

## **Working Paper Series n<sup>o</sup>2: Discourse, Peace and Conflict**



### **War and 'dediscouration': a research frame**

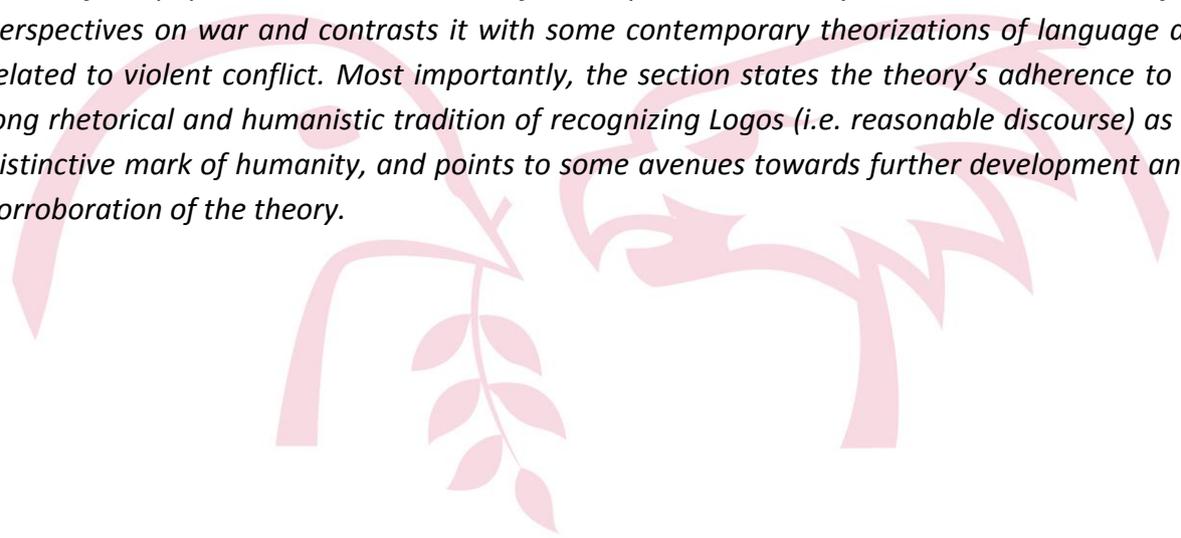
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## ABSTRACT

*Drawing on a number of examples, the paper gives a brief introductory outline of the theory of 'dediscouragement' which attempts to explain an important part of the genealogy of war. The theory is set on discourse-ethical premises, but it is not couched in terms of strict and inflexible rules that define discursive rights and duties in the fashion of Jürgen Habermas. As the theory stipulates, a rationally motivated loss of faith in the use of discourse as a problem-solving means, that is followed and underlined by deterioration of a discursive agent's moral standing, plays an important causal role in the genealogy of armed conflict. The paper contends that such deterioration of moral standing can be satisfactorily explained only in terms of the violation of four key parameters, or key values/functions, of moral matrix of language: 'meaning', 'truth', 'reason-giving', and 'promising' (Part I). This simple theoretical frame can be appropriately diversified in a number of ways as argued in the first section of Part II of the paper. The second section of Part II places the theory in relation to some major perspectives on war and contrasts it with some contemporary theorizations of language as related to violent conflict. Most importantly, the section states the theory's adherence to a long rhetorical and humanistic tradition of recognizing Logos (i.e. reasonable discourse) as a distinctive mark of humanity, and points to some avenues towards further development and corroboration of the theory.*



## INTRODUCTION

In one of his more sober moments the British Prime Minister Chamberlain, while declaring the war on Hitler's Germany on September 3 1939, stated also the following: "The situation in which no word given by Germany's ruler could be trusted, and no people or country could feel itself safe had become intolerable."<sup>1</sup>

At March 22 1999, his last meeting with the trio of international mediators (the Russian Ambassador Mayorski, the EU representative Petritsch, and the US Ambassador Hill), Milošević characterized the Rambouillet draft agreement as 'a fraud' before he dismissed it. Thereby he gave a pretext to the US and NATO force to launch on March 24 the action 'Allied Force' as a quasi-humanitarian intervention in Kosovo.<sup>2</sup>

Some 2,400 years ago Pericles, a famous Athenian statesman, urged his fellow citizens to resist Spartan demands and declare a defensive war against the Spartan league, which would soon turn into a devastating Peloponnesian war of which Thucydides left a highly acclaimed narrative record. In his speech Pericles claimed that "they [Spartans] prefer war to negotiation as a means of settling the issue of complaints," and specifically referred to the Spartan refusal to activate the arbitration clause of the Thirty Year Peace Treaty as evidence in support of his words on Spartan bellicosity.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the speech by Pericles Spartans on their part had already come to the conclusion that Athens had violated the Treaty by having signed a defensive alliance with Corcyra, a neutral city-state involved in a war-threatening dispute with one of the key Spartan allies, the city of Corinth. Persuaded by the talkative Corinthian envoys Spartan statesmen accused Athens of reneging on the sacred oath of the Treaty that Spartans and their allies decided then to defend by the force of arms.<sup>4</sup>

Former Egyptian Ambassador to the UN Mahmoud Riad quotes Egyptian President Nasser's statement from 18 February 1968: "We will listen to the United States, although she wants to make us enter a dark room called 'negotiations on Resolution 242.' We will cooperate with the devil himself, if only to prove our good intentions! However, we know from the start that we are the ones to liberate our land by the force of arms, the only language Israel understands."<sup>5</sup> Then the war of attrition between Egypt and Israel followed in 1969 and

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<sup>1</sup> The quote from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/ww2outbreak/7957.shtml> ; for a wider background, see Kagan D. (1995), *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*, New York: Anchor Books, pp. 375-412.

<sup>2</sup> See Petritsch, W., Kaser, K., Pichler, R. (1999.) *Kosovo-Kosova*. Klagenfurt, Wien: WieserVerlag, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup> Thucydides (1952), *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Chicago, London, Toronto: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., translated by Richard Crawley, I 140-144.

<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, I 87-88.

<sup>5</sup> Riad, Mahmoud (1981), *The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East*, London, Melbourne, New York: Quartet Books, p. 75; for a better understanding of Nasser's statements, one should also have in mind the fact that,

1970. The abortive 1969 Big Four meetings, involving the USA, the Soviet Union, the UK and France, caused some of the key Arab representatives to believe that, by having sided with the Israeli interpretation of the UN SC Resolution 242, “the US played an effective role to make it possible for the Israeli occupation to continue.”<sup>6</sup> They formed the impression that the US was but exploiting the resolution, a negotiated blueprint of peace, to cement the results of the June 1967 war. Hence another war between Israel and Egypt followed in October 1973.

