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Affective and Rhetorical Framing
in News Programming of
The O’Reilly Factor

Joey Brooke Jakob

Ryerson and York Universities

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Abstract

It is a political impossibility for the public sphere to be a place of neutral affect. With news media as a tool for political communication and its existence in the public sphere, there is a contradiction between its ability to be objective and its use of emotional language. This study uses an interview between Bill O’Reilly and Donald Rumsfeld on *The O’Reilly Factor* to illustrate how affective rhetoric is used to reinforce the value of coercive interrogation. Drawing from a methodology of affective and rhetorical framing, the language used during the interview – both verbal and bodily – is analyzed for goals, techniques, and effectiveness. Relying upon O’Reilly’s partisan audience, *The O’Reilly Factor* frames coercive interrogation as necessary, without the use of adequate logic. To this end, this paper illustrates how the news media pre-mediate and reinforce a public that accepts coercive interrogation by justifying anxiety about national security.

Keywords: Affective and rhetorical framing, coercive interrogation, *The O’Reilly Factor*, pre-mediation and news media, emotion and the public sphere

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You cited two names, the CIA and yourself as primary sources that coerced interrogation provided information that protected America [...] You provided the sources and your sourcing is correct [...] Then you hear the President [Obama], Vice President [Biden], Secretary of State [Clinton] flat out deny what looks to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt [that coercive interrogation works]. That *worries* me [...] Does that worry you that the top three people in the government are saying that, even though Rumsfeld says it [that coerced interrogation is useful], we still don’t believe it. Doesn’t that worry *you*?

- Bill O’Reilly to former American Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, *The O’Reilly Factor*, 4 May 2011

When news media use anxious affective language during discussions of national security and the competency of state officials, logic is often com-

promised. With this, the news media make it possible to have a public space, with a dedicated audience, in which to articulate such logics. I am arguing that the anxieties of a news mediator – in this case Bill O’Reilly of *The O’Reilly Factor* – become an audience’s own by affective and rhetorical framing. This study is rooted in the question: how does the news media aid in the fostering of logics whereby acts of coercive interrogation are legitimated? My argument expands on the conceptions of Butler (2010) and Grusin (2010), who claim that mediation of war narratives act to agitate a public by situating war as a background to everyday life. With analysis of an interview between O’Reilly and Donald Rumsfeld from *The O’Reilly Factor*, I am illustrating how the news media pre-mediate and reinforce a public that accepts coercive interrogation by justifying anxiety about national security.

Torture Or Not: Semantic Reasoning

In the interview, O’Reilly only uses the term ‘coercive interrogation.’ Midway through the conversation, Rumsfeld indicates that he has a problem with equating ‘waterboarding’ or ‘coercive interrogation’ to ‘torture.’ In bringing the two concepts together, coupled with O’Reilly not prompting the comparison, Rumsfeld connects what he strives to disconnect by failing to outline the difference.

As Greenberg and Dratel (2005) outline, a large part of interrogations done by the American military involve the possibility of physical pain and affective emotional harm. If torture is defined as great physical or mental suffering or anxiety, and coercion is to persuade an unwilling person to do something via force or threats, the two are semantically connected. In knowing that the American military and governments have condoned coercive interrogation, it is conceivable that such actions might involve physical, mental suffering, or anxiety, just as with torture.

Michel Foucault (1977) discusses how the idea of torture conjures ideas of a barbaric, uncivilized past that was remedied by the Enlightenment (p. 16). Though this change brought us out of a collective perversion that used bodily pain as a manner of punishment, Foucault is quick to point out that the current penal system is built on foundations of torture, whereby the infliction of undesired feelings in the body of the guilty¹ are valued for the potential to cause testimony. Torture in war is modeled after prison systems: “Imprisonment has always involved a certain degree of physical pain (rationing of food, sexual deprivation, corporal punishment, solitary confinement) [...] a condemned man should suffer physically more than other men.” (Foucault, 1977, p. 16) In this way, a “trace of torture” exists in the modern mechanisms of the criminal justice system (Foucault, 1977, p. 16). For torture to be torture, it must produce pain in the condemned, which can be measured, calculated, compared and hierarchized on a continuum in which prolonged agony is vital up until possible death (Foucault, 1977, p. 33). In acts of war today, interrogation can occur pre-conviction and exists outside of national penal systems, which may involve acts of physical pain and deprivation (Foucault, 1977, p. 35). Waterboarding, specifically, is a method of oxygen deprivation that produces physical pain in the subject – and can cause death if done long enough – thus can be likened to torturous acts. Beyond my interpretation here, the Obama administration has called coercive interrogation techniques, including waterboarding, ‘torture’ (Shane & Savage, 2011).

