Chapter 8  Contextual analysis

8.1. Introduction

The previous chapters presented the findings of the textual analysis (Chapter 6) and the intertextual analysis (Chapter 7) conducted in this study. This chapter proceeds to the last stage of the analysis, and considers the respective socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in which the texts were produced in relation to the textual and intertextual findings of the study, and in particular the roles of the media and the discourses about terrorism in each of the particular settings. This chapter explores how the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts mediate and influence the rhetorical and discursive practices in these two particular settings.

There could be a huge number of contextual factors that could mediate and influence the formation of the newspaper commentaries under investigation. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) put forward a theoretical hierarchy of influences to examine the influences on media content from several perspectives such as journalistic routines, media owners’ and employees’ attitudes and role conceptions, organisational constraints, extramedia factors, and ideological forces from the more powerful. Here Shoemaker and Reese (1996) put extramedia factors, comprising social environment and government influence, and ideological forces from the more powerful, at the highest rank of influences on media content. Based on this, this thesis considers the roles of the press and opinion discourses in these two cultural and linguistic settings as the most crucial socio-cultural factors that may mediate and influence the production of the newspaper commentaries. The first part of this chapter examines the different perceptions of the media’s roles in China and Australia, especially with a focus on the roles of newspaper opinion discourses. The second part of this chapter explores how discourses about terrorism are represented in these two countries in relation to the analytical findings of the textual and intertextual analyses conducted in this study.
8.2. Roles of the press and opinion discourse in China and Australia

Although China has been widely seen as operating a booming economy since the 1980s, it has preserved a Communist system of government. It has also been pointed out that the mass media under the Chinese communist system have become livelier, more consumer-oriented under the influence of more market conditions, but it is still bound by the Chinese political system (Donald, Keane, & Hong, 2002; Huang, 2003; Lee, 1990, 2000, 2001, 2003; Zhang & Fleming, 2005; Zhao, 1998). In Australia, by contrast, for nearly two centuries the idea that the press plays a central role in the management and maintenance of a representative democracy has framed debates about the media. Despite profound changes to society, communications and political circumstances in Australia, the modern mass media continues to embrace this central role (Schultz, 1997, 1998).

8.2.1. Roles of the press and opinion discourse in China

It has been shown in recent literature (e.g. Donald, Keane, & Hong, 2002; Huang, 2003; Lee, 1990, 2000, 2001, 2003; Zhao, 1998; Zhang & Fleming, 2005) that although the introduction of a market economy has, to some extent, eroded China’s commandist media system, the press in China is still largely influenced by political pressure. Before the 1980s, the media in China was under thorough control of the Communist Party’s propaganda system, and served as the mouthpiece of the Party. Following the opening-up and reform policy in the 1980s, the media’s role in China has softened from being purely a mouthpiece of the party-state to what has been characterised as Party Publicity Incorporation (Chen & Chan, 1998). The term Party Publicity Incorporation comes from Schmitter’s (1974) concept of “state corporatism”, which was used to analyse the post-WW I capitalist countries. This term is employed by some researchers (e.g. Chen & Chan, 1998; Pan, Lee, Chan, & So, 2001) to examine the relationship between the mass media and the Party in modern China. As suggested in the term – Party Publicity Incorporation, although the media in China remains tightly controlled, it has lost its former totalist characteristics (Pan et al.,
At present, China is marked by transition from a Communist authoritarian state with a strict planned economic setup to an authoritarian state with an emerging market economy (Fishman, 2005). Along with being a mouthpiece of the party, the commodified party media system in China has accommodated a large amount of entertainment and commercial information, which to some extent has diluted the party’s straitjacket on the readers. It could be seen that there is a tension between the Party’s control and the emerging ideological de-emphasis along with the development of market economy. According to Zhao (1998), ideological de-emphasis in the present China is tolerated just to the extent that the media does not defy party authority or policy. Meanwhile, both party officials and media managers stress the importance of meeting “financial” (i.e., market) and “social” (i.e., party) goals (Pan et al., 2001). This suggests that other than being only part of the Party’s propaganda system, the media have become profit seekers that need to pursue their own financial interests. In other words, the media in modern China has to take the responsibilities of a government mouthpiece on the one hand, and on the other, it has to be run as a business to cater for the needs of the ever-increasing market-oriented economy.

Despite becoming livelier, the scope for fundamental change to China’s mass media is limited by its long-standing role as a mouthpiece of the Party and the consequent paternalistic top-down approach to presenting issues (Zhao, 1998). In 1997, Zhu, Weaver, Lo, Chen, & Wu (1997) conducted a comprehensive study comparing media role perceptions among journalists in China, Taiwan, and the United States, based on three nationwide surveys in these societies. Their study compares the perceived importance of the information, interpretation, and entertainment roles performed by the mass media in these three societies. While the study finds that the media’s role as an information provider is the most popular and the least controversial, the view that the media should play a role of interpretation is also very popular among mainland Chinese journalists, but much less so among the US and Taiwan Chinese journalists. Their study examined the reason behind this difference and reached its conclusion by
examining the missions and responsibilities assigned to Chinese mass media by the Communist Party and the State. As Zhu et al. (1997, p.94) argue,

At the heart is the notion that ordinary citizens do not have an intrinsic ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, and the media have the noble responsibility to help the masses to make sense of daily events around the world. The role of providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems fits nicely into this system (in China).

