

Scholarly Observations and Meditations: Perspectives on September 11, 2001

James W. Carey, Susan J. Drucker, Raymond Gozzi, Jr., Gary
Gumpert, Paul Thaler, and Carol Wilder ¹

Introduction

Gary P. Radford and Marie L. Radford

First Vice-Presidents, the New York State Communication Association

September 11, 2001, is a date that will stand forever in our personal and collective memories. The 59th annual conference of the New York State Communication Association (NYSCA) was held on October 5-7, 2001, just three short weeks following those traumatic events. As the official communication association representing New York State and New York City, it was imperative to us that these events be addressed at our conference. Gary Gumpert, Professor Emeritus at Queens College, New York, put together a panel of internationally known and respected communication scholars, and New Yorkers, to offer their thoughts and meditations on September 11. What follows is a transcription of that panel. The panelists attempt to describe the impact of September 11 as people struggling to understand events that seem to far transcend the intellectual tools and frameworks at their disposal. In the short weeks following September 11, it became clear that the only appropriate frames of understanding were personal ones. The time needed to consider September 11 in terms of the objective, distanced, and impersonal style of academic discourse had yet to pass. James Carey of Columbia University expressed the sentiment of the panel perfectly with these words:

1. James W. Carey (Ph.D., University of Illinois) is CBS Professor of International Journalism in the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, New York, NY 10027-6902. Susan J. Drucker (J. D., St. John's University) is an Associate Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies at Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11549. Raymond Gozzi, Jr. (Ph. D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Television-Radio, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY 14850-7253. Gary Gumpert (Ph. D., Wayne State University) is Professor Emeritus, Queens College of the City University of New York and a partner in the consulting firm of Communication Landscapers, 6 Fourth Road, Great Neck, NY 11021. Paul Thaler (Ph. D., New York University) is a Professor in the Department of Journalism and Media at Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522. Carol Wilder (Ph. D., Kent State University) is Associate Dean and Chair of the Department of Media Studies at the New School University, 2 West 13th Street, New York, NY 10011. This paper is a transcript of a panel that was held at the 59th annual conference of the New York State Communication Association, Monticello, New York, October 6, 2001. Many thanks to Bill Devers, Fairleigh Dickinson University, for his help in transcribing the audio recording.

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I have things I believe and I have emotions I feel. But in the days since September 11th, I=ve come to believe that they=re not stable. That they=re not fixed. They=re not reliable. That in some sense, I=m as emotionally and intellectually at sea as anyone else. I can pretend for you. I can launch into a very systematic lecture about all of this that shows I have the world very firmly in command. But I don=t have the world in command. I don=t even have myself in command. I find my imagination vagrantly wandering across this landscape of what=s going on in an absolute random sequence.

These first tentative steps by communication scholars to address the horror that was September 11 reveal the humanness of the academic enterprise. Behind the prestige of degrees, the products of authorship, the perspective of experience, or depth of book learning, there are human beings who must cope with these events in the same way as anyone else. If for nothing else, these statements are as valuable for what they say about the scholar and the nature of scholarship as they are for the light they shine on our understanding of September 11.

Gary Gumpert

We=ve all witnessed calamities of a national or global nature. Some have directly experienced events of such magnitude and proportion. But most of us face the blows of catastrophe indirectly; detached and remote from ground zero. I=ve always watched. We measure age by a collection of personal frozen moments of scale and significance. I=ve always experienced the traumas of disaster under fortuitous circumstance. My family escaped from Nazi Germany and via Holland fled by boat, arriving in New York on December 19, 1939 on the *Zaandam*, a Dutch ocean liner. As a six-year-old I was imprinted with the life boat drill conducted in the middle of the night in case a U-boat lurked near by or we hit a mine. The *Zaandam*, by the way, was torpedoed on its return trip to Holland.

My immediate family escaped the Holocaust. My grandparents and one of my uncles struggled to Shanghai, China, where they remained until 1949. Any other relatives were exterminated. I was not a tattooed victim, but merely a bewildered seven-year-old refugee, grateful to be alive.