¹ Torture as discussed by Foucault is one based on a demonstration of guilt, as punishment for that guilt. Coercive interrogation is a precursor to guilt – an attempt to extract information that would not only indicate the guilt of the interrogated, but also to direct guilt to others – is rooted in histories of torture and punishment as outlined by Foucault.

Theoretical Scope

Where Habermas is concerned, democratic debate is normative, positive, and necessary, leading to rational critical discourse. News communication, while residing in the public sphere, is not necessarily rational. Habermas (1974) describes the public sphere as an ideal where public opinion can be formed, giving equal participation and access to all citizens (p. 49). Formed through the act of participation, the public sphere provides opportunity for conversation whereby private individuals can assemble to form a public body (Habermas, 1974). For Habermas (1974), a flaw occurs when news media are used as weapons of party politics, when they change from bearers of news to reproducers of partisan ideals (p. 53).

While the communication of news as residing in the public sphere can be agreed upon, Habermas's claims to rational critical discourse are invalidated when considering the effects of opinion and interpretation. According to Murray Elderman (1988), people do not react rationally to political facts if they are already subsumed by partisan ideals. As illustrated by Coe et al. (2008), spectators of news are already in political alignment with the source they choose to consume, particularly where soft news shows like *The O'Reilly Factor* and *The Daily Show* are concerned. For Elderman (1988), those who deliver the information are powerful in the ways they define and explain social issues, which can only be further solidified by engagement and identification with the politics exemplified. In agreement with Habermas and the notion that news media can easily become imbued with party politics, Elderman (1988) adds that political communication relies upon the creation of anxiety, followed by reassurance. He explains the production of anxiety in political communication:

Beliefs in political enemies seem to influence public opinion most powerfully when the enemy is not named explicitly, but evoked through an

indirect reference. Perhaps the most common form of subtle evocation is the advocacy of a course of action that implies that a particular group is dangerous (p. 73).

With this, Elderman is illustrating that a nameless enemy works to foster anxiety in order to produce a greater civic desire to achieve particular political goals.

The other aspect, according to Elderman (1988), for constructing political communication is to reassure the public to follow the anxieties that have been produced:

To support a war against a foreign aggressor who threatens national sovereignty and moral decencies is to construct oneself as a member of a nation of innocent heroes. To define the people one hurts as evil is to define oneself as virtuous. The narrative establishes the identities of enemy and victim-savior by defining the latter as emerging from an innocent past and as destined to help bring about a brighter future world cleansed of the contamination of the enemy embodies (p. 76).

In the interview with Rumsfeld, O'Reilly makes clear only one of two enemies by rhetorically constructing 'us' versus 'them': he outright identifies that the current administration is at fault by not agreeing with the use of coercive interrogation. The second, tacitly stated enemy is the assumed terrorist who is coercively interrogated. O'Reilly's language may strike one as odd. While the interview only takes place for five minutes, it is interesting that O'Reilly makes no mention of terrorists or terrorism. Instead, his language works to incite his audience to feel anxious over the issue that the current administration is against coercive interrogation, implicitly stating that the current administration fails at protecting America. With this, anxiety is established, and O'Reilly is able to offer reassurance to his public by way of paternalism and indications toward a shared commonality.