The aforementioned examples provide a sufficiently solid base from which we may try to draw a reasonable conjecture as follows: One party’s view of the other party’s attitude to language plays *prima facie* important role in a decision to rely more on violent means of dispute settlement than on verbal, purely discursive ones. In all the aforementioned examples, one party claims something about the other party’s attitude to language and, based on such a claim, forms an additional view of the likelihood of a peaceful, discursive resolution of differences in partnership with the party concerned. In all the examples the claim is negative: it implies that the use of discursive means by the other party is in a sense disruptive of dialogue/negotiated solution, or inimical to dialogue or negotiated solution, or in some other way deficient and irreconcilable to the ways the discourse should be practiced. Therefore one party experiences a loss of faith in language, is discouraged from further participation in dialogue and thus likely to draw the conclusion that the probability of a peaceful, discursive resolution of differences in partnership with the other party is negligible. To put it simply, one party acts upon the other as a generator of ‘de-discoursation’; the former induces in the latter the belief that further use of discourse would not pay off (hence, ‘de-discoursing’)<sup>7</sup> primarily because some fundamental conditions of agreeability are not satisfied.

Looking back at the examples, they amount to some individual statements taken out of their context. An attentive reader will immediately notice that the wider context within which the statements were made has not been reproduced here. Such context is, of course, important. Actually, it is the most important part of the story because it should tell us something important about the motives of Chamberlain, Milošević, Pericles etc. An attentive reader should also ask whether the wider narrative indeed supports the statements given by the

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over the period of twenty years (1947-1967), the USA kept reassuring the Arab countries that they should not fear from Israeli territorial expansion; as Dean Rusk, a US State Secretary at the time, emphasizes, when, following the June 1967 war, he reminded Abba Eban of such reassurances, “he [Eban] simply shrugged his shoulders and said ‘we’ve changed our minds.’ With that remark, a contentious and even bitter point with Americans, he turned the United States into a twenty-year liar.” (Rusk (1991), *As I Saw It*, London, New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., p. 332)

<sup>6</sup> El-Farra, Muhammad (1987), *Years of No Decision*, London, New York: KPI, p. 121

<sup>7</sup> In this paper I will continue with the practice of writing ‘*dediscoursation*’ with quotation marks/inverted commas primarily for the following two reasons: 1. the word is not an established noun of any English language dictionary; 2. the word should be used as a technical term that applies only within the context of a critical and highly polarized political debate.

individuals. For instance, is Milošević's statement concerning the fraudulent nature of Rambouillet draft agreement reasonable or justifiable? If it is, his dismissal of the draft should not have been taken as a pretext for the NATO action against selected targets throughout Serbia and Kosovo. Such questions are undoubtedly of crucial importance; however, due to limitation of space I cannot address them here.<sup>8</sup> In my mind, the very fact that the reader starts pondering over such questions is of primary importance. It means that the reader sensed that, on the one hand, the question of whether one has violated an aspect of discourse, which justifies his or her interlocutor to pose the claim of, for instance, 'fraud,' is a question that calls for an objectively or inter-subjectively verifiable answer, and that it permits an answer of such character, on the other.

Now, let us assume that such an answer is given and that, in all the above examples, those who qualified the discourse of their interlocutors in the way they did were right. How should one explain the further development towards a less peace- and more war-oriented attitude? What is it that makes the party, who is an object of 'dediscouragement,' believe that discourse cannot be recovered or resumed? In other words, what is it that makes the party believe not only that their interlocutor assumed a discourse-unfriendly position,<sup>9</sup> but also that the latter is likely to adhere to such a position into indefinite future?

## **PART I**

### **From the examples to the key parameters of the theory of 'dediscouragement'**

In my view, the only viable answer can be proposed as follows: the nature of 'dediscouragement' itself is such that it tells you something important about moral standing of a discursive agent who generates it.

The view of language that the party-object to 'dediscouragement' forms is not merely a view of language; it is also a view of the party who does the de-discouraging, in particular of the party's moral standing as reflected through their use of discourse. This means that the only way to explain the move from 'dediscouragement', as a significant decline of the will to keep conversing with this interlocutor here and now, to the conclusion that the discourse with the interlocutor is unlikely to pay off, hence that one has to have non-verbal, even violent means of 'persuasion' ready, is by postulating and/or emphasizing that some aspects of the use of

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<sup>8</sup> For more background to Milošević's statement, see Pehar, D. (2005), 'Diplomatic ambiguity: from the power-centric practice to a reasoned theory', *Polemos* 8:2, pp. 153-182, downloadable from [hrcak.srce.hr](http://hrcak.srce.hr), or from [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)

<sup>9</sup> 'Discourse-unfriendly influence' is also a concept that Philip Pettit's version of republican theory relies on; for details, see Pettit, P. (2001), *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 67-79; and Pettit (2004), 'Discourse Theory and Republican Freedom', in: D. Weinstock and C. Nadeau (eds.) *Republicanism: History, Theory and Practice*, pp. 62-82. London, Portland, Or: Frank Cass Publishers.

language must have an emphatically moral import. In other words, in some situations one's standing as a moral agent is reflected and considered through one's standing as a discursive agent.

Looking again at the above examples, it is clear that the aforementioned move has indeed taken place. Chamberlain, Milošević, the Spartans...do not simply take a meta-lingual perspective; they take a meta-lingual perspective of a specific kind, one which is focused on those values in the use of language that typically produce morally relevant and valuable outcomes. The Spartans provide the most straightforward example: their focus is on the value of promising, the use of language that affects one's trustworthiness, one's standing as a responsible and reliable agent. They view Athens as a city that, for its own narrow gains, tends to break its own solemn promises.

Milošević refers to the Rambouillet draft agreement as 'a fraud' because he believes that its authors only present it as an agreement that aims to resolve the issues pertaining to the relations between Kosovar Albanians and the Serb state; in fact its only purpose is to transform Kosovo into an 'international protectorate,'<sup>10</sup> an entity effectively run by a foreign administration backed by NATO troops. Hence Milošević's meta-lingual focus is on the issue of sincerity and truthfulness: does a discursive agent speak words that really reflect, and pertain to, reality, or does s/he deliberately tailor and deform his presentation of reality so as to gratify his or her own interests even at the expense of the other agents? In the former case the discursive agent is deemed sincere, accurate and trustworthy, in the latter s/he is viewed as deceptive and manipulative. In the former case the discursive agent is viewed as materializing the values discourse has been made for, in the latter case s/he is viewed as disrupting or negating such values, as using discourse only to mislead, and perhaps temporarily suspend disbelief in, his or her victims.