Growing older is accumulating memories, but I=ve always, luckily, avoided ground zeros. I=ve come close, but so far have always been an observer. We collect a series of catastrophic pin point images, sharp moments in time and place, permanently etched into our being. The photographic image B it=s always an image for me B remains clear, never fading. If you are older, the chances are great you have accumulated more traumatic experiences. Each person possesses a unique set of such experiences. We might call them the trauma quotient.

My set of harrowing images includes: Pearl Harbor, the death of Franklin Roosevelt, Hiroshima, the concentration camps, the assassination of John F.

Kennedy, the murder of Harvey Oswald, the assassination of Robert Kennedy, the night of the Chicago 1968 riots during the democratic convention, and the World Trade Center and the Pentagon disasters. Events might also have included in this bizarre role-call of events of magnitude and repercussion: the Cuban Missile Crisis, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the blowing up of Challenger, Kent State, Desert Storm, the death of Princess Diana, and the funeral of Rabin. This ignominious list is surprisingly lengthy. I come to it with my own emotional and intellectual baggage. My reactions are complex. I am detached from the event, exhilarated by the fact that I am alive, but feeling a strange sense of guilt. I sit in front of my television set B one in the study, one on the first floor B always nearby a television. The sound is always there. In the car, the radio is never turned off, the television accompanies the computer. I switch between incoming e-mail and the web, seeking responses from other countries: BBC, Doichavella, Radio Scotland, voice of America, CBC, CYBC, Cyprus, Israel, Radio International, Radio France. I'm always accompanied by some sort of image, or some sort of sound. I am a watcher. I am drained, because I do nothing but watch.

I want to do, but what can I do? As a communication scholar, the question is even more agonizing. To whom do we speak? To whom do we write? The question is not a new one, but its urgency is heightened because I believe that the communication discipline, with a big AC,@ has a special understanding which ought to extend beyond the classroom. Being a critic is simply not enough for me.

We brought this panel together today because they are very special people in our field. The question they have simply been asked is to respond to September 11, 2001; not just as human beings, but also as very special scholars.

Raymond Gozzi, Jr.

Let me start by saying that I see nothing good about the September 11th attacks. I see nothing good coming in the near future. We're being told to expect more attacks in the United States. There is suddenly a steep slope toward war. I think we are in for difficult times. As communication scholars, what do we say? As teachers, what do we do? How do we get a handle on the changes that are occurring? I find myself coming back to the concept of context. My theme is that the events of Sept 11th, 2001, have recontextualized our lives and, of course, our students' lives.

Let me give you my definition of context. Context is that which surrounds something and helps give it meaning. This definition has two parts, and I will discuss each part separately.

The context which surrounds us is now more fearful. We seem to live in a world that is suddenly, to us, hostile to the United States. The sense of safety and invulnerability of the United States is gone. Distant television wars have come closer and we have been provided with villains, people to hold up as our enemies. But what do we do with this information? As communication scholars, we are very

aware of the dangers of stereotyping and profiling. In these times of fear, it would be tempting for our students to slip into racist stereotypes and their jokes, their attitudes, their comments. They will be encouraged in this by elements in the media and in the society and we need to be a voice for recognizing the humanity of each person. We also need to avoid over simplifying groups and emphasize the diversity of opinions in every group in the world.

That the world seems more hostile to the United States is my second point. Why do they hate us? This question I have faced in several classes. Many people are genuinely bewildered about this. I think as communication scholars we can point out the poor job the media has done in covering foreign news. The total coverage of international news has dropped steeply since the 1970s in both print and television. In 1998, total U.S. newspaper coverage focused on world news only 2% of the time. This year, 2001, television reported only 6% foreign news. Also under-reported is the involvement of the U.S. Government in supporting coups in Guatemala, Iran, Chile, and elsewhere, and supporting repressive regimes and dictatorships. I want to emphasize, this does not excuse the attacks. What I'm trying to do here is add context to answer the question of why many people dislike the United States. We need to be able to explain to our students why this is true without excusing, or seeming to excuse, these attacks.