Cable news programming has overt partisanship and *The O'Reilly Factor* is no exception. In a 2008 study, Coe et al. discovered that partisan political affiliations affected what people watched and what they believed. Specifically, the findings indicated that participants perceived greater bias on shows with content that did not align with their own. With specific reference to *The O'Reilly Factor*², the findings illustrated that viewers believed a show was more informative if the information reflected their already held views (Coe et al., 2008, p. 208).

Affective and Rhetorical Framing Methodology

This analysis of affective framing comes from a combination of methodological approaches, drawing from the work of both Butler (2010) and Grusin (2010). To begin, affects cannot be considered solely as 'concepts' as they involve practices that link perception with feeling, thought and body (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 3). Rather, affects can be discussed as encompassing systems that interconnect individuals to the social (including institutions such as news media), individuals to other individuals, and individuals to groups or publics. In essence, affects are persuasive, socially based relations between people (Butler, 2010; Seigworth & Gregg, 2010). Based on his reading of Massumi, Grusin (2010) further distinguishes affects from emotions, "characterizing affects as uncontained bodily intensities and emotions as limited and contained expressions of affects first felt by the body, and only afterward recognized as particular emotional states" (p. 81). Put more simply, emotions are internal and individual, while affects are external and social. What is external can have an impact on the internal and vice versa, but where one origi-

² The study also included *The Daily Show* as an example of opposite partisan views, with similar results in viewership.

nates – either emotion or affect – has weight in terms of effects, what the emotion or affect is capable of *doing* and to whom.

For Grusin (2010), mediation of war and war related content, particularly post 9/11, is rooted in prevention of further possible harm. He titles this specific form of media distribution as ‘premediation’, describing it as:

The emergence of a media logic or formation...which intensified after 9/11 as a form of medial pre-emption. Premediation works to prevent citizens of the global mediasphere from experiencing again the kind of systematic or traumatic shock produced by the events of 9/11 by perpetuating an almost constant, low level of fear or anxiety about another terrorist attack (p. 1-2).

Similar to Elderman’s explanation of political communication as a producer of anxiety, but without the outcome of reassurance, the concept of premediation relies upon an already felt anxiety within individuals. The mediation of content surrounding the events of 9/11 – or the invocation of threats that occurred that day – keeps an immediacy of further potential harm in much of Western culture (Grusin, 2010).

While both Grusin and I are concerned with representations of mediated war issues, to conduct research according to logics of affectivity enable us to focus on mediation itself. With this, it becomes possible to consider “things that mediation does rather than what media mean or represent” (Grusin, 2010, p. 7). Accordingly, I can translate the representations comprised within a textual analysis in order to move to the “doings” of mediated affective logics. The purpose of this type of examination is to map out O’Reilly’s production and reinforcement of anxiety by way of what remains lingering after his proclamations.

Butler (2010) articulates how affective logics are the place

to begin inquiry and critique: affective responsiveness stems from interpretive acts (p. 34). It is within the interpretive act that affects are not only structured but also regulated, predicated upon frameworks that are socially established and legitimated (Butler, 2010, p. 41). With this, social affects can become individual feelings: we claim feelings as our own when we see our experiences reflected back to us from an affective social space. These relations can be summed up:

Our affect is never merely our own: affect is, from the start, communicated from elsewhere. It disposes us to perceive the world in a certain way, to let certain dimensions of the world in and to resist others...Affect depends upon social supports for feeling: we come to feel only in relation to a perceived loss, one that depends on social structures of perception; and we can only feel and claim affect as our own on the condition that we have already been inscribed in a circuit of social affect (p. 50).

Butler (2010) describes the 'inscribed circuit of social affect' according to framing practices. To break the above down, a text has to be apprehendable and intelligible (p. 6). With this, it must be understandably presented, for instance, building upon already ascertained knowledge. A frame always indicates not only what is contained within, but intentionally or not, references what is outside. What is outside a frame shapes what is held inside as the previous information builds the current context, creating understandability. Butler (2010) explains: "to call the frame into question is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limit, that something was already outside, which made the very sense of the inside possible, recognizable" (p. 9). With this, what is outside the frame of this O'Reilly Factor interview are the events of 9/11 and other related content that creates a shared affectivity. Such framing corresponds to Grusin's premediation: what we understand through viewing this interview is building from an already anxious desire to prevent

future trauma.

