



War legitimization discourse: Representing 'Us' and 'Them' in four US presidential addresses

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John Oddo

Kent State University, USA

Abstract

This article presents an intertextual analysis of legitimization in four 'call-to-arms' speeches by Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Bush. Drawing on Thibault's (1991) account of critical intertextual analysis, I identify key legitimization strategies and thematic formations that underlie the rhetoric of both speakers. In addition, I (re)situate the speeches in their wider social and historical context to demonstrate how both presidents manipulated the public. In the analysis, I first examine how both speakers use polarizing lexical resources to constitute 'Us' and 'Them' as superordinate thematic categories that covertly legitimate war. Next, I analyze how representations of the past and future also function to legitimate violence across the four speeches. Finally, I examine how both presidents demarcate group membership to discredit opponents of war at home, and legitimate violence against non-aggressors abroad. I conclude that, in spite of popular mythology, Bush is not an aberrant American president; he is one of many to have misled the public into war.

Keywords

Bush, intertextuality, Iraq War, legitimization, manipulation, membership categorization, polarization, proximization, rhetoric, Roosevelt, temporality, thematic formation, World War II

Franklin Roosevelt was a big man with big thoughts. He *never* instituted color-coded fear systems to scare the bejesus out of us or ominously warned us of impending doom from mysterious hidden forces. In his booming voice he told us we had nothing to fear ... FDR united a nation and he led. Bush is a small man with small thoughts, controlled by powerful and greedy forces, doing great damage to a great democracy in the service of a base and shallow agenda for crass political purpose. (Jackson, 2007: paras 9–10)

Corresponding author:

John Oddo, 5075 Lakeside Ct, Stow, OH 44224, USA.

Email: joddo@kent.edu

Many on the Left regard attacking Iraq for terrorism as a simple category mistake, and emphasize that Iraq was not shown to be involved in the attack of 9/11. Without attempting to deal with this issue in detail, let me simply mention that Germany was never implicated in Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, but the US attacked them both in the Second World War. (Bar-Lev, 2007: 192)

Introduction

The above quotations – one from an editorial *criticizing* George W. Bush, and the other from an academic article ostensibly *defending* George W. Bush against the criticisms of CDA scholars – have one thing in common. Namely, both writers compare, explicitly and implicitly, the call-to-arms rhetoric of George W. Bush with the call-to-arms rhetoric of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR). And, importantly, both writers suggest that there is a gulf between the two. For Jackson (2007), the gulf is wide. She posits that Roosevelt, unlike Bush, never appealed to the fear 'of impending doom from mysterious hidden forces' to generate support for war. Meanwhile, Bar-Lev (2007), who notes several similarities between the rhetoric of Bush and FDR,¹ mentions one specific difference. He suggests that prior to World War II, Roosevelt and others never implicated Germany in Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, while Bush – perhaps not unfairly in Bar-Lev's opinion – at the very least categorized Iraq and al Qaeda as part of the same group.

In both excerpts, FDR's rhetoric before World War II is presented as in some way disjoined from the rhetoric of George W. Bush during his 'war on terror'. In short, it is argued that FDR *never* did some of the things that Bush did. He *never* invoked the 'rhetoric of fear' that has come to be associated with Bush; he *never* misled the public into imagining a link between a group that attacked the nation and some other group that did not. Such arguments make it possible to interpret Bush's call-to-arms rhetoric as in some way new, or even anomalous. Especially in Jackson's (2007) estimation, Bush is represented as a different kind of president – one whose manipulative rhetoric can be attributed to his own personal deficiencies. It might be assumed that, if Americans could just replace Bush with someone of FDR's character, they wouldn't have to worry about their president stoking fears and manipulating the public to promote a war.

In this study, I attempt to challenge the idea that Bush and FDR argued in different ways to promote war. In fact, this critical intertextual analysis (Thibault, 1991) views Bush's call-to-arms rhetoric not as a departure from FDR's rhetoric, but as a continuation of it. Specifically, the study intertextually examines four speeches – two by FDR and two by George W. Bush – to illustrate how the same argumentative techniques and thematic formations are used to legitimize violence against 'enemies'. In the course of the analysis, I identify the discursive construal of an Us/Them binary as the principal legitimation technique employed by both Bush and FDR to justify war. I discuss how 'Us' and 'Them' emerge as meaningful categories through the differential deployment of highly moralized lexical resources – especially highly moralized material processes and nominalizations. Next, I examine how representations of time (specifically, the past and the future) also function rhetorically to legitimate violence across all four speeches. Finally, I examine how both presidents represent membership in the semantic categories of Us and Them. That is, I analyze the rhetorical techniques by which both presidents demarcate who is on Our side and who is on Their side.

Above all, the analysis suggests that FDR and Bush employ similar lexico-grammatical resources and rhetorical techniques to legitimate war. In fact, at least in terms of their call-to-arms rhetoric, Bush and FDR are not so different after all. The analysis implies, therefore, that CDA scholars interested in challenging the prevailing social problem of war should not neglect history. Nor should they assume that any political leader – regardless of party affiliation – is above making the kind of manipulative and dishonest arguments that are often necessary to make war palatable to the public.

Call-to-arms legitimation

Legitimation² is defined as discourse that explains and justifies social activity, and typically involves providing ‘good reasons, grounds, or acceptable motivations for past or present action’ (Van Dijk, 1998: 255). As Van Leeuwen (2007) has suggested, legitimation provides an answer to the question ‘Why?’ – ‘Why should we do this?’ and ‘Why should we do this in this way?’ (p. 93). War is certainly one social practice that begs the question – why? Indeed – as a dangerous, deadly activity – war must be assigned *legitimacy* before it is undertaken. And this takes serious rhetorical work – work that is most often carried out by political leaders.

In fact, over the last century alone, political leaders have given thousands of speeches aimed at generating support for war. And, given that there have been over a hundred wars resulting in millions of deaths over the last century, it is clear that politicians are very adept at employing discourse to legitimate violence. One key to their success is their possession of a kind of *soft power* – a power to persuade others (without force) to do what they want (Chouliaraki, 2005; Nye, 2004).³ Some of this soft power is derived from their status and rank. More importantly, perhaps, political leaders have privileged access to mass media and the power to reach and influence enormous public audiences (Van Dijk, 1993, 1998).⁴

In any event, the political speech laying out the case for war has become a genre in its own right.⁵ Of course, scholars agree⁶ that the most pervasive and remarkable pattern in this genre is the development of an Us/Them binary that involves the semantic macro-strategies of positive Self-presentation and negative Other-presentation (Van Dijk, 1993, 1998). In call-to-arms speeches, this binary poses Us, the essentially good and innocent protagonists, against Them, the thoroughly evil aggressors who are poised to attack.⁷ Us/Them polarization is hortatory in that it covertly implies that violent action in the world is necessary. In fact, by representing an enemy that is completely evil and ready to strike, the discourse practically necessitates only one course of action: wipe Them off the face of the planet. In this way, Us/Them polarization is a key legitimation strategy – an argumentative technique that rhetors employ to justify violence.

Us/Them polarization is the key legitimation strategy in call-to-arms discourse, but it is by no means the only legitimation strategy. In fact, this study examines polarization *in relation* to three other legitimation techniques: (1) legitimation by reference to values; (2) legitimation by reference to temporality; and (3) legitimation by reference to group membership demarcation. In the first case, I examine how ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are constituted through ‘moral evaluations’ (Van Leeuwen, 2007). In other words, I investigate the moralized lexis used to differentiate Our actions and values from Their actions and

values. In the second case, I focus on the role of temporality in legitimizing war (Cap, 2006, 2008, 2010; Dunmire, 2005). More specifically, I explore how representations of Us and Them in the past and future are used to legitimate violent action in the present. Finally, I consider the discursive demarcation of group membership as a strategy of legitimation. In this case, I am concerned with the ways that rhetors demarcate (whether clearly or ambiguously) *who belongs* to Us and Them. This final type of legitimation is perhaps the most interesting as it is used by the rhetors in this study to discredit people who would seem to be ‘with Us’ and to advocate violence against non-aggressors who don’t appear to be ‘with Them’.