So this is the first part of my definition of context, that which surrounds us. We become more fearful, and seemingly more hostile. The other part of context is that it helps give meaning to our lives. I want to make three points about this.

My first point is the often repeated saying, "Everything has changed." I'm sure we have all heard this. Doonesberry's been joking about it. Yet, in a way, we keep doing the same things and, except for those of us in New York and Washington, there isn't much visible evidence yet. But I do believe this sentiment is accurate because the context has changed and we understand everything in relation to some context.

So these changes will seep into the rest of our lives eventually. As teachers, how can we help students deal with this? My suggestion is that we note that the news of the day is just one of many contexts in our lives. In many ways, the important contexts are those which we can directly experience: School, friends, family, neighborhood, community, church, clubs, teams. We should pay attention to those things we can influence ourselves.

My second point is that many of our former concerns will seem trivial and unimportant, particularly if we escalate to a war. In a wartime atmosphere, people are brought up against ultimate questions of life and death. As teachers, I think it is important for us to encourage students to think about the direction of their lives. To think about what they can do which will provide meaning in their lives. We should also reaffirm the importance of daily routines and continue to provide structure for students in our classes and in our assignments.

My third point is that our media ecology has changed. Media is going to be very different. We've been told that the terrorists get much of their information from the media, so the media will not be carrying information of use to potential adversaries. This means that propaganda and disinformation will be standard operating procedure. As communication teachers, we will need to practice skepticism toward the media, even more than ever. I think we really do have to realize how different the media are going to be and how we will not be able to rely upon what is reported in the newspapers the way we used to rely on it. We will need to constantly ask what the agenda is behind the news we receive. We should use as many alternate news sources as possible. For example, I've learned quite a bit about my own country by reading British newspapers on the Internet.

My final section concerns the way in which the role of the teacher has been recontextualized. I know I didn't have any classes on September 11th, but September 12th I was actually nervous going into class, for the first time in many years. And we had to talk about it, there was nothing else we could do. We will face an increasingly fearful and confused environment as the dreadful logic of war unfolds before us. Our students will be emotional and threatened. One purpose of terrorism is to disorient a population. As teachers we need to speak from reason and require evidence for our opinions and our students' opinions. At the same time we need to recognize that our students will be more stressed out than usual. This will surface in many unpredictable ways and our students will need our compassion and understanding more than we realize.

I also feel that students will be facing ultimate questions of life and death, faith and doubt, violence and nonviolence, obedience and resistance. I think we have to be able to talk to our students about these. But when we do, we should draw a careful distinction between when we are speaking as citizens and when we are speaking as professors. We should make it clear that students can disagree with us without penalties. We should strive to keep civil and rational discourse in our classrooms. I'm afraid this will be increasingly difficult in an escalating atmosphere of terrorism.

Ultimately, I think it comes down to respecting your students as human beings. Respect them when they show confusion and when their opinions vacillate. Respect them when their conclusions differ from ours. Finally, remember that war is a time of great social change and, perhaps in a very near future situation, you will find yourself dependent upon one of your students in some form or another. So, I would leave you with the thought that we should treat them as we would like to be treated.

Paul Thaler

When Gary Gumpert asked us to think about this panel earlier this week, a flood of thoughts entered my mind. The first thing was the surreal nature of this whole event. Not only was the landscape of New York City dramatically impacted by these attacks, but the landscape of our media. Sitting next to a television and to see this event happen live was the ultimate television nightmare. I know for me, personally, it did not register until a day or two, or maybe a week later, that this, in fact, was real. Television has a way of connecting to us on one level, but yet we don't believe what is happening is actually real.

What made this event even more surreal, for many people, was that they could look out of their window and actually see the event. They could also turn to television and see the event. This collision between your senses and what you are watching on television, something one stepped removed, created a feeling of imbalance that many of us experienced that morning. I think for some of us what happened in that moment, when we couldn't connect to the story in a real way, the images we were seeing on television resonated so much like a movie. I could not believe I was watching reality. I was watching *Independence Day* or any one of a dozen other movies where this apocalyptic drama has unfolded. There really was this collision between our past references in terms of media images and what we were seeing. The World Trade Center was being attacked. I think this led to a certain surrealism.