Considerations presented thus far do not intend to suggest that there cannot be any complication. Later in the text I will point out that 'dediscouragement' is not a simple or single-layer phenomenon. For the moment it will suffice to mention that upon a first glance Hitler's case may be compared to the case of Athens and Sparta. Hitler kept breaking his promises through a series of acts that led to the outbreak of WWII; but even the case of Athens and Sparta is not that simple – for instance, it remains unclear whether Athens had really violated a provision of Thirty Year Peace Treaty. It is also worthy mentioning that Thucydides never takes a stand on the issue – he, for some specific reasons, considers it as irrelevant to his narrative.<sup>11</sup> As to Hitler, the problem with him is not only in the fact that he violated a number of agreements, or evidently broke his own promises. The problem is that, for an extensive period of time, the two dominant and major powers of the European continent,

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<sup>10</sup> As also emphasized by Petritsch et al. (1999), pp. 280-1

<sup>11</sup> Kagan does not take notice of this; he claims that the Spartans and Corinthians were fully right when they accused Athens of violating the Thirty Year Treaty, for which see Kagan (1995), pp. 42-3.

France and Great Britain, responded to Hitler's violations as if nearly nothing was happening. In other words, Hitler's 'dediscoursation' was in a way assisted by those who we deem the objects, or victims, of his 'dediscoursing.'

To return to the examples I referred to on page 3, it is now clear that the process and phenomenon of 'dediscoursation' concerns some factors or functions of language that carry a significant moral import. The experience of 'dediscoursation' prompts one to form a view of the moral standing of the generator of 'dediscoursation' both as a discursive and a moral agent. Hence, when you judge one according to the criteria of his potential to generate 'dediscoursation' of a sufficiently grave extent, your meta-lingual perspective is not arbitrary; it is focused on some specific functions of language-use, more specifically on 'truth' and 'promising.'

As to the latter, it is clear why taking it into account is prudent. If one tends to break his or her promises, without plausible reasons and with no regrets, then it makes no sense to try to come to an agreement with him, or her, on some future promises such as treaties, agreements, and similar. In other words, a promise-breaker is unreliable at the very start – s/he puts into question the fundamental aims of negotiating, hence a major part of the conditions of agreeability is missing. As to 'truth', the violation of this function implies that a speaker is able to dismiss to his liking the reality-based constraints to his language; s/he feels pretty much free to deviate by his or her statements from reality that is of relevance to dialogue. Now, if this fundamental limitation is disregarded, what could make you reasonably believe that such user of language should take your will, or a word on anything, as a limiting factor? Again, it seems not hard at all to understand why those who do not evince a sufficient amount of truthfulness and trustworthiness act on their interlocutor as a generator of 'dediscoursation.'

However, the 'Israeli-Arab' case, addressed through my quote from President Nasser and a Jordanian Ambassador memoir, concerns a different aspect of moral matrix of language-use. First of all, it concerns interpretation of a pattern of language, UN SC Resolution 242 that is nearly universally considered ambiguous, hence as open to equally convincing, and yet mutually opposed interpretations.<sup>12</sup> This immediately implies that the resolution is a sort of screen on which two not actual but potential meanings may be projected. It contains a number of elements that may be put into different order and given a different weight. Two elements are crucial ones: the element of inadmissibility of the change of territorial borders by the use of force and the element of the right to live in secure, peaceful, and recognized borders. How do Israeli and Arab representatives differ in their view of the resolution? The former give more weight to the element of the right to live in secure and recognized

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<sup>12</sup> For the 242, see Pehar, D. (2011a), *Diplomatic Ambiguity: Language, Power, Law*, Saarbrücken: Akademiker Verlag/LAP (also available from academia.edu and [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) (Ethos)), pp. 74-83

borders; the latter to the element of the inadmissibility of a violent change of territorial borders.

There is one important fact concerning meaning, especially if there is a conflict over the issue of a true meaning of a document that should bind two or more parties jointly. Meaning is not arbitrary and one cannot simply decide that one pattern of language means something. One should have sound and compelling reasons why a pattern of language means whatever it seems to mean.<sup>13</sup> Should there be a conflict of interpretations, i.e. meaning-attributions, the proposed attribution needs to be supported by reasons.

Applied to the Arab-Israeli case, this must be taken to entail the following: the two parties never come to the point where they start to exchange, assess, weigh and compare, or perhaps adduce new, reasons in support of their interpretations. They simply state their position and 'justify' it by the fact that they can do it. A further, logical and necessary step is not taken: the step of explaining why one ought to give more weight to some elements of the resolution rather than to the others, the step of scrutinizing publicly the reasons given for the preference in weight. They seem not to take this step primarily because they take the document not as jointly binding, but as binding only on the opposed party. Each party's aim seems to be to impose the meaning they arbitrarily prefer on their opposed party so that the latter assumes the primary responsibility for implementation of the document concerned. In such conditions, the document and the parties' attitude to it become self-defeating. No meaning is really discerned in the document, which consequently completely loses its binding force. For this failure I think that both parties, together with their international supporters, should be deemed equally culpable.<sup>14</sup>

It follows from the brief consideration of the Arab-Israeli case that two additional functions, or factors, of moral matrix of discourse need to be taken into account: 'meaning' and 'reason giving.' The first function is reflected through one's adherence to meaning as commonly stipulated; change, or modification, is possible only if one is able to adduce some special and plausible reasons in support of one's interpretation. One document should ideally carry a single meaning binding on all parties to it equally; if there is some disagreement in interpretation, rational motivation of the disagreement needs to be explained, while the disagreement itself may be resolved only through an exchange, modification, or discovery of reasons. Such requirement applies to all areas of disagreement, not only to political, diplomatic, or legal-moral ones, and it obviously serves to trigger the second function or factor of 'reason giving'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Pehar (2011a), pp. 179-184.