This could be understood as, for helping ordinary citizens in China make sense of the daily events around the world, the Communist Party and the State assigning missions and responsibilities to the mass media to not only inform, but also to interpret and analyse complex global problems. This argument has been reinforced by other studies (e.g. Fang, 2001; Kluver, 1996) on contemporary China’s society and mass media. Kluver (1996) argues that the political discourses generated by the mass media in China do not so much attempt to persuade the public as to educate them on what constitutes acceptable beliefs and behaviour from the people.

This kind of awareness fits with what has been found in the micro-genres of the newspaper commentaries used by the Chinese writers in this study. As shown in Chapter 6, the predominant micro-genre used in Chinese newspaper commentaries in this study is ‘explanatory exposition’, which aims to explain and analyse the event of 9/11 to the public. Moreover, at the end of this type of text, the writers usually propose some strong suggestions for dealing with terrorism, which mainly aim to illustrate the government’s stance on terrorism. These can be regarded as the acceptable ideas and beliefs that the government employed to educate the public.

Under such circumstances, opinion discourses in China’s press have been largely regarded as being an explanatory arena of the Party to analyse and interpret key issues of concern to the public (Wu & Liu, 2001). Similar to western countries, opinion discourses in newspapers in China can be roughly categorised as ‘editorials’,
‘commentaries’ and ‘letters to the editors’. Editorials represent the ‘official’ voice of a media outlet (quite often the Party’s voice) on matters of public importance, while commentaries usually represent the expressed opinion of a single individual associated with an affiliate news outlet, or an accredited expert outside the media industry, who nevertheless possesses specialised, “insider” status, for example, an academic researcher or former government officer.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, no overtly claimed editorials on terrorism were found in the Chinese newspapers from 11 September to 31 December 2001. Editorials published in Chinese newspapers, especially in the large Party newspapers such as the People’s Daily, are still considered a very important outlet of the authority’s voice on issues of public importance. That no editorials on terrorism appeared within that period of time may imply that the authorities purposely avoided direct responses to the events of 9/11, or played down the importance of the topic of terrorism so as to prevent this topic from being the focus of public attention.

However, it is also true that, against the backdrop of the rapidly changing status quo of media in China, conventional newspaper editorials, which were traditional landmark outlets of the Party’s voices, have become an obsolete and unpopular newspaper genre and have been in sharp decline since the 1990s (Wu & Liu, 2001). Consequently, it is interesting to observe that in the newspaper commentaries on terrorism in China, which is the genre under investigation in the present study, some commentaries were published with no clearly declared authorship. These could be understood as representing the government’s voice (e.g. CN 01, CN 02). Such comments would have been previously conveyed in ‘editorials’. It could be argued here that the Chinese press may have adjusted its strategies of representing government’s voices to using ordinary commentaries rather than traditional editorials so as to accommodate the rapidly changing socio-political circumstances in China. Thus, the press in China may be repackaging the notion of ‘the Party mouthpiece’ and
trying to express the intended voices through the ‘scholastic’ discourses of newspaper commentaries which were often written by academics and researchers.

In sum, the press in China, though becoming more varied in its forms and being pushed to pursue financial profits, is still largely controlled by the government, being its mouthpiece and struggling ‘between the Party line and bottom line’ of market economy (Zhao, 1998).

8.2.2. Roles of the press and opinion discourse in Australia

The claim that the press was entitled to its own independent standing in the political system, as the ‘fourth estate’, has been regarded as an ideal, which, continues to influence the attitudes of those working in the modern mass media of Australia (Schultz, 1997, 1998; Cunningham & Turner, 2002). The term ‘the fourth estate’ was first employed by Macaulay in Great Britain in 1828 to contrast the press with the Lord Spiritual, Lords Temporal and Commons but is now used to contrast the press to the legislative, executive and judicial arms of government (Stockwell, 2004). As ‘the fourth estate’, the press assumes a high status in the management and maintenance of a democratic society together with the legislative, executive and judicial parts of government. In this context, the press is understood and justified as a watchdog on political institutions and the social processes those institutions create and defend. Moreover, the press serves not only as a conduit for information to the governed, but it also serves as a guardian of the people’s fundamental right to free expression of opinion (Schultz, 1997, 1998). Mass media in Australia is believed to be more commercialised and profit-driven than in China; and it enjoys much more freedom and independence in news selection and publication (Marshall & Kingsbury, 1996).