The question I had after all of this happened was: what does television want us to be in front of it? How does television position us as we watch television? We look to television for kind of a stable governing order. It's one thing if it is chaos out there, but it is another thing if our anchors are in a state of chaos. Or, worse yet, we can't even connect to the people who give us the news.

I remember turning to ABC Television when this event struck. The tower holds the antenna for network ABC TV and it was out. I remember feeling a momentary panic although I knew it was happening because you could obviously turn to other channels. The message I was getting from television was that we were truly living in a chaotic and ungoverned world at that moment in time. Yet we recognized, perhaps subconsciously, that television news gives us a sense that there is, in fact, this governing order, even when the worst is happening.

I don't know about you, but when you see Browkowitz, when you see Rather, when you see Jennings, there is this stability. But then you see Rather, on Letterman, and he is breaking down. I was connecting to that in a very different way. Rather is not supposed to be on Letterman and if he is he shouldn't be crying. I can't explain it to you other way than that he was shaking me up by his own emotional trauma as this happened. I was looking at Rather as something more than simply a talk-show person. He was an anchor, one of the three major voices. So, I think that's one

message of television. It presents to us a stable governing order, especially at these particular times.

The other thing is: who are we in front of the television tube? A colleague of mine, Jay Rosen, once gave a paper and he delineated the type of people we are in front of a television set in any particular time. Most of the time, we are basically treated as consumers. Strangers come on the air and they try to sell us products. Sometimes we're treated as spectators. We're there to kind of enjoy the spectacle of what is unfolding on television. But every now and then, we become witnesses. This is a very important positioning effect that we have in front of television. It's not that we just recognize this, but the world recognizes its positioning. I remember during the events in Tiananmen Square in China that a tank was rolling down the road and there was a young man. I believe he had a flower in his hand and the tank stopped and didn't go any further. I have to believe that the people in charge knew the world was watching at that particular point in time. The television audience were witnesses to this particular scene. The tank stopped. I think that spoke to a larger issue having to do with television's power in creating witnesses on the world scene.

Take the World Trade Center attacks. We are all witnesses to this drama. Because of the way this has unfolded, we all feel victimized in a way. We are not just witnesses. We feel a sense of victimization. It also creates a very surreal effect because most of us, I hope, have not been directly affected by this tragedy. And yet, we all feel a certain sense of being victims. This speaks to television's power to be able to place us in a position to create an emotional mindset that is very unique from every other medium.

Television's power has had a traumatic effect with enormous resonance as the story continues to play out, and play out, and play out. Three weeks, almost four weeks after the event, we still feel the World Trade Center, and I think largely because of television's impact

Carol Wilder

What I have to say is fragmentary. I've really been trying to put things together, but there are just lots of pieces that come at me. They fall down, they come together, and they fall apart again.

I live at 18th street and Third Avenue, in Manhattan. My office is at Fifth Avenue and 13th Street. On September 11th, we had a nine o'clock faculty meeting, so I cut through Union Square to go to my office and then I go down University Place. Many of you know that area well. As I rounded the corner B and I'm still getting goose bumps B onto University Place, I saw people looking up, and I looked up, and I saw the first triangle in the first tower. And I didn't register anything. I had no thought. Nothing. Nothing. You know. And someone said it was a plane, another

said Athis is war.@ I watched for a minute and I thought, Awell, I have to get to my faculty meeting.@

By the time I had picked up the muffins and started to cross Fifth Avenue, I heard this scream. I looked up and I saw the fire ball in the second tower. I went up to the department office on the 12th floor, which I guess I would equate to a front row seat in the mezzanine, and scrambled to get a television. We don=t have cable in the building and all of the transmitters were out except for channel 2. ~~So~~ We had this fuzzy picture of channel 2, and we had the window. So we were watching it out the window and watching it on television, kind of going back and forth. ~~So~~ I have to say, existentially, it was an experience that I still can=t describe.