This study adds to existing scholarship by examining how these legitimation strategies were adopted by two different American presidents at ostensibly very different historical moments. In fact, part of the appeal of this study is that the two speakers – FDR and George W. Bush – are generally believed to have been very dissimilar in their approach to governance. To work against this assumption, I have purposefully chosen an intertextual set of four speeches (two by each president) that reveals continuities in their wartime rhetoric. Indeed, instead of treating each speech as a completely discrete event, I consider them to be part of the same intertextual current. In other words, I imagine each speech to be a slight variation of an all-too-common rhetorical thrust for war.

Analytic framework

To examine the four speeches in this study, I draw on Thibault’s (1991) approach to critical intertextual analysis (CIA). Essentially, CIA attempts to destabilize the notion that different texts are completely separate from one another. As Thibault (1991) explains, CIA aims to disrupt the notion that texts are ‘autonomous, object-like’ entities that exist in an ‘already-given social situation’ (p. 124). Instead, he argues that texts are ‘instantiations of intertextual relations’ which enact social situations as much as they are determined by them (p. 124). In other words, Thibault posits that textual meanings are not simply given in texts. Instead, rhetors *make* textual meanings when they draw from the wider intertextual field and recontextualize certain existing generic meanings for their own purposes. Likewise, for Thibault, context cannot be reduced to the social situation that apparently ‘contains’ texts. Instead, context includes both the intertextual formations that rhetors draw upon to create texts, as well as the shifting social and historical situation that is (re)created as a text unfolds. Thus, the analyst’s job is (1) to make explicit the broader intertextual meaning relations that connect apparently ‘disjoined’ texts, and (2) to (re)situate texts within their relevant social and historical contexts of production.

Thibault suggests that texts do not need to cite or allude to one another to be considered intertextual. Indeed, texts don’t have to share any key words (or any words at all) to be part of an intertextual set. They need only share recurrent, abstract semantic patterns known as ‘thematic formations’ (Lemke, 1995). These thematic formations may be thought of as generic meanings that underlie the specific wordings in a given text. Thus, various texts with slightly different wordings may nevertheless constitute the same thematic formation. Following in the tradition of systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), an analyst can investigate ideational and interpersonal meanings ‘both within single texts and across entire intertextual sets’ to uncover these overarching

'networks of thematic relations' (Thibault, 1991: 136). Thus, both within and across texts, the analyst attends to the meanings actually selected in a given text (on the syntagmatic plane), as well as the potential meanings that might have been selected (from the paradigmatic environment), but were not.

In the present analysis, I attempt to uncover how the superordinate thematic formations of 'Us' and 'Them' are construed across all four speeches in order to justify military action. Specifically, I identify key lexico-semantic connections between Bush's call-to-arms rhetoric and the earlier call-to-arms rhetoric of FDR. In so doing, I aim to challenge the notion that Bush's manipulative call-to-arms rhetoric is an historical aberration. Indeed, this analysis situates Bush's wartime rhetoric within its wider historical and intertextual context to show that even the 'best' of American presidents have misled the public to legitimize war.⁸

In the following section, I seek to provide a historical background for the four speeches. Here, I aim to show that both FDR and Bush sought to manipulate the public into war against non-aggressors by exploiting public memory of recent attacks against Americans. Later, I turn to the speeches themselves, and explain how both FDR and Bush used the same legitimization strategies in their attempts to secure public approval for war.

The four speeches

The four addresses that I have selected for analysis are: (a) FDR's (27 October 1941) Navy Day radio address in which he describes the need for military action against Hitler; (b) FDR's (9 December 1941) radio address, just after the attack on Pearl Harbor, in which he justifies war with Japan, Germany and Italy; (c) President Bush's (20 September 2001) address to a joint session of Congress, just nine days after the 9/11 attacks, in which he prepares the public for violence against the Taliban and leaders of al Qaeda and declares a 'war on terror'; (d) President Bush's (7 October 2002) address in Cincinnati, Ohio in which he prepares the public for probable military action against Iraq as a continuation of the war on terror. Below, I attempt to contextualize each of the speeches, including information about how the addresses were received by the public. In so doing, I hope to illustrate how the social and historical forces that produced these speeches make them a compelling intertextual set. In particular, I hope to indicate what makes these speeches *manipulative*. I should point out now how I define manipulation. It is an illegitimate form of persuasion in which rhetors from dominant groups withhold key information or misrepresent social events in order to convince audiences to adopt beliefs or perform actions that serve dominant interests (Van Dijk, 2006).

FDR's Navy Day radio address – 27 October 1941

There is considerable evidence that FDR was trying, even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, to enter American troops into World War II. In fact, at first, FDR's sights were not set on Japan, but on Germany.⁹ However, strong opposition from the US Congress and the American public prevented FDR from entering the war.¹⁰ In fact, polls suggested that 80 percent of Americans – still weary from World War I and the Great Depression – favored

sending humanitarian aid to allies, but had no interest in military conflict with Germany, which had not committed any hostile attacks against America (Fleming, 2001: 5).

FDR believed that in order to change public opinion, Germany had to declare war on the United States. So, he decided to provoke Hitler – who wanted desperately to keep America out of the war – into attacking US ships on the Atlantic.¹¹ The president ordered American destroyers to dump depth charges on German U-boats and sanctioned them to support British ships in war operations. Eventually, the strategy succeeded. In the fall of 1941, a German submarine torpedoed the USS *Greer* – which had been dropping depth charges on the submarine for three hours in cooperation with a British patrol plane (Fleming, 2001: 89). Weeks later, the USS *Kearny* was also hit by a torpedo when it helped an under-protected British convoy attack yet another German submarine (Black, 2003: 667). Again, the German U-boat was being pounded with depth charges, and only fired on the American vessel in self-defense.

The killing of 11 men on the *Kearny* set the stage for Roosevelt's Navy Day address (FDR, 1941a). In the speech, FDR characterized the strikes on the *Greer* and *Kearny* as unprovoked. Moreover, he claimed to have in his possession a 'secret map' made by the German government which outlined Hitler's imperial designs on South and Central America. The map was a forgery produced by British intelligence, and while it is unclear whether Roosevelt knew this, 'it is academic, since he was, for his own purposes, constantly imputing fantastic ambitions in the Americas to Hitler, and it is not clear how much credence, if any, he attached to these claims' (Black, 2003: 667). Later in the speech, Roosevelt claimed to have yet another document made by the German government – this time 'a plan to abolish all existing religions'. Again, the document was a fraud. In any case, FDR explained to Americans that they had taken their 'battle stations', and pledged US commitment to the 'destruction of Hitlerism'.

Still, the speech failed to generate public support for war with Germany. For one thing, antiwar groups in and out of Congress criticized Roosevelt for his provocative acts and convinced a large percentage of the public that the dead sailors were Roosevelt's fault, not Hitler's (Fleming, 2001: 90). Moreover, other Americans told themselves that 'the loss of some ships and some men was inevitable – and even a price worth paying to stay out of the war' (p. 90). Even after Roosevelt's outright deception in the Navy Day address, polls continued to indicate that as much as 80 percent of the public opposed entering the war (p. 91).