As for the contemporary press in Australia,
there are now profound challenges to the press’s claim to be the fourth estate, challenges that go to the heart of the tension between the commercial nature of the press and its public-political role (Schultz, 1997, p. 25).

The problem for traditional accounts of journalism based in fourth estate explanations is that audiences no longer find traditional journalism as important and sustaining as they once did. On the other hand, the commercial nature of the industry has blurred the idealised role of the press as a unique political institution, committed to playing an independent and central role in the public life of a modern democracy. As a vast and powerful industry itself, the press today frequently acts in its own interest, rather than on behalf of the public interest. It often uses its capacity to discern public desires, as an aid to commercial success (Schultz, 1998). However, it is seen to be fundamental for the press to be regarded as a representative agency because of its capacity to represent the diversity of public opinions. As Curran has argued (1991, p.97):

The view of the media as a public tribunal thus seems almost obsolete. Yet, it is still worth clinging on to the role of the media as a representative agency. The market also has a role to play in making media organisations responsible to the public. What is needed is a new formulation that fits changed circumstances and a revised conception of the media’s democratic role.

According to Schultz (1997), the professionalisation of journalism and acceptance of the idea of the public’s right to information has continued to give the ideal of the fourth estate a life in the Australian press industry. It is believed that if the press had been reduced to a purely commercial entity, its role as the fourth estate would not have been retained. What is needed here is to reformulate the ideal of the fourth estate so as to cater for the changed circumstances. Both journalists and media owners recognise that they have a great deal to lose if the media is seen as a pure commercial activity. In particular, journalists are reluctant to jettison the ideal of being guardians of the people’s fundamental right to free expression of opinion, which has provided
the foundation of their claims to professionalism. As Schultz argues (1998, p.135), “it is harder for journalists to assert themselves in an industry driven by marketing, audience ratings and profit maximisation. But it is not impossible. If journalists were able to build more meaningful, reflective alliances with their audiences they could become a more significant democratic force”. In addition, the press industry has used the fourth estate rhetoric to achieve greater power and influence than it could otherwise enjoy. In this sense, the press in Australia is still embracing the basic norms of the fourth estate.

As for the Australian commentaries on terrorism collected as data in this study, it has been shown that heterogeneous voices and opinions have been represented and even been put into debate in these texts. In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, Australian commentaries with sharply contrastive opinions appear in different or even the same newspapers in Australia. For instance, one article titled ‘US should now take careful aim’ while another named ‘Let the eagle strike free’ appeared in the same newspaper – The Australian. This kind of open debate does not occur in China’s media. Furthermore, nearly all the Australian commentaries in this study, no matter what micro-genre the writers are using, attempt to put forward their own arguments, while many of the Chinese texts do not necessarily attempt to argue for some specific point but only present the government’s point of view at the end of the texts (see details below).

As can be seen above, although the press in China and Australia are situated in quite different contexts and originated from different traditions, both of them are encountering the commercialisation trend. At present, newspapers in both countries are facing stagnant or falling circulations, and are losing their prestigious political and public status under the challenges of other modern forms of mass media such as television and Internet (Schultz, 1997, 1998; Wu & Liu, 2001). Nevertheless, to some extent, the different roles that the press and its opinion discourses are playing in these
two countries can be explicated in their presentations of the commentaries on terrorism in this study.

In short, the press in Australia, though undertaking adjustments in the ever-changing social, political and economic contexts, still enjoys its status as a watchdog on political institutions and an arena of representing the diversity of public opinions. This is in contrast with China where, along with rapid economic development, the press is still largely the mouthpiece of the Party.

8.3. Discourse on terrorism in China and Australia

The following section of this chapter explores how discourses about terrorism have been represented in China and Australia. Particularly, the focus is on what major themes are foregrounded and backgrounded in relation to the textual and intertextual findings in the newspaper commentaries collected as data in this study.

8.3.1. Discourse on terrorism in China

According to van Dijk (1988), a thematic analysis is useful for the explication or assessment of social, cultural and political dimensions of the media discourse. Within this thematic analysis, a text can be examined in terms of its headlines and its topics or themes covered in the text. Headlines could be a starting point for analysing how the discourses on terrorism have been represented in these two different socio-cultural and socio-political contexts. The discourses on terrorism triggered by the events of September 11 can be conceived as a discursive formation as they are a set of discourses dealing with the same subject, and thus build up a discursive reality which, in turn, defines the subjects in a given historical moment. Based on the reading of the headlines of the commentaries in this study, I propose a summary of the themes that could serve as a guideline for further exploring the discourses on terrorism represented in these two contexts.

- Awareness of the nature and origin of the terrorist attack
Advocacy of combating terrorism cooperatively under the leadership of the UN
Support for the military actions taken by the US
Support for participation of one’s own country in these actions
Concern with possible dangers
The impact of this terrorist attack on the world order and economy

For understanding how discourses on terrorism is represented in the Chinese newspaper commentaries, the commentary headlines would be a good start to explore the major themes covered in the texts collected in this study. Table 8.1 gives a list of the Chinese text headlines covered in this study.