I have done a fair amount of study on war and media including a lot of work on Vietnam in the media, representations of Vietnam in American culture, and I did a fair amount of study during the Gulf War. I felt I could extrapolate from what I knew about Vietnam in the media to the Gulf War, and it made a lot of sense. I can=t extrapolate now. The only thing I can really extrapolate is that after 24-hours of television being at its finest because it didn=t know what to say, the broadcast designers came back with their war logos and their star-spangled peacocks for NBC, and their titles that tell us what we=re supposed to be seeing. This is one extrapolation from the Gulf War; War, the miniseries. So that is one thing I=m trying to pay attention to.

But there are two thoughts I had that I am pondering. One is that this was a quintessential media event. Not only did these people turn our technology against us, they appropriated our culture, and turned our culture against us, using cinematic values to make a point in the most dramatic possible way. And in that sense, you probably need the ACLU to say this, but it was brilliant as far as turning our culture and our technology against us.

The other thing I thought was that this was a radically dismediating experience. I experienced what Gary Gumpert was saying. We are covered with media all the time. I experience it as a second skin, particularly in a high stimulus environment like New York City where you=ve got 40-foot Cindy Crawford's. So you develop this second skin of media, and I don=t know whether McLuhan said that or not, but it sounds like something he might have thought. September 11 sort of ripped this skin off. Everybody=s clothes were blown off by some sort of wind or something like that and everybody felt really raw. I spend a lot of time in Union Square. My son came down from college that weekend and he spent the whole weekend at Union Square, which has been a phenomenal place. I went there last night thinking, well, maybe I might have something more coherent to say. And still, even though its been swept up and cleaned, there=s still a group of Mennonites singing A God Bless America@ and a group of breakdancers over here, the flowers and candles. People are reclaiming public space and acknowledging each other in a way that I

haven't seen, certainly in New York, where they shed their second skin and for a minute they become real, like the Velveteen Rabbit.

It seems there is a very small window of opportunity here for being more real, whatever that may mean. I want to celebrate the kids who come to Union Square who dance and and run around and do whatever they do because there's a moment here of connectivity that has been so lacking in this culture. The lack of connectivity has to do with our desensitization and our desensitization has to do with the 2% of the news that reports foreign affairs and that fact that we don't know anything. And since we don't know anything, things like this are pretty likely to happen.

We haven't learned much. It breaks my heart that, after all these years as a peace activist and studying these things, it comes to this. It seems to be that we're back in the Stone age. I think it is certainly the end of complacency. It is the end, I agree, of the world as we know it. It's the beginning of something else and I don't know what that is. But I know we are all committed to making that something better. If that's at all possible.

Susan Drucker

Gary Gumpert described frozen moments in time. When I think of the most recent frozen moment in time, I have to admit a degree of guilt. Not survivors guilt. Of course, my first reaction was to react very personally and then, slowly, the realization that I approached with guilt was that I was asking myself, Ais there a paper in this?@ The question came up entirely too soon.

Much of what I would like to talk about today seems fairly obvious. As the editor of the *Free Speech Yearbook*, at a time like this the bells go off. In previous wars or times of crisis, there was a rationing of gas, or a rationing of aluminum, or a rationing of food, or rationing of rubber. Last week, we were put on notice that there very well may be a rationing of civil liberties. Privacy in particular may be one commodity that's going to be rationed. We've always heard that loose lips sink ships, and that's been repackaged. Last week we were told that we need, as Americans, to watch what we say by Ari Fleischer in the White House. Perhaps more frightening than that admonition, because I have heard reports that it was taken out of context, was that those remarks were dropped from the official transcript of the press briefing.

Thurgood Marshal said that, AHistory teaches that grave threats to liberty often come in times of urgency. Constitutional rights seem too extravagant to endure.@ Americans and journalists in particular are being reminded that what is said matters and, most specifically, there are two areas of note: (a) surveillance, where we see Abig brother@ being warmly welcomed, and (b) free speech in an age where Bill Maher has to fear for his program.