FDR's radio address following the declaration of war with Japan – 9 December 1941

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor finally gave FDR an incident large enough to generate public outrage – and a kind of 'backdoor' into the European conflict.¹² Still, the president faced a problem – Japan had attacked the United States; Germany hadn't. So, in his 9 December radio address (Roosevelt, 1941b), FDR sought to link Germany to the Japanese attack.¹³ In the speech, he charged that Germany and Italy 'already consider[ed] themselves at war with the United States' – an allegation that was not true.¹⁴ More importantly, FDR claimed that Germany and Japan were conducting their military and naval operations according to a 'joint plan',¹⁵ and that Hitler had promised to reward Japan if it attacked America.¹⁶ As Fleming (2001) explains, these accusations were categorically untrue.

Still, the speech got Roosevelt what he needed to enter into the war. Two days after the address, on 11 December, Hitler – convinced that FDR’s words represented a ‘de facto declaration of war’ against his country – officially declared war against the United States¹⁷ (Fleming, 2001: 34). But even before Hitler’s declaration of war, FDR’s address *had convinced the public that Germany was a legitimate target*. National polls taken on 10 December – just one day after this speech – indicated that 48 percent of the public believed that Japan attacked the United States because they were ‘urged by Germany’, and 90 percent believed that the president should have declared war on Germany as well as Japan (Hill, 2003: 214). As Richard F. Hill (2003) asserts in his intriguing book *Hitler Attacks Pearl Harbor: Why the United States Declared War on Germany*, FDR shaped in the public imagination a ‘strong and widespread belief in German culpability for Pearl Harbor’ (p. 3). Hill goes on to argue that it was not Hitler’s declaration of war against the USA, but the president’s discourse, directly and indirectly linking Germany with the attack on Pearl Harbor, that convinced the public of the necessity of invading Germany.

President Bush’s State of the Union address – 20 September 2001

Just nine days after the 11 September (9/11) attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush prepared the public for violent action against the Taliban and leaders of al Qaeda. Importantly, Bush identified not just those responsible for the 9/11 attacks as potential targets for violence, but all other people who could be deemed ‘terrorists’ or supporters of terrorists. In fact, Bush declared a potentially unending global ‘war on terror’. This speech – and others like it – helped the president gain wide public support for an invasion of Afghanistan, as roughly 90 percent approved of military action there. Moreover, roughly 80 percent of the people polled in late September and early October 2001 following this address favored military action against groups *other than those in Afghanistan*, including other countries ‘sheltering’ terrorists, people in other countries *suspected* of being terrorists, as well as terrorists *not* behind the 9/11 attacks (Huddy et al., 2002: 447–8). Clearly, the president had succeeded in convincing the public that the ‘war on terror’ should extend beyond the borders of Afghanistan.

President Bush’s Cincinnati address – 7 October 2002

Several months into the war in Afghanistan, a push for war in Iraq¹⁸ intensified as Bush’s speeches increasingly legitimated military action against Saddam Hussein. Even before 11 September, public support for using military force to depose Saddam Hussein was generally strong.¹⁹ On the other hand, Americans were yet to be convinced that a ‘threat’ from Iraq necessitated immediate and potentially extensive military action – indeed, roughly half believed, before the 7 October Cincinnati address, that the conflict could be solved diplomatically through weapons inspections (Pew Research Center, 2002).

In his 7 October 2002 speech, Bush charged Iraq with criminal wrongdoing and cautioned the public that military action against Iraq would likely be necessary.²⁰ Of course, rhetorically, the president had the same problem that FDR had in 1941. Iraq, much like Germany, had not attacked the United States. Thus, Bush needed to stress in this speech (1) that Iraq would likely attack (or help others attack) America, and (2) that an invasion

of Iraq would probably be the only way to continue winning the already-constructed ‘war on terror’. To do this, Bush contended, among other things, that the threat from Iraq was urgent, that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program, and that Iraq had links to al Qaeda – and reason to support terrorists with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). All of these contentions were arguable, if not entirely false. In fact, according to *Iraq on the Record: The Bush Administration’s Public Statements on Iraq*, a report published by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform (Waxman, 2004), Bush’s Cincinnati address contained ‘11 misleading statements, the most by any [of the administration] officials in a single appearance’ (p. ii).

Nevertheless, the speech was, at the time, influential. While it is impossible to know the exact impact of the Cincinnati address on the public’s willingness to invade Iraq, it is likely that the speech further reinforced the already prevalent ideas that Iraq possessed WMD and that Iraq had links to al Qaeda. Indeed, a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center (2002) – days *before* the president’s 7 October address – indicated that 79 percent of Americans already believed that Saddam Hussein had or was close to getting nuclear weapons, and 64 percent believed that Saddam Hussein directly helped terrorists carry out the 9/11 attacks. The 7 October speech merely reinforced these beliefs – particularly the belief in the connection between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks.²¹ According to Kushner and Gershkoff (2004), ‘the principal reason that three-quarters of the American public supported the war was that the Bush administration successfully convinced them that a link existed between Saddam Hussein and terrorism generally, and between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda specifically’ (p. 1).

Analysis – defining Us and Them: Legitimation by moral evaluation

Our violence, our values; their violence, their values

The overarching thematic formations that I have labeled ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are, in large part, derived from the speakers’ patterned distribution of highly moralized lexical resources (see Van Leeuwen’s discussion of moral evaluations, 2007). Perhaps most notably, across the four speeches negatively valued nouns and processes are almost exclusively used to represent Them and their actions; meanwhile, relatively positive (and neutral) nouns and processes are used to represent Us and our actions. In Table 1, I have focused on representations of ‘Our Violence’ across the four speeches. That is, I have listed a number of the most common ‘violent’ material processes (and nominalized processes) for which We are represented, implicitly or explicitly, as the responsible actor.

As indicated in Table 1, when it comes to representations of Our violent actions, relatively positive or neutral lexical resources are typically selected. Intertextually, these words are linked in the lexicogrammar through *synonymy*. Each of them tends to justify the use of force, while at the same time diminishing or euphemizing the killing and dying that the use of such force compels. In a sense, Our violence doesn’t seem violent at all.

By contrast, when it comes to representing Their violent actions, the speakers select from a synonymous set of relatively negative material processes. Indeed, Their violence is moralized so that it appears inexcusable, unprovoked and maximally lethal. In Table 2,

Table 1. Positively moralized processes representing Our violent actions

Process	Prototypical example	Nominalized variation	Frequency
Defend	... we are called to defend freedom (Bush, 2001)	... resisting Hitler or Japan was in the long run the defense of our own country (FDR, 1941b)	15
Fight	We don't like it – we didn't want to get in it – but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got (FDR, 1941b)	This is not, however, just America's fight. This is the world's fight (Bush, 2001)	14
Defeat/ Win	It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated (Bush, 2001); We are going to win the war (FDR, 1941b)	–	12
Confront	... confronting the threat posed by Iraq is crucial to winning the war on terror (Bush, 2002)	–	8
Protect	Our American merchant ships must be protected by our American Navy (FDR, 1941a)	–	4

I have listed a number of the most common ‘violent’ material processes (and nominalized processes) for which They are construed, implicitly or explicitly, as the responsible actor.