Table 8.1 Headlines of the Chinese commentaries on 9/11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. No.</th>
<th>Newspaper / Date</th>
<th>Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CN01</td>
<td>人民日报海外版 [People’s Daily (Overseas edition)] 03/11/2001</td>
<td>共识：联手打击恐怖主义 [Common awareness: to combat terrorism jointly]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN02</td>
<td>人民日报海外版 [People’s Daily (Overseas edition)] 03/11/2001</td>
<td>联合国应主导全球反恐怖斗争 [The United Nations should play the key role in the global anti-terrorism battle]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN04</td>
<td>人民日报 [People’s Daily] 21/09/2001</td>
<td>文明对话与国际关系 [Dialogues among civilisations and international relationship]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN05</td>
<td>人民日报 [People’s Daily] 21/09/2001</td>
<td>时代变局渐显端倪 [Changing times are around the corner]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN06</td>
<td>光明日报 [Guangming Daily] 30/11/2001</td>
<td>早晨的战争 [A war in the morning]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN07</td>
<td>新华每日电讯 [Xinhua Daily Telegraph] 7/10/2001</td>
<td>共同反恐斗争的良好开端 [A good start for combating terrorism together]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN08</td>
<td>新华每日电讯 [Xinhua Daily Telegraph]</td>
<td>反对一切形式的恐怖主义 [To combat all forms of terrorism]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CN09</strong></td>
<td>中国青年报 [China Youth Daily] 22/09/2001</td>
<td>国际恐怖主义;撼动国际战略局势的黑暗力量 [International terrorism: The dark power that shakes the international strategic situation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CN10</strong></td>
<td>经济日报 [Economic Daily] 19/11/2001</td>
<td>世界经济面临考验 [The world economy is facing tribulation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS01</strong></td>
<td>国际金融报 [International Financial Times] 26/10/2001</td>
<td>全球金融市场“钱”途未卜 [The future of the international financial market is unpredictable]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS02</strong></td>
<td>证券时报 [Security Times] 16/09/2001</td>
<td>屋漏偏逢连天雨 [When the roof is inadequate, the rain gets heavier]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS03</strong></td>
<td>中国经济时报 [Chinese Economy Times] 21/09/2001</td>
<td>世界应如何对付恐怖主义 [How should the world deal with terrorism]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS04</strong></td>
<td>证券时报 [Security Times] 16/09/2001</td>
<td>明天我们安全吗 [Are we safe tomorrow?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS05</strong></td>
<td>中国国防报 [Chinese Defence Daily] 09/10/2001</td>
<td>遵循《联合国宪章》宗旨发挥联合国主导作用 共同打击恐怖主义 [Follow the tenets of the UN Charter and bring the leading role of the UN into full play -- Combating terrorism together]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR01</strong></td>
<td>解放日报 [Jiefang Daily] 09/10/2001</td>
<td>美英对阿富汗实施军事打击，全球经济走势如何 [After the US-British military blow on Afghanistan, how the world economy will go?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR02</strong></td>
<td>解放日报 [Jiefang Daily] 24/12/2001</td>
<td>“9·11”后看中美关系合作与摩擦并存 [After September 11, the co-existence of cooperation and friction in the Sino-US relation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR03</strong></td>
<td>文汇报 [Wenhui Daily] 18/11/2001</td>
<td>经济“火车头”开起“倒车” [The economic 'locomotive' starts to 'move backward']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR04</strong></td>
<td>文汇报 [Wenhui Daily] 26/12/2001</td>
<td>世界因“反恐”而变化 [The world will be changed due to the anti-terrorism]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR05</strong></td>
<td>河北日报 [Hebei Daily] 30/12/2001</td>
<td>恐怖主义威胁现代社会 [Terrorism threatens modern society]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR06</strong></td>
<td>湖北日报 [Hubei Daily] 21/12/2001</td>
<td>整体滑向衰退深渊，恐怖袭击雪上加霜，美经济多灾又多难 [Falls down into slump as a whole and the terrorist attack makes it worse --The calamitous American economy]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR07</strong></td>
<td>华夏时报 [Huaxia Times] 15/10/2001</td>
<td>可以说，9.11 事件是世界经济与社会严重失序的表现。那么,在全球化的条件下,政府与非政府、国家与社会之间, 如何建立新的世界治理 [It could be said that September 11 is a manifestation of the serious disorder in world economy and society. So under the condition of globalisation, how governments and non-governments, countries and societies establish a new world administration?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CR08</strong></td>
<td>华夏时报 [Huaxia Times] 29/10/2001</td>
<td>恐怖主义与贫穷无关 [Terrorism has nothing to do with poverty]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **CR09**  | 华夏时报 [Huaxia Times] 06/12/2001 | 发生在美国的 9·11 事件给世界格局带来了什么？一个变化，三大终结 [What has been brought to the world by
By analysing the headlines of these texts, we can gain valuable insights into what the writers of these commentaries consider important or they would like to foreground in response to the event of 9/11 terrorist attacks to New York and Washington. After a close scrutiny of the texts, it is found that the Chinese commentaries are generally foregrounding the themes discussed below:

First, some of the Chinese texts focus on the awareness of the nature and origin of terrorism and the terrorist attack (e.g. CN 06, CN 08, CN 09, CR 04, CR 05, and CR 10). In these texts, the writers generally attempt to show the readers the background to terrorism and the terrorists. Terrorist development and key terrorist attacks in world history are often included as backgrounds to illustrate the cruelty and harmfulness of the terrorist movement. These texts are serving the social function of interpreting for the public what terrorism is. In addition, usually, strong propositions on how to deal with terrorism are presented at the end of these texts. These can be understood as some authoritative voices such as from the Chinese government. For example, at the end of CN 09, after explaining what terrorism is and what terrorism could do to the world, it reads,

但是,任何国家力量,不论其多么强大,都难以在一场无规则的游戏中占上风,与恐怖主义的斗争将是一场异常残酷的非常规的战争,它要求各国摒弃彼此间的嫌隙,通力合作;要求各国改变传统的国家安全观,建立多元化的国家安全战略;要求全世界共同努力,减少恐怖活动产生的根源,从源头上消灭恐怖主义。[However, no matter how strong it is, any country power is difficult to get the upper hand in a game without regulations. The anti-terrorism war will be an extraordinary cruel unconventional war. It requests all countries to get rid of ill wills between each other and cooperate closely. It requests all countries to change conventional views on country security and establish a multi-dimensional country security strategy. It requests the world to make efforts together to eradicate terrorist activities from their roots.]

这是摆在国际社会面前一道既现实又长期的共同难题。[This is a real and long-term common problem faced by the international community.]
Second, some texts are an advocacy for combating terrorism cooperatively under the leadership of the UN (e.g. CN 01, CN 02, CN 03, CN 04, CN 07, CN 08, CS 03, and CS 05). This proposition of combating terrorism is clearly seen as the position of the Chinese government. Sometimes in these texts, the voices of the Chinese government are explicitly presented. For instance, in CS 05, with the headline ‘Follow the tenets of the UN Charter and bring the leading role of the UN into full play – Combating terrorism together’, the writer elaborates on the position of the Chinese government very explicitly with frequent quotations of China’s chief representative in the UN General Assembly. As cited in the text, China’s representative states,

... 中国政府一贯坚决反对和谴责一切形式、各种表现的恐怖主义。防止和打击一切恐怖主义活动是中国政府的一项基本政策。[... The Chinese government always resolutely opposes and condemns all kinds of terrorism. Preventing and combating all terrorist activities is a basic policy of the Chinese government.]

...打击恐怖主义是一项长期而复杂的斗争，需要各国在遵循《联合国宪章》的宗旨和原则以及其他公认的国际法准则的基础上，加强政治、外交、经济、法律和军事等各个领域的合作。[... combating terrorism is a long-term and complicated task, which demands the cooperation of all the countries in political, diplomatic, economic, legal and military fields by following the tenets of the UN Charter and rules of international laws.]

Third, quite a few Chinese commentaries are concerned with the impact of this terrorist attack on the world economies and world order (e.g. CN 10, CS 01, CS 02, CS 04, CR 01, CR 02, CR 03, CR 04, CR 05, CR 06, CR 09). It was found that nearly half of the Chinese texts (11 out of 25 texts) are involved in a discussion on the impact of this 9/11 terrorist attack on the economic situation in the world, especially in China and the US. In these commentaries, various predictions and discussions are made on the possible impacts of 9/11 on different fields of the economy such as financial market, international trade and the manufacturing industry. This finding fits nicely with the polls on the public’s priorities after 9/11 conducted by IPSOS-Reid, Global Express Monitor in January 2002 (see details below), which indicates that more than half of the respondents in China (56%) expressed that the priority after 9/11 should be the economy.
Through an international poll agency – IPSOS-Reid, Global Express Monitor (January 2002) (Everts, & Isernia. 2002), the public’s priorities were monitored in many countries including China and Australia. The following table (Table 8.2.) is based on the answers to the question ‘Thinking of all the issues presently confronting your country, which one do you feel should receive the greatest attention from your country’s leaders?’

Table 8.2. Public priorities after 9/11 in China and Australia
(Source: IPSOS-Reid, Global Express Monitor, January 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19 November – 17 December</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society/ social service</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government system/spending</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other international affairs</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers of respondents: 500 Australia, 508 China*

From the table above, it is observed that the public in China give much more attention to the economy than the public in Australia. This is in line with what has been found in the Chinese commentaries in which the impacts of 9/11 on world economies have been foregrounded. As for terrorism, a much lower percent of respondents (4%) in China felt that it should receive the greatest attention from the country’s leaders.