Method

I am using a dual process of affective and rhetorical analysis, as outlined above, drawing from both Butler and Grusin. Data for this study was obtained from the *Fox News* website, titled “Rumsfeld on Waterboarding Controversy”, 4 May 2011, 4:59 in length. The clip was chosen to analyze an example of mediated support for coercive interrogation, which had recently been widely scrutinized in news media. Following the murder of Osama bin Laden by the American military on 1 May 2011, the value of coercive interrogation was hotly debated. Many international publications not only contested the use of coercive interrogation, but also went so far as to question its use on ethical grounds, claiming these acts to be potentially torturous³. Beyond this, the Guantanamo Wikileaks Files were released just prior, on 25 April 2011. These classified cables describe the controversial interrogations that have taken place at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Not only did the cables indicate that children, elderly, and mentally ill detainees were imprisoned for indefinite periods then released without charge, but the cables also made reference to a possible case of waterboarding, although this appeared inconclusive as it may have taken place at another detention facility⁴.

³ See Savage and Shane “Bin Laden Raid Revives Debate on Value of Torture” *NYT*; “Did torture help in the capture of Bin Laden?”, *Arab News*; “How Osama Bin Laden Perverted US Justice” *The Guardian*; “Bin Laden kill may reopen CIA interrogation debate; n Information on bin Laden courier came from detainees, but ‘enhanced interrogations’ were being curbed”, *Reuters*; “The Wrong Lessons on Bin Laden and Torture” *The Globe and Mail*; and Turley, Jonathan. “After bin Laden: The demon is dead; so are many of our rights” *USA Today*.

⁴ See <http://wikileaks.org/gitmo/#>

Finally, this study is geared toward addressing the emotions and affect in O'Reilly's partisan language and embodiment. Following the Coe et al. study that found similarity between *The Daily Show* and *The O'Reilly Factor* in terms of partisan viewership, I have chosen to address the emotional rhetoric used in *The O'Reilly Factor*. O'Reilly often lambastes *The Daily Show's* host, Jon Stewart, for expressing strong Left political sentiments and for not being neutral. However, as Coe et al. illustrate, there are similarities between the two shows in terms of projecting to their already politically mutually exclusive and confirmed audience. Furthermore, *The Daily Show* airs on *Comedy Central*, while *The O'Reilly Factor* is a *Fox News* program. One is outright produced for an audience expecting satire as soft news, while the other has some identity issues in terms of content and quality, and airs on a (arguably) hard news network.

Findings and Analysis:

The O'Reilly Factor as Affective News Programming

O'Reilly's persuasive language – both in words and embodiment – is impressive. He comes across as sincere, affirming meaning between he and his audience in terms of the issues addressed. O'Reilly may not, nor can his audience, directly acknowledge that his anxieties are injected within his interviewing and delivery of news. In his commentary, he expands on and builds a discourse around the topic of war and coercive interrogation, as affectively based on worry. His worry derives from assumptions of a failing current Democratic American administration, which concludes that coercive interrogation does not work. This worry is articulated at three different points in a five-minute interview. It becomes clear that O'Reilly's expression of thought combines with sensorial-based feelings to reveal his worry. Rhetorical analysis here shows how O'Reilly intends to be persuasive with direct reference to the news media hype against coercive interrogation. In terms of frame analysis, the things O'Reilly

does not do or say – that is, what is contained outside or beyond his arguments – further illustrate his rhetorical points.