Aside from these moralized representations of violent processes, both speakers also tend to *naturalize* violence (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Specifically, Bush and FDR use nominalizations to represent violence as a historically natural and even inevitable force that We are sometimes compelled to ‘confront’. For example, Bush uses the nominalization *threat* 22 times in his two speeches. Very often, the threat seems to be a force that cannot

Table 2. Negatively moralized processes representing Their violent actions²²

Process	Prototypical example	Nominalized variation	Frequency
Attack	Terrorists attacked a symbol of American prosperity (Bush, 2001)	The purpose of Hitler's attack was to frighten the American people off the high seas (FDR, 1941a)	31
Kill	Eleven brave and loyal men of our Navy were killed by the Nazis (FDR, 1941a)	–	11
Invade	Japan invaded Manchukuo – without warning (FDR, 1941b)	–	8
Dominate	This same tyrant has tried to dominate the Middle East (Bush, 2002)	... bringing the whole continent under their domination (FDR, 1941b)	7
Murder	By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder (Bush, 2001)	–	7

be attributed to human agency (e.g. 'I want to ... discuss a grave **threat** to peace, and America's determination to lead the world in confronting that **threat**', Bush, 2002). Correspondingly, both FDR and Bush use the nominalization **challenge** – often to represent violence as a kind of inexorable test which We have faced and overcome before and which We must now face and overcome again:

- Today in the face of this newest and greatest **challenge** of them all we Americans have cleared our decks and taken our battle stations (FDR, 1941a).
- Their **challenge** has now been flung at the United States of America ... the people of the United States have accepted that **challenge** (FDR, 1941b).
- We did not ask for this present **challenge**, but we accept it (Bush, 2002).

In some cases, these **challenges** are loosely represented as trials forced on us by an enemy's material actions – such as the challenge 'flung' at America – but more often they are presented as completely agent-less conditions that must be dealt with.

Finally, it is worth noting the ways that Our side and Their side are represented with highly moralized titles, attributes and ambitions. The following value-laden words and their variations are often used in noun groups associated with Us – in the form of things, epithets, classifiers and qualifiers (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 311–35). More generally, these words are used to describe Us; the attributes we naturally possess; the concepts that We value, promote and protect; and the qualities that are threatened when They attack:²³ **free/freedom** (27), **peace** (19), **security** (18), **strength/strong** (12), **good** (11), **human** (10), **success** (8), **liberty** (6), **civilization** (5), **justice** (5), **resolve** (5), **prosperity** (4), **decency** (4), **courage** (3) and **democracy** (2). By contrast, the following value-laden words and their variations are often used in noun groups associated with Them – again in the form of things, epithets, classifiers and qualifiers. This time, the words describe Them; the attributes they naturally possess; and the goals they promote, value and aspire to bring about: **terror** (67), **enemy** (16), **fear** (11), **danger/dangerous** (11), **destruction** (9), **aggressor/aggression** (7), **dictator** (7), **violence** (5), **crime/criminal** (4), **death/deadly** (4), **evil** (4), **treacherous** (4), **tyrant** (4), **murderer/murderous** (3), **oppression** (3), **ruthless** (3) and **perpetrator** (2).

Taken together, these value-laden terms enact clear identities for Us and Them. Clearly, the strategy of positive Self-presentation and negative Other-presentation (Van Dijk, 1998) is at work in these speeches. Our side is construed in terms that tend to glorify and sanitize; meanwhile, Their side is represented through pejorative terms that tend to vilify and demonize. Needless to say, these patterns of lexicalization assign war a kind of legitimacy. Insofar as it is a war *for* all things good, and against all things evil – it is a war that ought to be waged.

Us and Them in the past and future: Temporal legitimization

Representations of time also function rhetorically to legitimate violence in these speeches. Following Cap (2006, 2008, 2010), we may refer to this legitimization technique as a kind of *temporal proximization*. As Cap (2008) explains: 'temporal proximization can be understood as a construal of events ... as momentous and historic and thus of central significance to the discourse addressee' (p. 35).

In other words, temporal proximization involves construing events, which may be ‘remote and inconsequential’, as proximal *in time* – so proximal that they are capable of ‘exerting an ... impact on both the speaker and the addressee’ (Cap, 2010: 392–3). Temporal proximization can involve construing the impact of past events in such a way that they seem to effect the current situation (Cap, 2008: 35). This is seen below as both Bush and FDR construe past acts of American heroism as a relevant justification for current and future violence (which are presumably also heroic). However, the rhetorical movement from past acts to present acts is not the only type of temporal proximization. As Dunmire (2005, 2008) points out, rhetors also shift from reports of what will happen in the *future* to exhortations of what *must happen now* (Dunmire, 2008: 83). For instance, a speaker may describe a future enemy attack in order to suggest that war is immediately necessary.

In the following portion of the analysis, I identify those intertextual thematic formations that are based on such argumentative representations of temporality – specifically representations of the past and future. Particularly significant in this analysis is the way that utterances are modalized to enact interpersonal relationships with the audience. *Epistemic* modality tends to qualify the certainty of given utterances – interpersonally creating more or less space for alternative viewpoints (Martin and White, 2005). For instance, the assertion ‘Hitler *might* have attacked’ allows a good deal of room for contrary views. But the statement ‘Hitler *definitely* attacked’ leaves only a small space for contrary views, increasing the social cost of disagreement with the speaker. Of course, when a statement is ‘unmodalized’, it tends to assume the most authority, essentially closing off debate on a given topic (e.g. ‘Hitler attacked’). Meanwhile, *deontic* modality concerns social obligation, and includes such modal auxiliaries as *should*, *ought* and *must*. As I suggest below, the overriding tendency in these speeches is to (1) employ epistemic resources to represent particular and disputed visions of reality as absolutely and universally true (Fairclough, 2003: 45–6), and (2) to use these categorical representations of reality to assert or imply (deontically) what *ought* to happen. For example, Bush and FDR often alternate unmodalized representations of the crimes a supposed enemy *has committed* or *will commit* with suggestions of what We *ought* to do about it.

Our past: Glory and heroism; suffering and wisdom

When it comes to the past, Bush and FDR tend to deploy meanings that realize an ‘American Heroism’ thematic formation consistent with Van Dijk’s (1993, 1998) general semantic strategy of positive Self-presentation. Accordingly, the speakers represent our past actions as habitually valiant and magnificently successful – and typically slip into representing our present and future as equally glorious. For instance, in his Navy Day address, FDR presents a kind of unspecified and ongoing American past that is stunningly positive. In the following examples, I have **bolded** verbs in the past tense²⁴ and underlined verbs in the present and future tense:

We **have enjoyed** many of God’s blessings. We **have lived** in a broad and abundant land, and by our industry and productivity we **have made it flourish** ... Our country **was first populated**, and it **has been steadily developed**, by men and women in whom there **burned** the spirit of adventure and restlessness and individual independence which will not tolerate oppression. Ours **has been** a story of vigorous challenges which **have been accepted and overcome** ... and

we have come out of them the most powerful Nation, and the freest, in all of history. Today in the face of this newest and greatest challenge of them all we Americans **have cleared** our decks and **taken** our battle stations. (FDR, 1941a)

Notice that in telling the grand ‘story’ of America, Roosevelt presents things in categorical ways. Unmodalized assertions (representing how We have enjoyed God’s blessings and overcome challenges) present a heroic portrait of American history – one that does not leave space for alternative viewpoints. Of course, this representation of the past is used to legitimate a violent course of action in the present and future. Indeed, the fact that We have always overcome past challenges to become the freest nation on earth, justifies taking *our battle stations* against the *newest and greatest challenge* we face *today*. Similarly, Our spirit of individual independence that burned in the past, simply *will not tolerate oppression* in the future.