<sup>14</sup> See also Rusk D. (1991), p. 333; and Lord Caradon (1981), 'Security Council Resolution 242', in Lord Caradon *et al.*, *U.N. Security Council Resolution 242: A Case Study in Diplomatic Ambiguity*, pp. 3-18, Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

<sup>15</sup> Philip Pettit put it as follows: "What of the practice of negotiation? There is no way of arguing, as in the case of the responsive habit, that this is inevitably present among any intentional subjects. But there is evidence

One should here also note that we correlate the persistent and widespread refusal to address moral-political-legal issues through reasons with more barbaric forms of government such as slavery, Bolshevism, or Nazi Germany. The lack of will to accept and play the game of 'reason giving' is also emphasized in some Greek tragedies, Sophocles' *Antigone* (lines 630-781) or *Phoenician women* by Euripides (lines 446-640), where it is followed by an increase in intensity of conflict and by interruption of dialogue between the drama's heroes that the reader senses irresistibly drives them towards a tragic outcome.

### **A brief narrative summary of the theory of 'dediscouragement'**

Let us now summarize the key points of the skeleton of the theory of 'dediscouragement.' 'Dediscouragement' is a use of discourse of such a character that at least one participant to the discourse experiences a motivated loss of faith in language, a decrease of the will to continue communicating and verbally cooperating with his or her interlocutor. If we imagine that human being is internally split into an *ens belli* (the being of war) and *ens loquens* (the being of language), 'dediscouragement' leads to progressive silencing of the latter and progressive opening of the door to the former. The key outcome of 'dediscouragement' is in the party's belief that the discourse with the other party will not pay off, that the other party is somehow unreachable by language, that attempts at verbal resolution of moral or political differences have led nowhere and are unlikely to lead to a desired direction.

Hence 'dediscouragement' cannot but take place through a meta-lingual perspective – to form a view of the other party's attitude to the means of discourse, one party needs to go meta-lingual; it needs to focus explicitly on some particular aspects or functions of language-use that carry a special weight. In the theory of 'dediscouragement' such weight is carried by those aspects or functions of language that have important implications for an agent's overall moral standing.<sup>16</sup> Therefore 'dediscouragement' takes place only if one takes into account such

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that the practice is actually present in subjects like you and me and that is sufficient to still any disquiet about postulating it. One of the most striking facts about the way we carry on is that we do not take a *laissez-penser* attitude in our dealings with one another or in our dealings with ourselves over time. Whenever we form discrepant beliefs in response to apparently the same situation, whenever we appear to disagree with ourselves or with one another, then we tend to look for a resolution of the divergence. We may countenance no-fault disagreements in some marginal cases...for example, we may think that there is no fault in your finding something amusing, and in my not doing so. But in general we think that disagreements call for explanation and, if possible, reconciliation" (Pettit (1996), *The Common Mind*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 98); see also Frank, M. (1988), *Die Grenzen der Verständigung*, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main, pp. 74-5.

<sup>16</sup> This is, of course, a discourse-ethical perspective. However, in contrast to Apel, Habermas, and Alexy, I prefer discourse-ethics couched in terms of values to one couched in terms of strict discursive rights and duties; for further references and more detailed argument, see Pehar (2011a), pp. 212-233 (the chapter also available online through [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)); for a masterful presentation of 'truth-virtues' (sincerity and accuracy) as a precondition of communication/discourse, see Williams, B. (2002), *Truth and Truthfulness*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 41-62 and 84-148; for a perhaps very first application of discourse-ethical frame to the problem of political debating, see Rapoport, A. (1967), 'Strategy and conscience,' in:

functions and, based on the account, constructs an image of his or her interlocutor with a highly negative expectation vis-à-vis the interlocutor's ability, or will, to work sincerely and devotedly towards a verbal resolution of differences. Four such functions are here emphasized: 'truth', 'meaning', 'reason-giving', and 'promising.' It is through the focus on the four that the party experience a fundamental loss of faith in language and form the view that war may be last resort, that they will have to 'defend' their position by the force of arms.<sup>17</sup>

'Dediscouragement' thus ultimately issues in silence of a special kind. One senses that the other party is a human being, hence should be in principle open to the use of language (one of the key attributes of human being as a species); but, following a period of negative experience, one is also forced to conclude that somehow this particular human being seems not to be endowed with a desirable level of appropriately focused discursive agency. Typically the party who experiences 'dediscouragement' will be forced to take an ambiguous attitude to the party doing the 'dediscouraging.' On the one hand, the latter will be characterized as somehow less than completely human; on the other, it will be also typically viewed as a party that remains at least potentially human – the only way to resolve political issues is by talk; therefore 'this' party may come back to the negotiating table; otherwise, both parties remain reduced to the world of pure animality. In other words, 'dediscouragement' is never full and complete. It always remains reversible at least to some extent.

In sum, there are five key ingredients to the process of 'dediscouragement': first, the process is triggered; secondly, at least one party takes a meta-lingual perspective; thirdly, the meta-lingual perspective is focused on morally relevant features of discourse as used by the party generating 'dediscouragement;' such features are roughly placed along the parameters/values of 'truth', 'meaning', 'reason-giving,' and 'promising'; fourthly, a conclusion is drawn that concerns both moral standing of the party generating 'dediscouragement,' as reflected through his or her attitude to the aforementioned parameters/values, and the low likelihood of success of continued communication with the party; fifthly, as a result of the conclusion, silence, with the adjacent view of both the interlocutor and oneself as not fully human, follows.

To this theory one could raise an objection to the following effect: 'dediscouragement' cannot be something objective, or something that is inter-subjectively verifiable. All language is subject to interpretation; all conclusions drawn about one's use of language are subjective and tailored narrowly to one's own interpretations, needs, interests, or similar. For instance,

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Matson, F., Montagu, A. (eds.), *The Human Dialogue*, New York, London: The Free Press, Collier Macmillan, pp. 79-96.

<sup>17</sup> For an application of the theory of 'dediscouragement' to an interesting contemporary case, see Pehar, D. (2011b), *Alija Izetbegović and the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (a bilingual edition), Mostar: HKD Napredak, pp. 185-194; also available online from [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com) or [www.dibido.eu](http://www.dibido.eu).

who should determine whether a party has responsibly responded to an implicit or explicit request to supply reasons? Are not the aforementioned values of discourse too vague to ensure an unambiguous implementation of such values through real discourse? Is not there something authoritarian in the idea that all users of language should subscribe to a single set of discursive values?

