence, Sneh references the Palestinians as 'and then you can come: with the stories: that the choppers and the tanks and everything' (lines 7–8). Here Sneh seems to be addressing Saeb Erekat's prior criticism of the Israeli military actions:

(13)   (Saeb Erekat, Palestinian negotiator)

Erekat: Today the voices of guns (0.7) the voices of tanks the voices of your choppers
             the voices of <u>your</u> <u>might</u> (.) is really des<u>troy</u>ing the essence of any hope.

Sneh paraphrases this statement from Erekat without attribution; he uses some of Erekat's terms and imagery though he frames these as mere 'stories' in attempting to disparage Erekat's criticism.

A moment latter, Sneh metacommunicatively addresses Erekat's objection (line 22), 'What is more emotional to speak about than- than killed eh children?' (line 23–4). Sneh's formulation here avoids any reference to the number of children killed or the morality of such action or the Israeli army as the agent of these events. But Sneh addresses one of the strongest rhetorical appeals of the Palestinian side. Sneh concedes that they gain 'sympathy' on television, but not toward living together in peace (lines 24–7). So Sneh attempts to re-position the Palestinians from victims to strategic agents attempting to garnish sympathy rather than continue peace negotiations.

Discussion

The positions, claims and arguments made during this panel discussion seem to be quite familiar to the panelists. The exchanges appear to be less about new information or new proposals, and more about participants' positioning to various audiences – those present in the auditorium and television viewers in the USA as part of a 'dialogical network' (Leuder and Nekvapil, 2004). This panel discussion may be seen as a kind of media event, yet accounts of violence get told or contested. Telling violence must be interactionally produced in the presence of the moderator and opposing interlocutors. Our focus has been on *the communicative practices in telling violence*, that is, on *the portrayal of events* and *the use of affect/ feeling in positioning self and other*.

Telling violence is a member's problem. How the violence is to be articulated and understood is not obviously given. While violence is an inherently compelling topic, participants report violence for more than its descriptive adequacy alone. We have examined the practices of how accounts of violence get told. The selection of membership categories and action descriptions matter in how events get portrayed. For instance, violent events are represented, not just as an isolated incident, as happening only to the individual narrator, but as part of a pattern, told as part of a list of atrocities (Jefferson, 1990). Violence gets formulated in both general terms (e.g. '<u>your</u> <u>army</u>. . .has <u>shot</u> and <u>kill</u>ed a hundred people' (excerpt 8, lines 4–5)) and in specific terms (e.g. 'the baby girl Sarah that was shot in her father's arms' (excerpt 8, lines 15–16)). Violence was told as involving personal experience (e.g. Bishara's account of an Israeli mob with torches coming to burn his house (Excerpt 1)) or as impersonal statistics (e.g. '§the bottom line is that over a hundred people have been killed§ (0.8) and <u>thousands have been injured,</u>' (Excerpt 9)).

These practices in portraying violent events are consequential in how persons or groups get positioned. As we have seen, the Israeli military/police gets

positioned by Arab panelists and even an Israeli audience member as being excessive, brutal or immoral in their use of deadly force. Participants often contest each other's accounts and positionings since what version becomes accepted can be consequential for accountability and political stances. The notion of positioning can apply to individuals (e.g. Bishara) or to aggregates (e.g. the Israeli military/police). Also, the notion of positioning can apply to what was told in the account – the story-world of the violence from five days ago – or it can refer to how persons are positioned in the current interaction. As regards the latter, we saw Bishara contest Olmert's speech action (e.g. 'explain' versus 'condemn' versus 'unacceptable') and in so doing position Olmert as changing his stance due to the North American TV audience.

Portraying others by conflicting membership categories or action descriptions can serve to position them in a problematical way (Davies and Harré, 1999; Watson, 1978). As we have seen, Olmert describes Bishara by the conflicting positionings as a member of the Israeli parliament but who visits enemy lands (Excerpt 2), or Eizenbaum describes her Arab-Israeli friend as a 17-year-old child, who belonged to Seeds of Peace, who didn't want to hurt anybody, but yet was killed by Israeli soldiers (excerpts 4–5). The teller's contrasting descriptive terms draws attention to something problematic and thereby implicates blame.