Bush, too, construes Our past as one that includes triumph in the face of threats. He explains that America ‘**has never permitted** the brutal and lawless to set history’s course’, and adds:

Now, as before, we will secure our nation, protect our freedom, and help others to find freedom of their own. (Bush, 2002)

Like FDR, Bush’s assertions could not be any more categorical: in wars, Our nation *has never permitted* brutality and lawlessness. It is assumed, of course, that the brutal and lawless have always been on Their side; we, by implication, have never been brutal and lawless ourselves in wars. This assertion about the past again slips into equally unmodalized assertions about the present and future. Now, as always, we will *secure, protect and help*.

The above excerpt illustrates how positive representations of Our past *material* processes (e.g. *have never permitted* the brutal and lawless ...) are deployed to legitimate euphemized violent processes in the future (*will secure + protect + help*). By contrast, in the following examples, representations of Our past *mental* processes are used to legitimate future violence. Specifically, Our past is one in which we have *learned* terrible lessons, which invariably suggest the wisdom of war now and in the future. In Bush’s Cincinnati address, for instance, he legitimates violence against Iraq by referring to the lessons We learned when our innocence and security were assaulted:

On September the 11th, 2001, America **felt** its vulnerability – even to threats that gather on the other side of the earth. We **resolved** then, and we **are resolved** today, to confront every threat, from any source, that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America. (Bush, 2002)

Here, Bush refers directly back to the attacks of 9/11. Notice how what America once felt (through mental perception) slips into what America is now resolved to do (materially): confront threats. Interestingly, even though Bush modalizes the probability that threats will actually hurt Americans in the future (they *could* bring terror and suffering), his representation of Our past mental process still commits us to a future of violence (*we resolved then to ... confront every threat*).

This same ‘Lesson Learned’ thematic formation is drawn upon even more explicitly by FDR. Note the similar three-part, generic semantic content underlying his argument:

(1) we have learned from our experience of past attacks; (2) we are no longer protected by distance in space; (3) we must be prepared to take up arms against enemies that wish to destroy Us:

In these past few years – and, most violently, in the past few days – we **have learned** a terrible lesson ... And what we all **have learned** is this: There is no such thing as security for any nation – or any individual – in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism. There is no such thing as impregnable defense against powerful aggressors who sneak up in the dark and strike without warning. We **have learned** that our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack – that we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map ... It **was** a thoroughly dishonorable deed ... We don't like it – we didn't want to get in it – but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got. (FDR 1941b)

As in the rhetoric of Bush, FDR construes mental processes that occurred in the past (i.e. what *we all learned*) to legitimate violence in the future (*we're going to fight*). Of course, what We learned is full of negative representations of Them and their violent processes (*gangersterism, aggressors, strike without warning, severe attack, etc.*).

*Their past: Unexplained transgressions*²⁵

Indeed, representations of the past in which They function as responsible actors, typically involve an enumeration of their 'Unexplained Transgressions'. As expected, Their crimes against Us are presented in unchallengeable ways that highlight their evil nature and our innocence. Moreover, the litany of Their crimes is unexplained (or explained only in terms of their evil disposition). Needless to say, this representation of their actions urges people to support a violent foreign policy against Them. For instance, in FDR's Navy Day address, we have the following categorical descriptions of Their past transgressions:

Hitler **has attacked** shipping ... Many American-owned merchant ships **have been sunk** on the high seas. One American destroyer **was attacked** on September 4. Another destroyer **was attacked** and **hit** on October 17. Eleven brave and loyal men of our Navy **were killed** by the Nazis. We **have wished** to avoid shooting. But the shooting **has started**. And history **has recorded** who fired the first shot ... Hitler's torpedo **was directed** at every American. (FDR 1941b)

Here, FDR is referring to the 'attacks' on the *Greer* and *Kearny*. Notice how the victims of these attacks are characterized by morally positive epithets: *brave and loyal* men. More importantly, notice how agency with regard to these attacks shifts – but is always more or less attributed to Them. First, Hitler is the sole actor who actively attacked shipping. This is presented in an unmodalized assertion as a self-evident truth, despite the fact that Hitler was not even in a U-boat during this incident and the fact that Hitler had ordered U-boats *not* to fire on American vessels. Interestingly, FDR commonly attributes a given transgression to just one person – Hitler. Meanwhile, he tends to exaggerate the number of people who suffer as a result. Indeed, in an instance of spatial proximization (Cap, 2006, 2008, 2010), an 'attack' that targeted a single ship on the ocean is represented as threatening all US citizens: 'Hitler's torpedo was directed at every American.'

Again, Hitler is the actor, and he fired not just at the *Kearny*, but at an entire nation of people. Essentially, one person causes all the trouble, but everybody suffers for it.²⁶ In other lines, FDR shifts to a passive construction where the agents behind the attack are slightly more obfuscated: ships *have been sunk*, each destroyer *was attacked*. In any event, the causal details that led to the incidents are never discussed (certainly, the deliberate provocation by American vessels is never discussed). Instead, FDR employs a nominalization ('the shooting') to describe the violence. Shooting is the thing We, of course, have wished to avoid, but now it has started, and They are responsible for it. Once again, this hortatory description of past events implicitly urges people to immediately take up arms in self-defense.

Bush also uses unmodalized language and presuppositions to realize the thematic of Their past transgressions. To save space, I will refer only to one brief example. Bush (2001) asserts: 'On September the 11th, enemies of freedom **committed an act of war** against our country.' Here, the agents who carried out the attack are represented as 'enemies of freedom'. While vague, this pejorative nominal creates a consensus that, whoever They may be, They are certainly enemies – not just of us – but of the abstract positive cultural value that sustains our civilized life: freedom. Their action is also described in unmodalized terms. Theirs was an act of *war* – and again this act of war was against all of Us – not just the people in the World Trade Center or the Pentagon. The implication, of course, is that all of Us must fight to defend ourselves in this war, or, at the very least, lend our support to those who do.

Our future: A difficult road to certain victory

The speakers in the four addresses represent the future with a degree of certitude that staggers the imagination.²⁷ For Us, the proximal future entails some difficulty: we will be involved in a lengthy military campaign and must be prepared for some casualties. However, Our distal future entails defeating the enemy and securing peace and prosperity for all of humankind – no small feat. These representations of the future are legitimate in the following way. The enormously desirable distal future (i.e. the glory of victory, peace and harmony) is represented as contingent upon the proximal future which is perhaps undesirable, but necessary (i.e. warfare against an evil adversary). In a sense, the speakers highlight an unmodalized epistemic future (we will prevail) in order to justify a potentially more problematic deontic future (we must fight). I present a few examples of the 'Guaranteed Victory' thematic formation below. In them, I have **bolded** the mostly unmodalized verbs that construe our future.

FDR (1941a) declares categorically that 'the forward march of Hitler and of Hitlerism can be stopped – and it **will be stopped**'. He adds that '**when we have helped to end** the curse of Hitlerism, **we shall help to establish** a new peace which **will give** to decent people everywhere a better chance to live and prosper in security and in freedom and in faith'. The implication is that in order to secure positive values (*peace, prosperity, security, freedom, faith*) for all decent people in the distal future, we must presently engage in violence against Hitlerism (an interesting noun).

Bush draws from the same thematic–semantic formation to present a grandiose vision of the distal future:

Our nation – this generation – **will lift** a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We **will rally** the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We **will not tire**, we **will not falter**, and we **will not fail**. (Bush, 2001)

Ironically, by executing our own violence, We *will lift the threat of violence from our future*. Indeed, We are represented as quasi-superheroes with unlimited strength and energy (who *will not tire, will not falter*), and intrinsic attributes (*courage*) that will allow us to rally together the entire world. Of course, since these predictions of the distant future never include representations of Our failure and defeat, they help to legitimate more immediate violence against Our enemy.