It is also to be noted that in all the Chinese commentaries in this study no Chinese government’s leaders’ voices have been heard. In contrast, the government leaders’ and key political figures’ voices (e.g. the US President Bush, the Australian PM Howard, the UK PM Blair) were widely heard and discussed in the Australian commentaries. This may be partially due to the fact that the Chinese government leaders’ priority was not on the anti-terrorist battle at that moment.

As can be seen above, all of the Chinese commentaries collected in this study have encompassed three themes, namely, 1) the awareness of the nature and origin of
terrorism and the terrorist attack; 2) an advocacy for combating terrorism cooperatively under the leadership of the UN; and 3) the impact of this terrorist attack on the world economies and world order. At the same time, it is noticed that some of the themes have been backgrounded or totally omitted in these Chinese commentaries, for example, whether the Chinese government supports the military actions taken by the US, what kind of exact battle (military or ideological) could be waged to combat terrorism or what exact measures could be taken to prevent further terrorist attacks, etc. It could be argued that the themes covered by the Chinese commentaries are mainly ‘high level topics’ or ‘grand narratives’ with the focus on what is terrorism in its origin and nature and how to deal with it in general terms (e.g. cooperation and under the leadership of the UN, etc). But few articles have been written which comment on whether the US military actions are appropriate or understandable. It seems that the Chinese writers purposely avoid these topics in an attempt to prevent deep involvement in this issue and avoid possible confrontation with the voice of the US government. In addition, little has been mentioned on what exact measures should be taken to respond to this terrorist attack. This could be also due to the distance that the writers intended to keep between them and the issue.

It is argued here that textual and intertextual features, such as micro-genre and the intertextual practices found in these texts are deeply related to the themes that the texts attempt to foreground and background in relation to the socio-cultural and socio-political atmosphere in China. It can be found that in order to explain the problems to the public the Chinese writers in this study seem to use the micro-genre of explanatory exposition and, in intertextual practice, they seem to distance themselves from outside sources and seldom indicate endorsement of these sources. They just let the outside voices express themselves and rarely integrate these voices into constructing their own personal viewpoints. These rhetorical and intertextual practices could be seen as closely related to the roles of the media and the opinion discourses in contemporary China.
In the following section, text CS 01 is used as an example to further elaborate this argument. CS 01 can be analysed as an explanatory exposition, which analyses the possible impact on the world economy brought by the anti-terrorist battle in Afghanistan (see detailed analysis of this text in Appendix II). As shown in previous chapters, this micro-genre is the most widely used style in the Chinese commentaries in this study. It adheres to the conventional three part structure of expositions, starting with an orientation to illustrate the basic situation, followed by arguments and ending with a conclusion.

After stating that ‘war is a part of economy’, the writer presents the situation in stock markets, exchange markets, gold and future markets, followed by the opinions of economic experts. Finally, the writer focuses attention on the American economy, which is believed to be the key to the recovery of the world economy. This text is one of the typical commentaries on terrorism that appeared in Chinese newspapers at that time. Its theme is on the possible impact of the US-led military actions on the world economy, which was the major public priority of the Chinese public after September 11.

In this text, the writer draws on various outside sources to illustrate possible impacts of 9/11. These outside sources include a direct quote from the US President Bush, which serves as evidence for the US actions, and several attributed but unidentified sources such as ‘it is reported…’, ‘the market experts think…’, ‘the experts point out…’, and ‘the optimistic experts think…’. All this information has been attributed to some unidentified outside sources. As argued in Chapter 7, the Chinese writer here attempts to keep a distance from these sources and avoids responsibility for the claims made. The writer, thus, is playing the role of a presenter rather than a commentator on the public discourse. He/she does not claim to be ‘the principal’ but just ‘an author’, or ‘an animator’ of the text (see detailed discussion in Chapter 7).

This example shows that the textual and intertextual features of the texts are deeply rooted in the roles that these texts attempt to perform. They are also profoundly
related to the themes that the writers intend to foreground and background in the
specific socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in China.

8.3.2. Discourses on terrorism in Australia

Before discussing how the discourses about terrorism have been represented in the
Australian media, the headlines of the Australian commentaries covered in this study
are presented below.