When the planes struck, Gary and I were celebrating the news that we had just received an acceptance of our latest article, *Urban Boundaries: Publicness, Privacy, and Surveillance in a Technological World*.⁸ In the article, we basically tried to deal with the human needs for affiliation and for safety. We talk a lot about landscapes of fear and how surveillance, by facilitating the management of fear, shapes interpersonal and communal communication patterns. Essentially, surveillance fosters a sense of security. We were concerned in that piece about the fact that surveillance cameras in the United States are following the lead in the UK and are being introduced into public spaces with virtually no protest.

New York, for some, has long been a landscape of fear, both as a tangible environment and a psychological environment. Fear has to do with incalculable risk, but risk is more so associated with rational calculations. What we see is that risk and fear have been altered and I think that the relationship between risk and fear will not be the same again. It is that sense of risk and fear that is leading to a bargain for the exchange of security for liberties that really captures my attention first.

I'm sure most of you were familiar with the details of this, but Attorney General John Ashcroft has called for the very quick passage of an antiterrorist package composed of measures to facilitate antiterrorist investigations, detentions, increasing police powers, laws modified concerning immigration, money laundering, and most particularly, in terms of our interest, wire tapping and surveillance. This isn't the first time that the World Trade Center was attacked, and it is not the first time that antiterrorist laws that raised civil liberties issues has emerged. After the bombings in 1993, there were a raft of proposals for expanded electronic surveillance, tighter airport security, tougher money laundering laws, a counter terrorism czar, increased intelligence sharing, and stepped up monitoring of foreign students. Some legislation was passed, including measures to increase criminal penalties for acts of terrorism, a crack down on immigration violations, and, substantially, increased Federal funding for investigating terrorism and protecting government buildings and computer networks. There was a statement made on the floor of Congress during the debate of the original anti-terrorism laws in 1994 by congressman Tom Coburn, a Republican from Oklahoma, who noted that, while terrorism posed a severe threat, there is a far greater fear in this country and that is the fear of our own government.

To just run through some of the measures that are still on the table, because there has been negotiation and supposedly some agreement where some of these provisions have been watered down, at least in the House versions. Ashcroft was seeking new authority to conduct roving wire taps, allowing law enforcement officials to eavesdrop on terrorists suspects who move from phone to phone, rather than eavesdropping on a specific phone. Surveillance is currently associated with a specific phone. What I find particular interesting about that is that there's a tremendous appeal to having the law reflect the technology because that is not

normally the state of things. We see a proposal for the expansion of a monitoring of the Internet and other types of electronic communication.

Those two in particular I find very interesting. I'm sure you're all familiar with the others. The White House proposal that newer immigration provisions allowing authorities to detain or deport immigrants who are suspected of terrorism without presenting evidence in court, and trying to determine how long they can hold them. Seizing billing information, like credit card numbers for the Internet companies, the use of electronic surveillance, particularly surveillance conducted overseas by foreign governments with methods that would violate the Fourth Amendment.

I want to go back to those first two provisions: the ones on the roving wire taps and the expansion of internet surveillance and monitoring. One of the really startling things that I see in the wake of September 11th is that we hear an acceptance of many of these initiatives, and we hear an acceptance across the political spectrum. We're hearing acceptance from the usual people from whom you would expect to hear acceptance. But we're also hearing an amazing amount of acceptance from the ACLU which is going along with 90% of these initiatives.

James Dempsey of the Communication Democracy and Technology Group is giving testimony that is absolutely in support of these monitoring technologies. He's giving testimony in Congress that, three weeks ago, would have been unimaginable. And we hear Lawrence Tribe last night on Charlie Rose. I sat listening with my mouth open as he made fine-line distinctions to justify the recognition of the introduction of face recognition surveillance technology at all public spaces around the United States. He's arguing in favor of this.