A final excerpt from Bush's 2002 address also illustrates this 'Guaranteed Victory' thematic. This example is particularly interesting for its modality:

I hope this will not require military action, but **it may**. And military conflict **could be** difficult. An Iraqi regime faced with its own demise **may attempt** cruel and desperate measures. **If** Saddam Hussein orders such measures, his generals **would be well advised to refuse** those orders. **If** they do not refuse, they must understand that all war criminals **will be pursued and punished**. **If we have to act**, we **will take** every precaution that is possible. We **will plan** carefully; we **will act** with the full power of the United States military; we **will act** with allies at our side, and we **will prevail**. (Bush, 2002)

Notably, Bush uses the semantic strategy of positive Self-presentation/negative Other-presentation (Van Dijk, 1998) to help legitimate future violence. First, Bush suggests that he *hopes* future military action will not be deontically *required*, suggesting a positive Self that is reluctant to go to war, while also epistemically indicating that war *may* nevertheless be necessary. However, he then discusses at length what this potential military action might entail, indicating that this is the vision of the future that he prefers. He explains that military conflict could be difficult – essentially because of crimes that the negative Other *may* try. Of course, Bush predicts a conditional future that assures his audience that even *if They try cruel and desperate measures*, They will suffer for it (i.e. *will be pursued and punished*). To this point, the future that includes the possibility of Our violence has been contingent. But then Bush shifts to unmodalized predictions of Our military campaign, making a future of war appear inevitable: *We will plan carefully; we will act with the full power of the United States military; we will act with allies at our side, and we will prevail*. In the space of a few lines, Bush slips from assertions about possible military action to categorical assertions about Our inevitable military victory. And, once again, the distal future of 'Guaranteed Victory' helps legitimate a more proximal future of potentially difficult violence.

Their future: Plans to kill us all!

In stark contrast to Our destined future of peace, prosperity and security, Their future (or at least the future They hope to achieve) entails the possibility of darkness, violence, aggression and death. In the end, They will be defeated, of course. But, in order to convince the public that violence against Them is justified, FDR and Bush sometimes like to raise the specter of a future dominated by Them. In most cases, the horrible future being

represented is actually quite remote, yet through *temporal proximization*, the future is made to appear so close (or so devastating) as to threaten speaker and audience alike. Often, in this ‘Dreadful Future’ thematic formation, one finds representations of ‘intelligence’ indicating what They plan to do. Below, I’ve **bolded** particular visions of the future that They have in store for Us – unless We stop Them.

FDR’s Navy Day address perhaps goes to the greatest lengths to represent a grim future that They would impose upon us:

I have in my possession a secret map ... **of South America and a part of Central America, as Hitler proposes to reorganize it** ... The geographical experts of Berlin ... have ruthlessly obliterated all existing boundary lines; and have **divided South America into five vassal states**, bringing the **whole continent under their domination** ... the **territory of one of these new puppet states includes the Republic of Panama** and our great life line – the Panama Canal. That is his plan. It will never go into effect. This map makes clear the **Nazi design not only against South America but against the United States itself.** (FDR, 1941b)

In the above excerpt, FDR talks of Hitler’s ‘secret map’, which was actually a forgery. Even though he uses the future tense just once in the selection – to say that Hitler’s plan will never go into effect – his assertions about what the Germans have written in their plan invoke an unwanted future complete with representations of negative material processes (e.g. *obliterated*) and nominalizations (e.g. *domination*). Indeed, this hortatory report carries with it the implicit suggestion that Germany must be stopped from executing its plan for world supremacy.

Later, FDR presents another piece of intelligence (also a forgery) that explains Germany’s plans to abolish all religions:

Your Government has in its possession another document made in Germany by Hitler’s government. It is a detailed plan ... which they are ready to impose a little later on a dominated world – if Hitler wins. It is a **plan to abolish all existing religions** ... The **property of all churches will be seized** by the Reich and its puppets. The cross and all other **symbols of religion are to be forbidden** ... In the place of the churches of our civilization, there **is to be set up an international Nazi church** ... In the place of the Bible, the **words of Mein Kampf will be imposed and enforced as Holy Writ**. And in **place of the cross of Christ will be put two symbols – the swastika and the naked sword. A god of blood and iron will take the place of the God of love and mercy.** (FDR, 1941a)

Here, the future tense is used extensively, and the predictions about the future are categorical. In fact, negative Other-presentation is accomplished through unmodalized assertions in which They are represented as the actors who *will be* responsible for a series of highly destructive material processes. They will *abolish all religions, seize the property of the churches, impose Mein Kampf as Holy Writ and replace the God of love and mercy with a god of blood and iron*. Indeed, there is only one phrase that would tend to qualify the likelihood of these events: ‘if Hitler wins’. Again, the covert implication is that We must not let Hitler win. Violent action is legitimated as it is implicitly presented as the only way to prevent a godless future.

Bush also uses language to realize the thematic–semantic category of the ‘Dreadful Future’ which They could bring about. In his 2002 address, for instance, he hints at the

possibility of the grimmest of all futures – a nuclear attack: ‘Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of **a mushroom cloud.**’ Here, Bush uses representations of an epistemically modalized, distal future (an attack that *could* come in the form of the mushroom cloud) to suggest the necessity of a deontically modalized, proximal course of action (*we cannot wait*). Bush’s represented future of nuclear annihilation – however it is modalized – strongly implies the need for immediate violence. Indeed, the audience is exhorted to remove Saddam Hussein from power *now*, as waiting could result in utter destruction.

In another excerpt, Bush relies on an initial assertion about the past (Iraq’s attempted purchase of aluminum tubes) in order to construe a grim future that legitimates immediate violence. It is worth noting from the outset that many US intelligence officials disputed the assertion that the aluminum tubes Iraq allegedly attempted to purchase were intended for nuclear weapons. Bush, however, presents this disputed assertion as an unmodalized and incontrovertible fact:

Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. **If** the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it **could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year.** And **if** we allow that to happen, a terrible line **would be crossed.** Saddam Hussein **would be in a position to blackmail anyone who opposes his aggression.** He **would be in a position to dominate the Middle East.** He **would be in a position to threaten America.** And Saddam Hussein **would be in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists.** (Bush, 2002)

Importantly, Bush never indicates whether Iraq’s *attempted* purchase of aluminum tubes even succeeded. However, this doesn’t stop him from sliding down a slippery slope into a dark, though propositional and uncertain, future. In fact, Bush’s representation of the future is highly modalized. It begins with a conditional (*if*) and a modal auxiliary (*could*): *If* Iraq is able to produce or obtain a small amount of enriched uranium, it *could* have a nuclear weapon in less than a year. Bush then continues to slip from this propositional future to still more worrisome hypothetical future (*would*) possibilities: Saddam Hussein *would* be in a position to blackmail those who oppose him, dominate the Middle East, threaten America and pass nuclear technology to terrorists. Of course, by unpacking all of the explicit and implicit ‘ifs’ in Bush’s utterances, it is easy to see the remoteness of the dark future he construes. Yet Bush presents this distant and highly contingent future as likely enough that We must take immediate military action to stop it. After all, Bush suggests that this future will come about *if we allow* it to happen.

Expanding and delimiting Us and Them: Demarcating group membership

The final trend that I would like to consider is the tendency to demarcate the boundaries of Our side and Their side. In essence, the question I’m interested in exploring is exactly who is included in each category. Here, several interesting thematic–semantic formations emerge. First, in the ‘We are the World’ category, Our side is construed as vast and inclusive of all civilized peoples. This kind of representation tends to legitimate

violence by reference to conformity (Van Leeuwen, 2007). If all good people are participating in violence, then presumably the audience should too. However, the 'We are the World' category is balanced by the 'Dangerous Minority' thematic, which represents a few dangerous naysayers among Us who may object to Our plans. In this case, violence is legitimated insofar as the people who stand in the way of violence are discredited or delegitimated.