To examine what exists beyond the presented frame of this interview, here are a few notes on the surrounding context. O'Reilly appears to orchestrate a forum for condoning coercive interrogation. The discussion of coercive interrogation on 4 May 2011 of *The O'Reilly Factor* is predicated upon the NYT article of 3 May 2011, which cites that Obama had stated the ineffectiveness of coercive interrogation (Shane and Savage, 2011). As well on 3 May, the day prior to interviewing Rumsfeld, O'Reilly speaks to *Fox News* commentator Alan Colmes on *The O'Reilly Factor*. O'Reilly describes Alan Colmes as situated politically on “the Left.” What is interesting to note is that, on the show in which Colmes and O'Reilly discuss coercive interrogation, Colmes states that Rumsfeld reports that coercive interrogation does not produce effective information, going so far as to say that it did *not* lead to the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden. It is at this point that O'Reilly states that he does not believe Colmes' account because O'Reilly himself had not spoken to Rumsfeld, thus creating opportunity for the questioning of Rumsfeld personally. Rumsfeld then appears on *The O'Reilly Factor* the next day (4 May 2011) to validate the practice, not even once faltering on his proclamation of the effectiveness of coercive interrogation. Perhaps it is possible that Colmes was a prop to facilitate discussion, and subsequent validation of coercive interrogation, due to the incriminating nature of the NYT article. Not only does this ploy for the interview with Rumsfeld reconstitute coercive interrogation as valuable, it also provides fodder for two *Fox News* commentators, O'Reilly and Colmes, to engage in a feud to boost ratings.

Briefly, *Fox News* is not neutral in its presentation of information. Rather, the network affirms its dominant position as “trustworthy” through linkages to the state. Skoll (2010) articulates how the news media are intertwined with the

American government, meant to build and maintain public compliance through mediated information (p. 93). Such a statement, while heavy handed, can be reinforced with the specifications made by Coe et al. in terms of partisan viewership and tacit agreement with content. As Butler (2004) describes, the American government and military use ‘shock and awe’, a strategy that “puts out of play the vary capacity to think...*Fox*, the network that regularly intersperse[s] its war coverage on television with the claim that it is the ‘most trustworthy’ news source on the war” exploits the aesthetics of war to make what is presented spectacularly interesting (p. 148). Spectacular news coverage seeks to inspire viewership by mediation of things that are dramatic and striking. This enables sensory perception – over thought – to prevail, with focus on feelings of anxiety as rooted in representations of ‘shock and awe’. Watching *The O’Reilly Factor*, in a sense, is like watching an action movie: we are drawn in by our own anxieties and desires through the sharing of the agitating affectivity presented to us.

To employ both rhetorical and frame analyses, I am breaking down my observations by this O’Reilly Factor clip in terms of goals, techniques, and effectiveness. To address the question of goals, I am problematizing how O’Reilly forms his arguments. O’Reilly fails to use adequate logic to prove his case. Instead, he presents a circular argument:

A = coercive interrogation is useful, is not torturous, and protects America;

B = Rumsfeld, the CIA, and I say so.

O’Reilly assumes what he attempts to prove is correct prior to giving any evidence, rather than presenting ‘A’ in question form. If previously agreed upon, ‘A’ is difficult to refute. In this case, the logic of ‘A’ and ‘B’ are not equal. To assume that he and Rumsfeld are authoritative on this issue begs the question of bias. Specifically, Rumsfeld was involved in mak-

ing decisions as to the use and effectiveness of the coercive interrogation in question. Moreover, O'Reilly is didactically committed to conservative ideals on national defense, citing the need for aggressive measure to tackle The War on Terror and is outright supportive of coercive interrogation – including physical means – to extract information from detainees (Therese, 2005).

In part, the two techniques that O'Reilly uses to persuade his audience of the necessity for coercive interrogation are his body and verbal language, and his claims to commonality with his viewers. O'Reilly is expressive with hand gestures as he speaks throughout the interview, however my focus is on his self-referential body language. To solidify his key points, he touches his chest, or pats his chest repeatedly with his right hand, the tone of his voice changes from regular articulation to slightly raised and wavering as he expresses concern. When his use of language involves himself, he instinctively touches his chest, mainly when conveying his worry that the Obama administration disavows the necessity of coercive interrogation. He also touches his chest at the end of the interview, when claiming that Colmes should take he and Rumsfeld out for dinner. What is interesting at this moment is that O'Reilly uses the term “us”, referring to Rumsfeld and himself, while touching his own chest and not making a hand gesture toward Rumsfeld, indicating a sharing of space. In this way, it seems as though O'Reilly conflates the struggles that he and Rumsfeld face on this issue, gesturing solely to himself at this moment because he and Rumsfeld are on the same side of the fight.