In an *NBC/Wall Street Journal* poll, conducted on the 21st of September, 7 in 10 people polled supported increased security measures against terrorism, even if that means reduced privacy protections. A *CNN/USA Today* Gallop poll, during the same period, reported that 61% thought it would be necessary for the average person to give up some of their personal liberties in order to prevent terrorism. Ubiquitous talkshows consider issues like identity cards, face recognition surveillance, and the very important question of when can we laugh? It's unimaginable to me that no matter how horrifying this experience has been, that we are at a point where we are questioning when it is alright to laugh, no less when it is alright to question.

So, ultimately, when we see this as a risk, my reactions are, not only do I see it as the physical risk that so many of us feel, but I see that there is another question, and I think we have to ask: What are we really risking?

James Carey

When I was riding up here yesterday with Paul Grossweiler, we talked a little bit, of course, about the subject under discussion today. We largely avoided it as I tried

to regale him with stories of faculty politics at Columbia. As I explained to him at the time, I don't trust either my thoughts or my emotions on this subject.

I have things I believe and I have emotions I feel. But in the days since September 11th, I've come to believe that they're not stable. That they're not fixed. They're not reliable. That in some sense, I'm as emotionally and intellectually at sea as anyone else. I can pretend for you. I can launch into a very systematic lecture about all of this that shows I have the world very firmly in command. But I don't have the world in command. I don't even have myself in command. I find my imagination vagrantly wandering across this landscape of what's going on in an absolute random sequence.

My first observation of the building coming down was: AMy God, it worked just the way the engineers designed it to. Just perfectly.@ They tried to topple the building in 1993, to get it to smash into its surrounding neighbors, and then it was realized you had to make it implode just the way the engineers designed it so it wouldn't do as much collateral damage. This great symbol of our technological civilization worked perfectly. A testimony to the genius behind it and the symbolism that it came to express. In particular, my own feelings have been unsettled because in the Fall I have 220 beginning journalists in class. On that first day, they were sent to cover the story. They came back 12 hours later emotional basket cases. It was like the first day an intern goes into the emergency room when there's a huge disaster and all human suffering is piled on him or her at once. They were as emotional and distraught and disoriented themselves and second guessing everything they did. Most of my work has been psychiatric, in the good sense; trying to deal with the perpetual problems day after day.

They came to New York hoping to write about the swinging New York scene, the new culture of the new city, and they find themselves staring face to face with reality. Maybe for the first time in their lives. Six months from now, a year from now, I'll know what I think and know what I believe. And know what I feel. When I get some distance. I don't have it now. I'll just make some mundane comments about the media, and they are mundane.

We first of all saw an enormous mistake by President Bush on September 11th which very much affected everything that came after. Bush should have declared a three day period of mourning to end on Friday night with religious services. The media would then have launched into their full media event mode. They would have spoken to us as mourners at the funeral of our brethren. They would have conducted themselves the way they conducted themselves during the Kennedy Assassination. For only the state can fix the parameters for collective public action.

As it was, every institution lurches around about what to do. Columbia: AShould we cancel class?@ Yes, we did for one day, Wednesday. Should we play Fordham in football? That was finally canceled Friday afternoon. Every institution without any guidelines from the outside, from the established order, made up their own rules

as they went along and tried to figure out how they should conduct themselves within it. That's what created some of the attractive publicness. Because there were not events in which we could participate, we had to often make them up. I was moved by Union Square and by the Times Square subway station, where these memorials suddenly sprouted. Candles, prayers, pictures, notices, which were in fact obituaries. They said "Would you help us find our daddy?" in a world where thousands of people anonymously not only die but where a speck of dust belonging to those people won't be found. They were completely incinerated. These notices say, "He or she was there, and is gone." The city's too big for the *New York Times* to do anything but put some representative stories on the back of *A Nation Challenged*.

People had to create the forms of ritual life, spontaneously and on the ground, through which they could deal with what was happening. The day of the crash was as close to the day of the Kennedy assassination as I've experienced. At noon, I walked into the West End. There must have been 2,000 or 3,000 people. So dense, eight deep at the bar. Everyone was suddenly there. Not in their offices, not off watching television. There together in circles, in knots, in a wide extended conversation. The streets, normally choked anyway, except for downtown because of its own special problems, were filled with people. Not singly and alone, not boulevarders strolling, but groups of people talking and reconnecting, trying to decide what to do and how to manage both their cognitive and emotional responses.