Meanwhile, in the 'They are Fringe' thematic formation, Their side is represented as a relatively small but very threatening segment of humanity. This delimiting of Their side legitimates violence because it makes the task of defeating Them seem achievable. After all, if Our side is vast and Their side is tiny, the numbers are on Our side. However, Their side is also expanded in what I have dubbed the 'Co-Conspirator' thematic formation, as They are frequently described in terms of their connections to (or intentions to connect to) other enemies. Often, enemies-in-the-making who may pose less of a threat to the public are *linked* with familiar and already-constructed enemies whose recent transgressions against Us are obvious. This is perhaps the most sinister form of legitimation, as the mere implication of a mutual relation between certain agents is used as grounds for violence against non-aggressors.

Expanding and delimiting Us

As mentioned earlier, Our side is typically construed as vast – and can include an entire nation's citizens, as in the following excerpt from FDR's Navy Day address:

The USS KEARNY is not just a Navy ship. She belongs to **every man, woman, and child in this Nation**. Hitler's torpedo was directed at **every American**, whether he lives on our seacoasts or in the innermost part of the Nation, far from the seas and far from the guns and tanks of the marching hordes of would-be conquerors of the world. (FDR 1941a)

Here, we again see the move to expand the victims of an attack to include those who were not actually involved. Thus, in FDR's representation of events, the *Kearny* was not the target; the citizens of the entire nation were the target. The 11 men who died are not the only victims; all Americans are victims. Later, following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, FDR (1941b) construes Us as even more expansive, explaining that the '**vast majority of the members of the human race are on our side**'. Thus, for FDR, almost everyone is with Us – not just all Americans, but most all human beings.

For his part, Bush (2001) also makes clear that the war on terror is not exclusively an American war, but a world war, which again finds all of civilization on Our side:

This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. (Bush, 2001)

Bush expresses virtually the same sentiment in his 2002 address about Iraq, when he explains that '**America speaks with one voice** and is determined to make the demands of **the civilized world** mean something'. In each of the above instances, the move to expand Our side works to legitimate violence by reference to conformity (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Essentially, if the audience wishes to identify themselves with all the good people in the world, then they should take up the call-to-arms.

Still, even though Our side is often construed as large and united, Bush and FDR also represent potential detractors to their arguments who are technically on Our side, but tend to disagree with what is being construed as Our objectives. This group is always construed as small, and their ideas are construed, implicitly or explicitly, as dangerous. FDR (1941a), for instance, describes ‘some Americans – not many – [who] will continue to insist that Hitler’s plans need not worry us’. He goes on to explain that the ‘protestations of these American citizens – few in number – will, as usual, be paraded with applause through the Axis press’, and declares that:

Nazi propaganda continues in desperation to seize upon such isolated statements as proof of American disunity. The Nazis have made up their own list of modern American heroes. It is, fortunately, a short list. I am glad that it does not contain my name. (FDR, 1941b)

In a sense, FDR suggests that those isolationists among Us who don’t wish to fight are somewhat akin to Them – indeed such isolationists are heroes to the Nazis. Elsewhere in the same speech, FDR refers to the ‘selfish obstruction of a small but dangerous minority’ of industrial managers and labor leaders ‘who are a menace’ to militarization progress.

Bush is less direct in his move to subcategorize and discredit those detractors among Us. Still, he makes clear that those who voice a dissenting opinion are not to be trusted, and that their ideas may present a threat to Our security. For instance, in his 2002 speech, Bush asserts:

Some believe we can address this danger by simply resuming the old approach to inspections, and applying diplomatic and economic pressure. Yet this is precisely what the world has tried to do since 1991 ... **Some have argued** we should wait – and that’s an option. In my view, **it’s the riskiest of all options**, because the longer we wait, the stronger and bolder Saddam Hussein will become ... (Bush, 2002)

Here, Bush represents the arguments of ‘some’ people as either invalid, or worse, dangerous. Specifically, those who argue for trying inspections and diplomatic and economic pressure in Iraq are represented as following an ‘old approach’ that has failed consistently in the past. Meanwhile, the arguments of those who propose ‘waiting’ to deal with Iraq are represented as the ‘riskiest’, since waiting, Bush categorically asserts, will only make Saddam Hussein stronger and bolder. Once again, in each of these examples, legitimation and delegitimation are closely linked. By representing a few dissenters as unpatriotic or dangerous, FDR and Bush exert a social pressure on the rest of their audience to consent to their plans for war.

Delimiting and expanding Them

Generally, Their side is construed as relatively small. They are represented as individual nations – Italy, Japan, Germany, Iraq – not entire civilized worlds. More typically, They are construed as national leaders – including regimes (the Iraqi regime and Taliban regime), parties (Nazis) and individuals (Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, etc.). As noted, the move to delimit Their side implicitly legitimates violence, since the prospect of military success against Them is more likely if only a few of Them exist. This tendency does not need further comment.

More important is the move to expand Them by lumping together enemies who attacked Us with enemies who didn't. In fact, three of the speeches – FDR (1941a), Bush (2001) and Bush (2002) – clearly construe a link between an already-represented enemy (believed to have carried out a hostile attack against Us) and an enemy-in-the-making (not previously assumed to have carried out a hostile attack against Us). For instance, in his 9 December 1941 address, FDR construes a link between the Japanese (the enemy responsible for the Pearl Harbor attack), Hitler and Italy (enemies-in-the-making):

The course that Japan has followed for the past 10 years in Asia has paralleled the course of Hitler and Mussolini in Europe and Africa. Today, it has become far more than a parallel. It is collaboration so well calculated that all the continents of the world, and all the oceans, are now considered by the Axis strategists as one gigantic battlefield. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchukuo – without warning. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia – without warning. In 1938, Hitler occupied Austria – without warning. In 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia – without warning. Later in 1939, Hitler invaded Poland – without warning. In 1940, Hitler invaded Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg – without warning. In 1940, Italy attacked France and later Greece – without warning. In 1941, the Axis Powers attacked Yugoslavia and Greece and they dominated the Balkans – without warning. In 1941, Hitler invaded Russia – without warning. And now Japan has attacked Malaya and Thailand – and the United States – without warning. It is all of one pattern. (FDR, 1941b)

Above, FDR categorically asserts that there is *collaboration* between all the Axis powers. In order to represent this collaboration, FDR connects various actors (Japan, Italy, Hitler) by representing them as responsible for the same key material processes (*invade, attack*) conducted in the same circumstantial manner (*without warning*). In fact, the evidence of well-calculated collaboration is slim, but FDR's repetition of key processes and circumstances creates a semantic link (lexical cohesion) that allows him to assert that the various 'surprise attacks' are 'all of one pattern'.

Later in the same speech, FDR takes it a step further by suggesting that Germany had a hand in the Pearl Harbor attack. At one point, he refers to the *Japanese* attack on Pearl Harbor as an example of 'modern warfare as conducted in *the Nazi manner*'. And, in his most outrageous comments, FDR asserts the following:

Your Government knows that for weeks Germany has been telling Japan that if Japan did not attack the United States, Japan would not share in dividing the spoils with Germany when peace came. She was promised by Germany that if she came in she would receive the complete and perpetual control of the whole of the Pacific area ... We also know that Germany and Japan are conducting their military and naval operations in accordance with a joint plan ... (FDR, 1941b)

Here, FDR creates the link between Germany and Japan through representations of verbal processes in which Germany [Sayer] persuades Japan [Receiver] to attack the United States. In fact, Germany is represented as a future Benefactor who will be in a position to reward Japan (the Beneficiary) later, if Japan enters the war now. Moreover, FDR represents Germany and Japan as co-actors and co-conspirators in a threatening material process: *conducting military operations*. Of course, FDR's assertions are assigned a great deal of authority because, in each case, he presents them as things the 'Government *knows*'.