O'Reilly injects his own anxieties and fears into how the current American government is operating, regarding the Obama administration's statements that coerced interrogation is ineffective. With an audience who might already trust O'Reilly, his worry can easily become their worries; O'Reilly's audience is bound to an affective sociality with him. This af-

fective sociality is structured via the trust garnered, not only to O'Reilly as a figurehead of support for coercive interrogation, but also to news media generally. The information presented on news programming, in a Habermasian sense of the public sphere, is to bring knowledge to a public that is needed in order to function and be productive. But what is functionally productive about playing up fears and anxieties in a mediated public forum? O'Reilly's worries work in a loop: his worries work to both foster worry in a public while also providing solutions to such worry, just as Elderman claims, to trust that Republican government strategies of the past are more concerned for the public's safety than Democratic ones of today. The other half of the loop is to confirm the worries that already exist in those who are watching *The O'Reilly Factor*. In confirmation, trust is fostered, as O'Reilly's public is reminded that they are intelligent enough to know that worrying makes sense, as O'Reilly confirms that he himself is worried, too.

As for O'Reilly's claims to the effectiveness of coercive interrogation, he is appealing to his partisan audience. Claiming that he is a "simple man", O'Reilly equates himself with common folks, appealing to human desire for protection and survival. Such a claim reinforces the anxiety American people might feel in terms of terrorism, and O'Reilly communicates an understanding for the everyday experience of this struggle. With this, trust is reinforced with O'Reilly stating his commonality with others. Later he says that he didn't take the word of a liberal – Colmes, someone whose political affiliation differs from his own – at face value, one that was muddying Rumsfeld's words. Instead, he states that he articulated the need to discuss the matter with Rumsfeld personally, and in so doing, self-describes as handling the situation "quite responsibly," implicitly stating that he proceeded correctly while others did not. O'Reilly is also convincing, if simplistic, with his statements about how coercive interrogation works. Twice he simply asks Rumsfeld if its use is effective, and

twice Rumsfeld affirms with near single-word statements.

Rumsfeld, on the other hand, applies a technique of circular logic all his own. Regarding the issue he has, that news media tend to conflate waterboarding and torture, he fails to define the two concepts. To counter the claim, Rumsfeld asserts that the CIA waterboarded only to three detainees, not at Guantanamo, and was not conducted by the US Military. His last testimony on this issue is to state that waterboarding produced valuable information. Rumsfeld affirms the value of waterboarding or coercive interrogation as a whole, not whether or not torture took place at Guantanamo. Then, Rumsfeld cites himself and the directors of the CIA as authorities on the effectiveness of waterboarding and coercive interrogation, yet fails to address the bias here, namely that the CIA certifies itself regarding its actions, without independent sources or review besides the American government. O'Reilly then confirms that Rumsfeld's sourcing here is correct, stating that coercive intelligence provided valuable information that protected America. Again, there exists a problematic logic:

A: coercive interrogation is not torture because the CIA (those who carried out the acts) and Rumsfeld (a figure who approved or did not discontinue the acts) claim it to be the case;

B: coercive interrogation is necessary because it protects America.

With this, the definitions of each act, coercive interrogation and torture, are not outlined. Instead, the reasoning in place comes down to a necessity for safety, which does not remove the possibility of torture, by definition.

In further discussion of the effectiveness of his persuasion techniques, O'Reilly plays up his own anxieties in explicitly stating his own worry, thereby enabling Rumsfeld to come

across as the rational one. O'Reilly uses emotional terms to articulate himself, asking how Rumsfeld *feels*, rather than *thinks*, ultimately stating that he is worried that the current administration has denounced the practice of waterboarding. Rumsfeld speaks as the clear, unbiased one, seemingly grounded in intelligence and objectivity. Affective strategies are employed to foster and solidify anxieties in a viewing public, facilitating potential and desire for public protection. The outcome of this mediation is that information gained through torture is thus not only rational, but also beneficial because it keeps the public safe.