Table 8.3. Headlines of the Australian commentaries on 9/11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. No.</th>
<th>Newspaper/ Date</th>
<th>Headlines/subtitles (italicised)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EN01     | The Australian 13/09/2001 | US should now take careful aim
Retaliation is inevitable, but it’s important to hit back at the right enemy |
| EN02     | The Australian 17/09/2001 | Don’t let terrorists recruit us to their cause
The hallmark of civilization is a belief in common humanity |
| EN03     | The Australian 17/09/2001 | Punishing bin Laden won’t stop extremists
The West must wage an ideological war against terror and eliminate fanaticism at its source, |
| EN04     | The Australian 19/09/2001 | Led astray in despair of a common humanity
Recognising terrorists as human will help reduce their power over us, |
| EN05     | The Australian 20/09/2001 | Base response on justice, not revenge
Terrorists are gangsters and should be treated as such |
| EN06     | The Australian 21/09/2001 | Only thing to fear is fear itself
Toppling the Taliban would send the right message to other terrorist regimes |
| EN07     | The Australian 26/09/2001 | Battle of ideas must also be won
America’s task is to eliminate terrorism without triggering Islamic revolution |
| EN08     | The Australian 28/09/2001 | Legacy of leaving allies to do the job
The anti-war Left is wrong to maintain the CIA created Osama bin Laden |
| EN09     | The Australian 02/10/2000 | Let the eagle strike free
The US should not establish a broad coalition of nations against the terrorist forces |
| EN10     | The Australian 03/10/2001 | It’ll take more than military force to win this war
Overthrowing states linked to terrorists could be counterproductive |
| ES01     | The Australian Financial | Ready for battle – home and away |
Upon examination of the headlines and subheadlines of these commentaries, it was found that many themes and topics have been covered in these texts. These differ
dramatically from what was found in the Chinese commentaries. These themes and topics could be roughly summarized as follows,

- How to take responses based on justice;
- The West needs to wage a military as well as an ideological war against terror;
- Whether to treat terrorists as gangsters or as humans;
- Whether the US should establish a broad coalition against the terrorist force.

We can observe from the themes above that the Australian commentaries seem to get closer and more engaged in the debate on the event. Rather than discussing what terrorism is and what the terrorists have done, the press in Australia seems to focus on how to win the war against terror. It was found that several controversial discourses were prevalent in the Australia media, including a strong confrontation between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and an advocacy of considering terrorists as human. This is in line with the observation of Mummery & Rodan (2003), who point out that the discourses of democracy and humanitarianism have been widely foregrounded in the Australian media in the aftermath of 9/11.

In the Australian commentaries covered in this study, it was found that a strong stance that distinguished ‘us’ (the western democracies) and ‘them’ (terrorists and terrorist states) was set forth, as Chomsky (2001, 2003) describes this prevailing rhetoric as either ‘join us or face destruction’ (Chomsky, 2001, p.75). Bush’s speech of 20 September 2001 forcefully reiterates that stance, and he also clearly claims in his speech that “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” (Bush, 20/09/2001). Such logic of clearly distinguishing ‘us’ and ‘them’, sometimes, marks a distinction between the ‘civilized’ and the ‘barbaric’. As Ronald Steel of the New York Times asserted on 14 September 2001: “They hate us because we champion a ‘new world order’ of capitalism, individualism, secularism and democracy that should be the norm everywhere” (cited in Chomsky, 2001, p.117). Similarly, John Howard in his
open letter to Australia in the aftermath of the Bali Bombings stated that the bombings were committed by “a murderous group of Islamic fanatics who despise the liberal democratic, open life of Western nations, such as Australia” (Howard, 26/11/2002). Hence in the Australian commentaries, we read:

The postmodern, globalised, financially interdependent multicultural world best symbolised by New York is beset by a force from the medieval world: a force that rejects the contemporary system of state-to-state relations originating with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, a force that defies comprehension because it embodies what has been rejected – fanaticism, absolutism, religious fundamentalism. Its language is that of martyrs – and martyrs, you may have noticed, are somewhat out of fashion in the secular West. It uses the tools of the present, but its mind-set is ancient. It is a struggle between the pre-modern and postmodern mind-sets, an entirely new and epic challenge (EN 07, The Australian, 26/09/2001).

This distinction of the ‘us’ versus ‘them’, civilized versus the barbaric, is widely observed across the media discourses in the aftermath of 9/11. In many of the commentaries covered in this study, it is found that ‘civilization’ is also strongly associated with the values of democracy, for example, some commentaries titled ‘evil took aim at the beacon of freedom’ (ER 09, The Daily Telegraph, 13/09/2001), and ‘US declares war of Western democracies against terrorism’ (ER 01, The Sydney Morning Herald, 17/09/2001).

This distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ can be seen as dependent on the binary logic of ‘either for or against’ the ‘war on terrors’. Around this argument, the commentaries under investigation are split in their opinions, and argumentative stances are established by drawing on various rhetorical and intertextual means. For instance, we read the headlines ‘West must strike’ (ER 08, The Herald Sun, 14/09/2001), and ‘Bloody payback would backfire’ (ER 05, The Courier Mail, 14/09/2001), which can be seen as quite different opinions. The writers of these commentaries are so eager to
put forward their own opinions and legitimize the ‘correctness’ of their positions. Given this, various rhetorical and intertextual practices are employed to achieve the goals.