Talk of violence makes relevant reports of affect/feeling. Our interest is in the discursive uses of affect/feeling in positioning oneself or one's own group, and in positioning others (Parrott, 2003). The Arab avowals of affect/feeling – such as 'painful', 'deep pain', 'suffering', 'hurting', 'shocked', 'sad', 'angry', 'crying', and so on – puts events into human terms, makes them more immediate, more tragic, and can be powerful in allocating blame. In response, the Israeli panelist Sneh concedes the power of the emotion of killed children, but he reframes events in terms of the Palestinian strategy of uprising in the streets. Sneh's attempt at reframing uses the rhetorical contrast between affect/feeling and cognitive strategy (Edwards, 1999). Another version of this contrast between emotion and cognition gets formulated as an obstacle to be overcome, for instance, that anger and related emotions prevent continuing negotiations. Labeling a situation by affect/feeling works as a gloss of events, as a shorthand version which needs to be explained. We have seen the moderator ascribe emotion to participants as a way to invite them to narrate their feelings about a violent incident.

Surprisingly, there are only a few explicit accusations (as seen, for instance, in the first two epigrams). Nonetheless, there are numerous blame-implicative statements made here based on the description of events and avowal of affect/feeling. The teller may just report the violent event that happened and leave the inference of blame to the audience (Atkinson and Drew, 1979). Accounts of violence have a structure similar to Van Dijk's (1993) 'problem stories of racism' in which the complication of the story is left unresolved, thereby implicating the continuing problem.

Looking back at this *Nightline* town hall panel discussion it could easily be relegated as a footnote of the early days of the Second Intifada. As a communication event, it could be seen as Israeli crisis management after the videotape of their shooting the Arab boy, Asel (ph), in his father's arms, or the all too familiar blame

and counter-blame by the Arabs and Israelis. But what such a historical perspective overlooks are the communicative practices we have noted through which violence gets told or contested. These communicative practices (i.e. selectivity of membership categories and action descriptions, avowals or ascriptions of affect/feeling, and the positioning of self and other) persist and, we conjecture, are still relevant today in accounts of violence from the Middle East and other locales. Violence can be seen as a discursive resource which persons can draw upon and tell to various audiences. We have attempted to show how accounts of violence are interactionally constructed out of real world events, and how these tellings can impact the positionings and accountability of participants.

NOTES

1. About 20 percent of Israelis are non-Jewish Arabs, so we use the term 'Israeli-Arabs' to refer to this group. We will see that this label is contested, as will be seen in our examination of the transcripts. As Wasserstein (2003: 167) observes, 'many [Israeli-Arabs] now prefer to style themselves, Palestinian citizens of Israel.'
2. As one journalistic account described the panel, '[I]t was not long before officials on each side were all yelling at the same time' and 'The impassioned exchanges continued through commercial breaks' (Sontag, 2000).
3. Note that the plural, 'US audiences', is used to indicate the various political positions of different demographic groups. US public opinion is generally favorable towards Israel. There is firmer support for Israeli policies among centrist and right-wing Jewish Americans and conservative Christian groups; the left, while more fragmented, tends to support the peace process and liberation movements such as the Palestinian Authority.
4. The 'it' in Koppel's assessment, we learn, does not refer to Bishara's listing of various violent incidents, but to Bishara's 'worry' of an Israeli mob burning his house down (lines 60–1). This focus on the personal and the painful experiences of particular individuals reflects a trend in broadcast news. Televised news is said to prefer specific and personal stories of violence (Gans, 2003).

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APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

.	(period) Falling intonation.
?	(question mark) Rising intonation.
,	(comma) Continuing intonation.
::	(colon(s)) Prolonging of sound.
ne̲ver	(underlining) Stressed syllable or word.
WORD	(all caps) Loud speech.
°word°	(degree symbols) Quiet speech.
>word<	(more than & less than) Quicker speech
<word>	(less than & more than) Slowed speech
hh	(series of h's) Aspiration or laughter
.hh	(h's preceded by dot) Inhalation.
[ ]	(brackets). Simultaneous or overlapping speech.
=	(equals sign) Contiguous utterances.
(2.4)	(number in parentheses). Length of silence
(.)	(period in parentheses) Micro-pause.
( )	(empty parentheses) Non-transcribable segment of talk.
(word)	(word or phrase in parentheses) Transcriptionist doubt.
((gazing toward the ceiling))	(double parentheses) Description of non-speech activity.
§word§	(§ symbol) Staccato voice.
XXXX	(series of X's) Applause.

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