Here, for obvious reasons, I am not in position to respond to all such counter-claims or doubts. I will simply present a rough basic frame of an answer to such skeptical queries taken as a whole:

It is not true that all language is subject to interpretation; actually, if that were the case, our notion of ambiguity, for instance, would not make sense. When all patterns of language are treated as ambiguous, some sensible interpretations of ambiguity cannot be formulated, which removes the very foundation on which both our notion and our ordinary attribution of ambiguity are built.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, the denial of the value of truth is self-defeating. This is clearly demonstrated through all the futile attempts to either formulate some position of a radical relativism or to dispense with the concept of truth altogether, and replace it with some allegedly more mundane locutions (such as warranted assertability, rational justifiability, or something similar).<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, we all learn language in the spirit of the belief that one can be wrong or right about the patterns of language. The very process of language-learning is guided by the premise that, when it comes to the use of language, some pretty strong criteria of successful performance, of doing things with words right, must apply.<sup>20</sup> Imagine, counterfactually, a mother teaching her children to distort the meanings of words any way they want, or to utter exactly the sentences that do not reflect their inner states, or to refuse to take part in any discourse-mediated cooperative activity with other human beings, which involves some form of binding oneself by words, or something similar. That kind of mother would not succeed in teaching her children a language. Hence, discourse-ethics, or an axiology of discourse, begins at home where we, as pre-school children, are already taught to use language in order to be understood and taken seriously so that we can cooperate and

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<sup>18</sup> For more comprehensive presentation of this argument, see Pehar (2011a), pp. 197-8.

<sup>19</sup> See Davidson, D. (2005), 'Truth Rehabilitated', in: Davidson, *Truth, Language, and History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 3-17.

<sup>20</sup> See essays 8 and 9 in Davidson, D. (2001), *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; Wittgenstein, L. (1953), *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, esp. paragraphs 185-242; and Quine, W.V. (1989), *Die Wurzeln der Referenz*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, trans. Herman Vetter.

coordinate our views and interests with some other human beings. This applies equally to those who tend to innovate with language.

In the following I comment on or elucidate two sets of issues. First, does the theory of 'dediscoursation' have enough potential to accommodate the obvious fact of diversity of ways in which language plays a role in the etiology of armed conflicts? Secondly, how should we position such theory vis-à-vis wider frames of theorization of war in general and vis-à-vis some wider reflections on language as related to conflict in particular?

## **PART II**

### **The theory and complexity/diversity**

The outline of the theory presented above is just a scheme, a very brief and elementary one. The violations of the discourse-ethical matrix presented above are very basic ones; as such matrix must contain additional elements, or rather sub-parameters of the four key parameters, this gives us some additional possibilities in the modeling and description of the basic frame of the theory. For instance, the regard of truth may be cultivated not only through viewing reality as a strong source of constraints on one's verbal deliveries, but in a number of additional ways. Think, for instance, of the requirement of coherence. If one values positively the parameter of 'truth,' one is committed to a further requirement, the requirement of coherent talk that preserves 'truth value' by appropriate logical relations between propositions.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, the less one cares for coherence, the more discourse-unfriendly influence s/he exerts; hence, the lack of coherence too will give rise to the meta-lingual perspective focused on moral matrix of discourse and result in the phenomenon of 'dediscoursation.'<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, the factor of meaning may be undermined in different ways, not only through an irresponsible attitude to an interpretive conflict, or through an inimical attitude to the requirement of reason-giving as a part of such conflict. For instance, one phenomenon encountered frequently in communication with some partners-parties is the phenomenon of 'imputation': when one imputes arbitrarily some meanings to his interlocutor so that the latter may be more easily and quickly quasi-defeated in an intellectual, political or moral debate. This means that the 'imputer' deliberately distorts the meaning of the words uttered by his interlocutor, and thereby attempts to influence an insufficiently attentive public to the debate. Communication with such 'imputers' is incredibly difficult; one immediately senses

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<sup>21</sup> See Davidson, D. (1999), 'Reply to Andrew Cutrofello', in: Hahn, L. E. (ed.), *The Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 27), Chicago and La Salle, Illionis: Open Court Publishing, pp. 342-344.

<sup>22</sup> Izetbegović's discourse provides a pertinent empirical testimony to this, for which see Pehar, D. (2011b), pp.157-162 and 190-194.

the need to escape from such kind of dialogue, to leave promptly the space of such verbal mockery. However, especially in politics, the phenomenon is not infrequent. For instance, Lenin was famous for his imputations to his both intellectual and political opponents.

I have presented the two simple additions just to bring home a simple fact: the theory of 'dediscouration' may be appropriately diversified; it contains the potential to do justice to, and give account of, the diversity of ways in which ethical aspects of language play a part in the processes leading to the outbreak of armed conflict. There are also some additional means or ways through which it can be diversified even further. In my mind, there are at least three such ways.

First, as there are always at least two parties to communication, there must be two parties to 'dediscouration' too. For 'dediscouration' to set in, a violation of the moral matrix of language by a single communicator will suffice, for obvious reasons. But, in fact both parties may contribute to 'dediscouration' more directly by their mutual violation of the said moral matrix. One example I already pointed to: the Israeli and Arab communicators concerning the UN Resolution 242. In this case we have a kind of mirror-image: the two parties not only violating the same moral matrix of language, but doing it in the same fashion. This is a bit puzzling, but a pertinent explanation may be proposed in the following terms: one party registers the violation by the opposed party, goes meta-lingual and gets discouraged from further participation in dialogue; but instead of opting out of the communication and going silent, it uses words as weapons – it registers the said violation as a continuation of war by other means. This fits the general mode of behavior in the aftermath of the June 1967 war between Israel and the Arab states. So, here we see a clear case of a 'dual-source' kind of 'dediscouration.'

Two participants to a dialogue may also both violate the moral matrix of language, but do it in different ways or through different attitudes to different parameters. For instance, I believe that British PM, the 'appeaser' Chamberlain himself violated the parameter of 'truth' a number of times throughout his dealings with the German Reich's Chancellor Hitler; but not in the way of a direct lying, or a direct attempt to mislead or manipulate his interlocutor. This too applies to the case of Athens and Sparta. However, due to the limitation of space, here I cannot go into more detail. It will here suffice to emphasize that both (or even more) partners to communication may violate the moral matrix of language, and may do it in different ways; we have at least four parameters, with a number of sub-parameters, and at least two interlocutors, which yields many possibilities in the coupling of the factors. This gives us an ample space to account for the diversity of ways in which 'dediscouration' may take place.