The effectiveness of the interview between O'Reilly and Rumsfeld comes down to an authoritative pathetic appeal, in the emotion-rousing sense, with indirect reference to prior events. The content of this interview takes for granted what exists beyond what it frames or supposes, relying upon the audience to remember past events of 9/11 and The War on Terror. Such fostering and reproduction of anxiety is premeditating a possible future, supposing that through the means of coercive interrogation, acts of terrorism can be prevented. What supports the claims of O'Reilly and Rumsfeld here are paternalistic strategies of superior knowledge and protection. The status that O'Reilly assigns himself as a "simple man," coupled with the expert status that he assigns Rumsfeld, as well as their shared camaraderie illustrated by the statement "Colmes should take us out for dinner", culminate in authority that seeks to reassure the aforementioned anxiety. Furthermore, O'Reilly continually refers to Rumsfeld as "Secretary", not even once indicating that Rumsfeld is, in fact, a *former* Secretary of Defense. Arguably, the reference to Rumsfeld as Secretary in the present tense solidifies his authority on the subject matter being discussed. With this, the strategy of relieving anxiety with reassurance, as linked to Elderman's claims regarding the functions of political communication, further gives credit to O'Reilly for providing fleeting relief via shared – and orchestrated – anxiety.

Conclusion

It is a political impossibility for the public sphere to be a place of neutral affect. Affective communication is necessary when discussing warring sides, to effectively foster an ‘us’ versus ‘them’. News mediation allows for this communication, and for it to be compelling. Due to news mediation practices of affective and rhetorical framing, often specific to national boundaries and interests, an audience can apprehend an ‘us’ versus a ‘them’: the ‘us’ needs to stay safe at a cost. ‘Them’, the bodies of Others, have to be seen as less relevant than ‘ours’ for wars to have the potential for success. With this, the possibility of coercive interrogation – or worse – is born.

Affects are fascinating for their social repercussions. One aspect that I continually gravitate toward is the ways in which affects are gendered as neutral at certain times; stereotypical gendering of emotionality is removed or ignored if it serves hegemonic ideals. For instance, O’Reilly opens the interview by asking Rumsfeld how he *feels* about those individuals who misquoted him. O’Reilly asks the former American Secretary of Defense how he feels – not thinks – about a key issue. Normative gendering attempts to prevent men from feeling when making rationally based decisions, particularly if they have a prominent role in the public sphere. How does asking a man of such high prestige, importance, and supposed objectivity and intelligence, how he *feels* constitute him as a strong man? Does this not feminize him and garner his answers subjective, perhaps too emotional, since Rumsfeld is a public figure that should be responding entirely as removed from affective composure? And why would Rumsfeld’s feelings be important to consider? Should the public not be more concerned with his thoughts? With normative socialization in mind, it would be counterintuitive for a political official to make judgments on national and international security based

on his feelings. However, if he is going to consider his affective stance, admitting to being affectively charged is rationally necessary. Of course, this is not at all possible given normative gender roles. Rumsfeld and O'Reilly completely ignore that affective subjectivities exist, that they have their own. These two individuals have garnered public attention whereby the only information communicated are assertions of how coercive interrogation is necessary, how Rumsfeld and O'Reilly are themselves trustworthy, and that affective frames of worry belong in the public sphere, all without adequate logic. *That worries me.*

Appendix A

The O'Reilly Factor on Fox News
"Rumsfeld on Waterboarding Controversy"
Transcript - 4 May 2011 – 4:59

Bill O'Reilly [Host, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *Fox News*, 1996-Present]: Author of the big best-selling book, "Known and Unknown", and he joins us from Washington. Mr. Secretary, I apologize you are in the middle of this – I didn't inject you into it [as he holds his right hand over his chest] – but obviously you are. I have a number of simple questions, as you know, I am a simple man. Number one, how do you feel about Alan Colmes [Radio/TV *Fox News* host, liberal political commentator] and others on the left using *you* to make their assertions *against* coerced interrogation?