In ‘West must strike’, the writer used a ‘problem/solution’ micro-genre with which he attempts to address the problem of ‘where and how the US will respond militarily’. The text is developed over a rhetorical structure of presenting the problem followed by the proposed solutions and recommendations. The writer employs his own experience in the Gulf War to convince readers that the US should hit back hard and overthrow any regime that is behind the terrorist attack. A clear distinction between ‘we’ and ‘they’ (Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and his regime) was established across the text. Discursively the writer also draws on various unattributed sources such as ‘the fashionable view is that …’, ‘only three years ago American warships …’, which are introduced as some widely prevalent information or opinions in the western world to support his main argument. Here the writer has not attributed these outside sources to some specific agencies and, also, he speaks from a very high status as the former commander of British Forces in the Middle East during the Gulf War to talk to his readers. He attempts to claim full responsibility for what he said by frequently using ‘I am convinced …’, ‘I question the wisdom…’. All these textual and intertextual practices that the writer draws on is quite in line with the purpose that he intends to achieve. That is to establish an authoritative voice of how the US should respond militarily after 9/11.

This ‘us’ and ‘them’ rhetoric has also been put under close scrutiny by critical thinkers such as Judith Butler. Butler (2004, p.2) argues,

In a strong sense, the binarism that Bush proposes in which only two positions are possible – ‘either you’re with us or you’re with the terrorists’ – make it untenable to hold a position in which one opposes both and queries the terms in which the opposition is framed. Moreover, it is the same binarism that returns us to an anachronistic division between ‘East’ and
‘West’ and which, in its sloshy metonymy, returns us to the invidious distinction between civilization (our own) and barbarism (now coded as ‘Islam’ itself).

Butler (2004, p.3) also suggests that “more responsible distinctions might be heard, histories might be recounted in their complexity, and accountability might be understood apart from the claims of vengeance”. Butler (2004, p.3) further claims, “This would also have to be a field in which the long-range prospects for global cooperation might work as a guide for public reflection and criticism”.

Another important discourse that is widely heard in the Australian media commentaries on terrorism is that of humanitarianism. In contrast with the previous discursive position of binary ‘us’ and ‘them’, the discourses of humanitarianism is not premised on the exclusive and divisive logic of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, but on an inclusive logic that emphasizes the common identity of being human and sharing humanity (Mummery & Rodan, 2003). This appeal to a common identity of being human and the associated call to treat terrorists as human is, thus, at the heart of a good number of Australian commentaries included in this study. For instance, we see headlines and subheadlines as ‘The hallmark of civilization is a belief in common humanity’ (EN 02, The Australian, 17/09/2001), ‘Led astray in despair of a common humanity – Recognising terrorists as human will help reduce their power over us’ (EN 04, The Australian, 19/09/2001). At the same time, we also read headlines like ‘Base response on justice, not revenge – Terrorists are gangsters and should be treated as such’ (EN05, The Australian, 20/09/2001), which could be understood as quite different from the proposition of regarding terrorists as humans. Even the logic of ‘humanitarianism’ is not irreconcilable to the logic of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. These controversial ideas give rise to a debate on terrorism in the Australian media where writers with different political and ideological perspectives attempt to set forth their own ideas in the open forum – the newspaper commentaries.
It can be seen here again that, as argued in the previous section of this chapter, the textual and intertextual features of texts are deeply rooted in the roles that these texts attempt to perform in the particular social setting, that is, to put forward the writers’ argument and establish some sort of authoritative opinions about the issue under concern. In addition, these textual and intertextual practices are profoundly related to the themes that the writers intend to foreground and background in the specific socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in Australia.

8.4. Conclusion

In an attempt to unravel the complex relationship between the discursive practices and their respective socio-cultural and socio-political contexts, this chapter explored the roles of the press and its opinion discourses in China and Australia, and also explicated how the discourses on terrorism were represented in different themes and topics in the two particular settings. It was found that the top-down explanatory micro-genre that dominated in the Chinese commentaries fulfilled the social function of ‘educating’ the readers about what terrorism is and how the Chinese government proposes to deal with terrorism. The discourses on terrorism in China were generally constituted by three themes in the Chinese commentaries, which were argued as ‘high level’ topics that had little connection to the particular happenings at the aftermath of 9/11, such as US military retaliation. The textual and intertextual practices adopted by the Chinese writers are consonant with the roles that the press and commentaries tended to play in Chinese society.

In the English language commentaries published in the Australian newspapers, the discourses on terrorism were represented under heteroglossic voices, in which two seemingly contradictory logics were foregrounded. These are the logic of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and the logic of ‘humanitarianism’. Under the logic of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, the writers highlighted the differences between the ‘democratic/civilised’ western world versus the ‘barbaric/uncivilised’ terrorist states, while the writers holding the logic of ‘humanitarianism’ tended to understand terrorists as human. Thus, writers with
different political and ideological perspectives set forth their own arguments eagerly by drawing on different textual and intertextual techniques. These discursive practices and positions are also very consistent with the roles of the press and its opinion discourses in Australian society, which tend to be the ‘fourth estate’ and an open forum for the public.