Secondly, there is no doubt that something I hesitantly call 'culture' may be involved in the genealogy of 'dediscouration.' In some 'cultures', or societies, a premium is put on violent

men instead of on peaceful negotiators. This means that one may be born in a society which positively awards more violent responses to a social or political problem; and negatively awards attempts at a discursive and peaceful resolution of differences. This is, of course, a sad state of affairs, but it exists. I will give two examples: for instance, prior to the outbreak of war in former Yugoslavia, one proverb was repeatedly broadcast through the Serb media – ‘Serbs have in the times of peace always lost their gains from the times of war.’ Prior to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in an atmosphere of political heat and polarization, the Bosniak-Moslem leader Alija Izetbegović emphasized in an interview that ‘weaponry is not an unfamiliar/alien thing to Moslems,’ implying that Moslems, including Moslems in Bosnia-Herzegovina, are good at fighting and have their means for armed combat always ready.<sup>23</sup> Just to dispel a wrong impression that such ‘culture’ is a disease only of a backward, or non-democratic society, here is the first sentence from a foreword to a book by an American author: “‘The United States always wins the war and loses the peace,’ runs a persistent popular complaint.”<sup>24</sup>

Is the theory of ‘dediscouragement’ capable of accommodating the role of ‘culture’, or, to put it more precisely, a societal prejudice that is normally propagated through some proverbs, myths, daily press, sometimes even through the leader’s rhetoric? There is no doubt about it. First, the societal prejudice is transferred to younger generation in the form of a narrative or idiom. Hence it is a part of language. If a negotiator brings to the negotiating table such kind of prejudice, the prejudice will quickly, actually is bound to, show itself in the negotiator’s attitude to the moral matrix of language. Secondly, society as such does not do the talk; individuals are those who propagate whatever cultural values their society subscribes to. Hence, in the last instance individuals decide on further destiny of the myths of the society they belong to; it is they who propagate, and reinforce, or weaken and even liberate their society from, the narratives and culture that generate ‘dediscouragement.’<sup>25</sup> In other words, the theory of ‘dediscouragement’ is wide enough to accommodate the phenomena that in a more roundabout way contribute to the phenomenon of ‘dediscouragement,’ such as culture, or cultural idiom, or societal myth or proverb.

Thirdly, one set of idioms and attitudes seems to indicate that, sometimes, negotiators-to-be suffer from a special kind of illusion that contributes to the process of ‘dediscouragement.’ Let us focus on the following statement that former US State Secretary Madeleine Albright is reported to have made: “We [USA] stand tall and hence see further than other nations.”<sup>26</sup> Here we see something like a confusion of two levels: the level of size/power and the level of

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<sup>23</sup> See Pehar (2011b), p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> Robert A. Divine, ‘Foreword’ to LaFeber, W. (1993), *America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1992*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., p. v.

<sup>25</sup> When John A. Vasquez refers to ‘realist folklore,’ as a part of an explanation of the causes of war, I think that he has in mind a culture very similar to one depicted in the last two paragraphs; for such folklore, see J. A. Vasquez (1998), ‘The steps to war in Europe, 1933-41’, in: Frank P. Harvey and Ben D. Mor (eds.), *Conflict in World Politics*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., pp. 207-240, (pp. 211-212).

<sup>26</sup> The quote in: Huntington, S. (1999), ‘The lonely superpower’, *Foreign Affairs* 78:2, pp. 35-49, p. 37

intellectual capacity. The perception of size distorts in this case the perception of one's intellectual power; the former is wrongly taken as an indicator of the latter. The 'USA' in Albright's image is also personified – it is imagined as a single human being whose size is obviously taken as evidence of a bigger symbolical worth that as well includes the capacity of prediction, intellectual grasp, or something similar. This is a complex image that may be taken as a symptom of many things: nationalism, sophistry, illusion, rhetorical self-boosting, self-propaganda, and similar. However, it is clear that this kind of statement will necessarily exert negative influence on a dialogue with another adult human being. The statement implies that the USA is a priori in the position of knowing; it is presented as much less fallible, and having a much better grasp of reality, than other nations. Obviously, this kind of statement also implies that, simply due to its 'standing tall', the USA may have a better knowledge of the other nations' interests than those nations themselves and, most importantly, may unburden itself of the requirement to back its positions by some substantive and plausible reasons.

Furthermore, one should note that it is not difficult at all to envisage another kind of illusion or misinterpretation that pulls one in opposite direction: for instance, one opposes an argument by another party simply because the latter is representative of a big, powerful country. One, so to speak, suffers from the 'small country' complex; s/he is mistrustful towards a representative of a bigger country to such an extent that s/he is not able to take the representative's argument at its face value, for what it is. S/he treats it arbitrarily and unexceptionally as a manipulative device, as an imposition in disguise.

Both cases obviously come under the heading of 'irrationality.'<sup>27</sup> Various theories may be deemed fit to explain the kinds of irrationality that the two aforementioned 'illusions' exemplify. There may be some perception-related or some emotive elements involved in the explanatory mechanism. Some will be more inclined to treat such kinds of irrationality in the fashion of *Gestalt* psychology's perceptual illusions; some others perhaps in the fashion of Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance.<sup>28</sup> However, the most important thing to note here is that the theory of 'dediscouragement' is capable of accommodating such phenomena too. Regardless of the source of the phenomena, and regardless of an appropriate explanatory mechanism, such phenomena inescapably find their way to one's attitude to moral matrix of language; they are bound to affect the speaker's attitude to at least two parameters of an ethically positive attitude to discourse, 'truth' and 'reason-giving.' For instance, Albright's 'illusion' is necessarily expressed in some verbal form, and if such a form becomes relevant at the negotiating table, it will be registered by Albright's interlocutors as

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<sup>27</sup> Here I take for granted the notion of irrationality (as incoherence, under an objective standard) proposed by Donald Davidson (2004), *Problems of Rationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, esp. pp. 189-198; see also Elster, J. (1993), *Political Psychology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-15.

<sup>28</sup> Festinger, L. (1957), *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

a violation of the parameter of 'reason-giving.' Hence 'dediscouragement' is an expected consequence of such irrationalities as well.

In sum, the theory of 'dediscouragement' may be diversified, enabled to cope with the complexity of cases, at least in the following four ways: 1. by fine-tuning on sub-parameters (for instance, 'coherence' as a sub-parameter of 'truth') and on various ways in which either parameters or sub-parameters may be upheld or undermined (for instance, 'imputation'); 2. by fine-tuning on combinations that couple two factors: the number of agents doing the 'dediscouraging,' on the one hand, and different parameters the violation of which contributes to 'dediscouragement', on the other; 3. by accommodating the factor of 'culture', or cultural idioms and societal prejudice, to the extent such factors influence the discourse of those involved in social, political, or diplomatic negotiations; 4. by making sense of the ways in which various forms of irrationality may, either at the very negotiating table or through some other negotiations-related channel, affect adversely the discourse of participating parties.