In the midst of this, the media made up their rules as they went along. They made up some pretty well and they made up some miserably. Because they canceled advertising and ran it as a complete period of coverage, they did very well on the outset. But by the time we got to Thursday, it was deteriorating fast. By the time we got to Saturday, it was a nightmare. That is to say, they were filling time. They were putting anything on they could find. And they were endlessly reiterating, without news value, context, or meaning, the nightmare images, playing them as filler. So that we could not only experience these images in dreams but we could live with them everyday.

But by then, the images had exhausted any information they contained. They simply served to keep us in a certain emotional state that, rather than calming the emotional distress, only aggravated it. I got a very agitated e-mail from a normally calm Michael Schudson in San Diego which said: "Do you know any of the vice presidents and presidents of the networks that you can talk to and stop them from showing these images? I can't sleep, my family can't sleep." The media didn't know what the story was. But yet they persist in this absurd television habit of putting a banner on everything. Well this isn't the road to the final four. But we gotta get a banner on it 'cause we got to tie it to "America Under Attack" or something. This week NBC had got around to "America Under Alert" or "On

Alert, a better banner if you have to use what has less implications behind it. But in the very structures and styles of the presentation, even when individual stories were intelligent and individual commentary valid, there was a continuous deterioration of the media's ability to simply speak in ways which were, on the one hand, emotionally coherent and, on the other hand, intellectually cognizant.

I agree with Ray Gozzi that everything has changed. Every class I have taught now is implicitly a class about the event. It is the subtext of every sentence that is uttered and, in that sense, life has been recontextualized. How long and in what way we don't know yet.

But for me, September 11 is also a world transforming event. Not in the sense that anything new happened. It was a moment of revealing the deep underlying processes of social change that we knew of but didn't pay attention to in a world of wealth and O.J. Simpson, and distraction and sensationalism and foolishness, in the excess capacity in the communication systems that lead to everything. We see the underlying structures of world politics. The whole nation-state system itself now called into question. It has been called into question for a long time by the creation of new political alliances and the European Union and NAFTA. It has been called into question by the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, by immigration, transportation, and citizenship. The concept of the nation state appears to be decisively at the moment of truth, whether it's going to be held on to and continued or let go of. There are forces pointing in both directions at one and the same time, as much as there are forces in ourselves pointing in both directions.

I ask my student journalists: Are you a citizen of anything? They say, Oh no, I am a citizen of the world. I say, Show up at Kennedy with your passport that says >country of origin - the World.= See if they let you on a damn airplane! They won't. My students think of themselves as living in a world without boundaries, but they actually live in a nation state system. That is a kind of revelation to them. To realize that this is not a war because we cannot attack a nation. It is not a national conflict in any traditional sense. It is a conflict between old forms of social order - still there, powerful, dangerous, threatening - and new forms of social order that may be even worse. But that we can't be sure of. That's the sense of being unsettled that I have; of not being sure about what I'm witnessing and what I'm seeing and how to organize it and think it through. And, above all, how to locate myself emotionally relative to it.

In 1963, I went to my first Vietnam teach-in. For eleven years thereafter my university life was a mess. It was a very unhappy eleven years: teach-ins, class invasions, protests, broken friendships, angry arguments night and day. I have no good memories of that time. I was keetching one day in my office about this: Leave me alone! I want to write! They won't let me alone! Bob Goldstein, a sophomore and writer for the *Daily Illini* at the University of Illinois, came into my

office. I'm complaining to Bob all over again. He says: "There's a lot of suffering in the world, Professor Carey. You should have your share of it." That's the dream from which September 11 awoke us. There's a lot of suffering in the world. There's a lot of pain. People all over the globe are living through painful transformations in which they don't have the wealth and resources which we have to give us some protection. But now, at this point, this pain is starting to spread out, to be experienced in places and in ways it hasn't been experienced before.

I don't know what to do about it.

I don't even know how to feel about it.