Donald Rumsfeld [USA Secretary of Defense, 2001-2006, under George W. Bush]: Well, it was the first time I've ever heard of Alan Colmes using *me* to support a position of his, but the fact is, the information was garbled. I think what I said was that there was *no* waterboarding at Guantanamo. And somebody else said that a Guantanamo detainee who had been waterboarded provided important information. And the connection created a disconnect. Because the people who were waterboarded, were three people by the CIA, none of whom were waterboarded *at* Guantanamo and none of whom were waterboarded by the military.

O: Right. Now, okay so there was confusion about the context of your remarks, which happens, as you know, *all* the time. All the time. And it was seized upon by Alan and others on the Left to say, you know what? Even Rumsfeld said it didn't work. But I said [places his hand on his chest], quite

responsibly I believe, that since I had not talked to you directly, I'm not taking some secondary source that as you said "garbled up" what your original remarks were. Now the most important thing: you just heard Barack Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and Vice President Biden say flat out, that coerced interrogation doesn't work. We now know that is false. It does work. Correct?

R: Unquestionably it works. And the problem that I have with the discussion is thus far is that people are equating waterboarding with torture. And I think that's a mistake. The President of The United States [then George W. Bush, President of the USA, 2001-2009] authorized the waterboarding. It was done to three people by the CIA – not by the military – and it produced an *enormous* amount of very, very valuable intelligence information. By the testimony of George Tenant [Director of CIA, 1997-2004], by the testimony of the CIA director Michael Hayden [Director of CIA, 2006-2009], and by others who have had the chance to review the information.

O: How about you? Did you see that intel?

R: Yeah, I've certainly been made aware of the intelligence information that came from those sources and others.

O: Okay. That being said then, you cited two names, the CIA and yourself as primary sources that coerced interrogation provided information that protected America. Correct? Am I correct on that?

R: Absolutely.

O: You provided the sources and your sourcing is correct.

R: You quoted Panetta.

O: Right. And we saw what Leon Panetta [Director of CIA, 2009-2011; USA Secretary of Defense, 2011-present] said

about this incident. Okay, now. Then you hear the President [Barack Obama, 2009-present], Vice-President [Joe Biden, 2009-present], Secretary of State [Hilary Clinton, 2009-present] flat out deny what looks to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt [that coercive interrogation works]. That worries *me* [as he repeatedly taps his fingers to his chest, staring intently into the camera without blinking].

R: Well, in my view, we would very likely not have captured or killed Osama bin Laden had we not had the intelligence information we had.

O: Okay, but does that *worry* you that the top three people in the government are saying that, even *though* Rumsfeld and everybody else – Tenet – says it [that coerced interrogation is usual], we still don't believe it. Doesn't that *worry* you?

R: Did they say that recently or when they were senators?

O: No, no. But they didn't repudiate it. They should have come out and said, "I was wrong". This intel [trails off]. Instead, the talking points from Washington – it was a mosaic. It was a mosaic of information. They're bending over like pretzels trying to get away from the coercive interrogation deal. You know what they're doing out there: it's the Washington spin-around.

R: Well, of course it *is* a mosaic in a sense, that you take pieces of information and no one in isolation is determinative [sic]. But taken together, it produces the outcome. And if some of that, as Director Panetta says, came from the enhanced interrogations – the waterboarding – then in fact, the mosaic would not have produced the outcome. And you would not have been able to get Osama bin Laden.

O: But you're not gonna get that admission from this administration, are you?

R: Maybe not. Although, in fact, what they've done is reversed themselves on most of the things they attacked during the campaign: on indefinite detention, Guantanamo Bay, military commissions, The Patriot Act. All these things they campaigned against, and yet now once they're governing, they I think realize, these are things that President Bush's administration put in place to hope to protect the American people.

O: I hope so. Now I think, Mr. Secretary, to be fair you and I have to take Combs out for dinner, since he made us [places his hand over his chest] look good at the expense of himself.

[both chuckle]

O: Alright, the book is called "Known and Unknown", Mr. Secretary, it was a pleasure to see you.

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