### **'Dediscouragement', the frames of war, and the frames of violent language**

The theory of 'dediscouragement' fits neatly those perspectives on war that emphasize the fact of continuity between the pre-war state and the state of war, such as the perspective by Clausewitz<sup>29</sup> or Grotius.<sup>30</sup> It also fits neatly those perspectives that emphasize the fact that there are some conditions that can be categorized neither as the state of war nor as the state of peace, and that in some conditions 'peace' must be characterized as continuation of war by other means.<sup>31</sup> Most importantly, however, the state of war does not remove the social, political or legal issues that define the pre-war state; it simply involves a different kind of responding to such issues.<sup>32</sup> Prior to the state of war, the adversaries argue/communicate about some issues, but their argument/communication for some reason does not bear a proper fruit.

The theory of 'dediscouragement' proposes a partial explanation of why the proper fruit was not born. However, it is also evident that the very same theory tells one what is needed for such a fruit to be born. In other words, the theory also fits neatly the general impression that

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<sup>29</sup> Clausewitz, C. von (1997), *On War*, Ware: Wordsworth, translation by J.J. Graham, revised by F.N. Maude, esp. pp. 5-23 and 357-360

<sup>30</sup> Grotius, H., *The Rights of War and Peace*, edited and with an Introduction by Richard Tuck, from the Edition by Jean Barbeyrac, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005; available from [www.libertyfund.org](http://www.libertyfund.org); in Chapter I Grotius draws on Cicero to propose the following definition of war: "War is the State or Situation of those (considered in that Respect) who dispute by Force of Arms."

<sup>31</sup> See Foucault, M. (2003), *Society Must Be Defended*, London: Allen Lane. The Penguin Press; translation by David Macey, pp. 15-19

<sup>32</sup> Hence the theory of 'dediscouragement' also fits well the model of 'conflict transformation', for which see, for instance, Galtung, J. (1996), *Peace by Peaceful Means*, Oslo, London: PRIO/SAGE.

the state of war is a kind of 'fall', that it takes place only if something in human being goes deeply wrong.<sup>33</sup> Now, what, from the standpoint of the theory, goes wrong may be put as follows: human being is primarily a discursive being; its distinction within the world of animals, of other living beings, is in its capacity to use language, to discourse both with oneself and with others, to be, as the Latin phrase goes, *ens loquens*. This means that the theory of 'dediscouration' is an heir to a long rhetorical and humanistic tradition dating back to the times of Isocrates, the famous Athenian speech-writer who produced one of the most eloquent eulogies to *Logos*, to human discursive capacity:

"For in the rest of our endowments we do not in any way excel the other animals, but we are inferior to many of them both in swiftness and in strength and in other faculties; but by the presence in us of the power of persuading each other and of disclosing to our own kind whatever we take counsel about, we have not only escaped from the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities, established laws, and discovered arts, and nearly everything devised by our means has been provided for us by the help of the faculty of discourse. For this faculty it is that laid down the laws concerning things just and unjust, base and honorable; without which ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. By this faculty we convict the bad, and extol the good. By means of this we educate the foolish and prove the wise; for we take right discourse as the greatest proof of wise judgment, and discourse which is true and law-abiding and just is an image of a good and faithful mind. It is with this faculty too that we both dispute on doubtful questions and inquire into what is unknown; for the same arguments by which we persuade others in speech, we also use in our deliberations, and so, while we give the title of rhetoricians to those who can speak in public, we attribute prudent counsel to all who can best discourse of affairs in the privacy of their own minds."<sup>34</sup>

A majority of contemporary theories of 'violent language' that precedes war, or even supports it, do not share Isocrates' view of language to which the theory of 'dediscouration' subscribes. The main point of contrast between such theories and the theory of 'dediscouration' may be explained as follows: the former view language as being already shaped by the intention to start military combat, or war, as already put into the service of an aggressive impulse. Such theories focus on language that is already war-like, and seem to lack a proper normative vocabulary for depiction of the normative aspects of discourse. In such theories one can hardly recognize the fact that, in the periods preceding the outbreak of war, some goods/values inherent in the use of language are lost or wasted, which brings about a rapid deterioration of the relationship between the negotiating parties.

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<sup>33</sup> I consider the theory to be in accord with the 'intentional actor model' as presented in Dessler, D. (1994), 'How to sort causes in the study of environmental change and violent conflict,' in: Nina Graeger and Dan Smith (eds.), *Environment, Poverty, Conflict*, Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, pp 91-112. However, I find Dessler's fourfold typology of causes of war lacking primarily because it passes in silence over discourse-related kind of causes; this, in my view, makes it insensitive to the question of the 'fall' that the state of war involves.

<sup>34</sup> Isocrates, 'Nicocles, or The Cyprians'; from *Peitho's* web: <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/>

In contrast, the theory of 'dediscoursation' with its discourse-ethical premises is able to explain the move from a recognized need to resolve political differences verbally and peacefully to a recognized, and also rationally motivated, decline of the will to engage in joint, continuous and extensive, tackling of such differences by discursive means only. Theorization of such a move implies, at one level, a faith in the capacity of language-users to cope with political differences in the medium of discourse only, and a loss of such faith at another level. It also has clear implications for the issue of the conditions of agreeability – the principal measures one can take to prevent the degeneration of discourse and/or communication that 'dediscoursation' involves.

One, in my view, pertinent explanation of the lack of the normative in the contemporary theories of 'violent language' is to be, perhaps even in a majority of cases, found in their postmodernist, or poststructuralist orientation.<sup>35</sup> If language is in its entirety theorized as a Derridian 'differance,' as slippery, paradoxical and ambiguous, then one should not expect to find in such a theory a space for meaning, broken promises, truth, or reason-giving.

Another graphic example of the lack of the normative in contemporary theories of language is in the work of Raymond Cohen, a linguistic relativist whose view of language only slightly differs from the postmodernist strand.<sup>36</sup> For instance, Cohen views language as a 'prison-house' of culture that shapes one's understanding of reality, and perhaps more importantly, informs one's attitude to the other cultures or nations. Also he seriously believes that, for instance, Arabic close equivalent for the word 'compromise' is never positively valued, and that Arabic languages do not have a word that could strictly correspond with the meaning of the word 'compromise.' From this he draws a preposterous and highly politicized conclusion or suggestion as follows: "the Spirit of the Middle Solution is without meaning in Arabic. Can there be a middle way between right and wrong?"<sup>37</sup> Hence, in Cohen's perspective, misunderstandings, untranslatability, and break-ups in communication are an ordinary phenomenon that has nothing to do with an individual behavior of individual language-users; such phenomena are simply a reflection of the cultural gap between the speakers of culturally different languages. In other words, the cultural conflict or war of languages is a process to which there is no cease-fire, in Cohen's view.

I think that the theory of 'dediscoursation' is superior to, for instance, Cohen's version of relativism primarily because of its universally applicable frame. It is nearly impossible to imagine a language that does not contain a vocabulary for elementary ethical functions of

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Campbell, D. (1993), *Politics without Principle. Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers; and Hodge, R., Kress, G. (1993), *Language as Ideology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Routledge.

<sup>36</sup> See Cohen, R. (1991), *Negotiating across Cultures*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace; and Cohen, R. (2000), 'Negotiating across languages', Paper presented to the BISA annual conference, Bradford, 18-20 December 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Cohen (2000), p. 7

language, such as 'truth', 'promise' or 'reason.' Also, a UN interpreter, for instance, would do her or his work better when following some kind of universalist idea of language than Cohen's linguistic relativism; by following the latter she would not hesitate to explain away too quickly some misunderstanding, or mistranslations, that might occur as a part of the process of diplomatic interpretation. This, in some cases, may be very dangerous indeed.

Even some prominent linguists and influential cultural anthropologists of language subscribe to the view that lessens the importance of the normative, discourse-ethical frame of language. For instance, Robbins Burling presents the relationship between language and violence as if language is a neutral means that can be equally used for both good and evil ends:

"We can talk through the consequences of our actions. We can calculate possible outcomes, and sometimes, if we are clever enough or lucky enough, we can successfully substitute talk for violence. The possibility of talking our way out of violence may not lower the overall level of human violence, but it does, sometimes, postpone it. We put off violence until the pressure builds and finally explodes in the particularly destructive episodes that we call 'war,' for if language allows us to avoid some kinds of relatively small-scale violence, it also gives us the means to organize our societies for our own unique forms of mass slaughter. Humans have no monopoly over violence, but language lets us organize our violence on a vastly greater scale than any other species can achieve."<sup>38</sup>

Burling here seems to follow Hobbes's famous dictum that "by *oratio* man is not made better but only given greater possibilities" (originally in his *De Homine* 10.3).<sup>39</sup> The theory of 'dediscouragement' as well follows Hobbes, but it is Hobbes who recognized that the use of language is necessarily supported by a moral matrix; it is Hobbes who used the phrase 'abuses of speech' (that include telling lies, inducing hatred or unease in the others by speech, and using ambiguity to mislead one),<sup>40</sup> which clearly implies a normative perspective on the use of language. Secondly, and in support of normative view of language, Hobbes also famously compared one's deviation from one's promise, or one's acting contrary to one's oath, with absurdity in the sense of contradiction. He called such deviation *Injury*, according to its Latin etymology (*in-iuria* or unjust acts), and stated that *Injury* equals Absurdity, that it is as irrational, hence condemnable, as contradiction.<sup>41</sup>

The theory of 'dediscouragement' does not adhere only to some fragments of Hobbes's philosophy of language. A further development of its linguistic aspects should draw primarily on the famous 'six functions-theory' of language we find in Jakobson's highly influential

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<sup>38</sup> Burling, R. (2005), *The Talking Ape*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 214; for a nearly identical view, see Koestler, A. (1989), *The Ghost in the Machine*, London: Arkana Books, pp. 308-310.

<sup>39</sup> The quote in Pettit, P. (2008) *Made with Words: Hobbes on Language, Mind, and Politics*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, p. 97.

<sup>40</sup> Hobbes, T. (1994) *Leviathan*, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668 (edited by Edwin Curley), Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., p. 17

<sup>41</sup> Hobbes (1994), p. 81

model which may be applied universally.<sup>42</sup> More specifically, elaboration of the connection between meta-lingual and phatic function of language may prove fruitful in further work on the theory, but here for obvious reasons I cannot go into more detail. It is also fair to add that George Orwell<sup>43</sup> and Hannah Arendt<sup>44</sup> produced some major contributions that provide a steady source of both theoretical inspiration and empirical guidelines for the work on discourse-ethical perspective on the causes of war: with a focus on specific and contextually rich cases, they both emphasized that the considerations of language, on the one hand, and the considerations of morality and politics, on the other, are necessarily intertwined.

It is here also of some importance to emphasize that the theory of 'dediscoursation' does justice to a common observation that, under some conditions, war may be a necessity. It is, of course, a tragic necessity. One only needs to put oneself into the shoes of those parties who do their best in terms of discourse-ethics, but face another party who have no notion of compromise and show no sign of the will to work on negotiated solution. The latter acts upon the former as a generator of 'dediscoursation', and the former, though not bellicose in principle, cannot avoid the situation in which their combat force remains the only means of 'persuasion.' Some theorists tend to call such defensive wars 'just', but we ought to have in mind that the only just aspect of such wars is in the fact that one party through its deeds communicates to the other party the message that they mean what they say, and that they adhere to whatever position they adhered to. Justice may be born only if such a war is fought within the discursive frame of the international law of warfare, which serves to prevent a complete submission of the *ens loquens* to the *ens belli*, and if it ends swiftly with restoration of *status quo ante bellum*.

Hence the theory of 'dediscoursation' contains not only the potential to explain an important part of the genealogy of war, but also to offer criteria of minimally 'acceptable' war as well as to shed some light on the dynamics of actual unfolding of war. For instance, the periods of war at which the belligerents signal that negotiations could and/or should be resumed are likely to be productively addressed in terms of the theory of 'dediscoursation.' It is also important to emphasize that the normative side of language figures in the theory of 'dediscoursation' as not only a normative but also an empirical fact, as something of which the parties to highly polarized negotiations actually form an empirical view prior to the outbreak of military hostilities. In other words, one of the theory's fundamental assumptions is that, at least when it comes to the genealogy of war, the focus on the normative produces very tangible empirical consequences. Finally, one should keep in mind that the theory of 'dediscoursation' does not aspire to offer a full and exhaustive list of causes that produce all major wars. However, as it deals primarily with humanly caused fiascos in discursive

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<sup>42</sup> Jakobson, R. (1960), 'Closing statement: linguistics and poetics', in: T. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*, New York: Wiley, pp. 350-377.

<sup>43</sup> (1961), 'Politics and the English language', in: K. W. Hunt, P. Stoakes (eds.) *Our Living Language*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, pp. 18-29.

<sup>44</sup> (1971), 'Lying in politics: reflections on the Pentagon Papers,' *The New York Review of Books* 17:8.

exchange as a part of the negotiating process, the theory aims to cover a critically important part of what one could call 'a diplomatic genealogy of war.'