Bush (2001) also represents 'Them' such that, once the 9/11 attackers are established as an enemy, they are quickly linked with non-attackers:

This group and its leader – a person named **Osama bin Laden** – are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the **Egyptian Islamic Jihad** and the **Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan**. There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries ... Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated ... (Bush, 2001)

First, Bush attributes responsibility for the attacks to al Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden. However, he immediately links this group (via the relational process 'are linked to') with other groups *not* responsible for the attacks. He then lumps all of Them together by replacing several distinct terms (al Qaeda, bin Laden, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan) with a superordinate reference term: 'these terrorists'. Thus, the enemy which was once al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden is expanded to include 'other terrorists in more than 60 countries'. Not much later, the enemy is expanded to include 'every terrorist' on earth *and* all the governments that support terrorists.

Importantly, Bush's rhetorical work in his 2001 address, in which he expanded the enemy to include all governments that support terror, allowed him to insert Iraq into the enemy category in 2002:

And that is the source of our urgent concern about Saddam Hussein's links to international terrorist groups. Over the years, Iraq has provided safe haven to terrorists ... And we know that Iraq is continuing to finance terror and gives assistance to groups that use terrorism to undermine Middle East peace. We know that Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist network share a common enemy – the United States of America. We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade ... We've learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases. And we know that after September the 11th, Saddam Hussein's regime gleefully celebrated the terrorist attacks on America. Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists. (Bush, 2002)

Here, using assertions strikingly similar to the ones used by FDR when he linked Germany with Japan, Bush imputes a link between Iraq and al Qaeda. Specifically, Bush represents Iraq as a Benefactor who donates goods to and performs services for an inherently evil Beneficiary: terrorists. In fact, Iraq is represented as a Benefactor of terrorists in past (*trained al Qaeda members*), present (*is continuing to finance terror*) and modalized future (*could decide to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group*). In addition, Bush represents Iraq and al Qaeda as co-possessors of the same enemy: the United States of America. And, as in the case of FDR, Bush's assertions are assigned credibility through the use of maximally warrantable mental process verbs (i.e. 'we know'). Thus, Iraq, the enemy-in-the-making, is construed to have been in collusion with al Qaeda, the already-constructed enemy. As before, the implication is clear: violence against this enemy-in-the-making is legitimate as it may be the only way to prevent another deadly attack on Us.

Conclusion

This intertextual analysis reveals that FDR and Bush drew upon similar thematic formations and rhetorical strategies in their attempts to lead the public into war. Above all, both speakers deployed moralized lexico-grammatical resources to develop the semantic categories of Us and Them and contribute to the kind of ideological polarization that makes the unpleasant realities of war seem necessary. In addition, both speakers mischaracterized disputed assertions as categorically true, and presented fabricated intelligence as maximally warrantable. In so doing, they (mis)represented both past and future events to legitimate immediate violence in the here-and-now. Finally, both speakers exploited suffering during recent and conspicuous attacks (both real and imagined) to legitimate war against groups who were not actually complicit in or responsible for those attacks.

In drawing this comparison between Bush and FDR, I have used some morally evaluative lexis of my own. Specifically, I have charged both presidents with discursive *manipulation*. I have chosen this term, following Van Dijk (2006), because it is clear to me that both men achieved their rhetorical (and material) objectives ‘by omitting very important information, by lying, or by distorting facts’ (p. 364).

I realize, however, that some may object to my use of the word *manipulation* – particularly in FDR’s case. In fact, readers of this article might argue that FDR’s rhetoric was ultimately *ethical* since it persuaded the US public to enter into a just war against an evil aggressor. They might further question whether it is proper for a discourse analyst to compare Bush’s rhetoric with FDR’s – since FDR’s discourse was aimed at confronting a true evil (Hitler), whereas Bush’s discourse was aimed at confronting a far less threatening dictator (Saddam Hussein).

Let me begin by saying that I recognize that Hitler presented a qualitatively different threat than the one (allegedly) posed by Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, I wholeheartedly agree that Hitler needed to be stopped from carrying out his ‘Final Solution’. In fact, I believe that violence against Hitler and the Nazis was legitimate insofar as this violence directly prevented the willful killing of innocent people. How, then, can I suggest that FDR’s rhetoric was unethical? After all, if FDR’s discourse was aimed at stopping Hitler – and stopping Hitler was a legitimate objective – then whatever lying FDR did, whatever misleading statements he made, were ultimately justified.

I don’t subscribe to this line of argument for two reasons. First, following Zinn (2001), I draw a distinction between a just cause and a just war. Putting a stop to German, Japanese and Italian military aggression, and ending Hitler’s program of systematic murder were undoubtedly just causes. But this does not mean that all the violence carried out in the name of these causes was therefore just. The Allies’ military campaign during World War II not only entailed ‘focused acts of violence against a monstrous and immediate evil’ (Zinn, 2001); it also entailed the indiscriminate killing of hundreds of thousands of innocent people – to give just a few examples: the intentional bombing of German civilians, the fire-bombing of Dresden, the fire-bombing of Tokyo, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Zinn, 2003). My point is not to rate these atrocities in relation to the atrocities carried out by the Axis powers. I’m not interested in doing some kind of moral calculus. My point is that the killing of innocent people – no matter

who does it – *is* an atrocity. Thus, I don't see FDR's misleading call-to-arms rhetoric as necessarily or self-evidently justified. In my opinion, any time a political leader misleads the nation into war – which inevitably includes the indiscriminate bombing of innocent people – we should at least pause before saying that this leader is unquestionably 'doing the right thing'.

But even if I believed that American participation in World War II was indisputably and *in every way* just, I would still find fault with FDR's rhetoric. More specifically, I would still find the means by which he convinced the American public to engage in this war objectionable. FDR took it upon himself to misrepresent German actions, to conceal key information and to implicate Germany in an attack that it had nothing to do with. In so doing, he essentially 'manufactured consent' for war (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). That is, the public was deprived of the relevant knowledge it needed to make an informed, democratic decision about whether to go to war. It may be tempting to say that in this case, given the circumstances, FDR's rhetoric was defensible. But the misleading call-to-arms rhetoric that FDR employed did not stop at, and is not confined to, the 'good war'. Indeed, as I have illustrated in this article, Bush drew upon the same rhetorical strategies as FDR to promote the Iraq War – a war which, in my opinion, had no moral justification. In a sense, FDR set a rhetorical and intertextual precedent for the likes of George W. Bush. He made it more acceptable for someone like Bush to decide on his own that he knew what was in the best interests of the American people. He made it more acceptable for someone like Bush to misrepresent enemies and withhold crucial information, because, so the thinking goes, sometimes a president knows best – sometimes the public needs to be deceived for the sake of national security. If we accept FDR's call-to-arms rhetoric as ethical, then we invite other presidents to be equally 'ethical' in their call-to-arms rhetoric – and we forfeit the principle of democratic government.

Indeed, World War II and the Iraq War were vastly different wars against vastly different enemies. As a result, a popular mythology has arisen, suggesting that FDR and Bush were vastly different presidents with vastly different rhetorical styles. For some, FDR is viewed as a 'good' president who led the United States into a 'good war'. Meanwhile, Bush is often seen as a 'bad' president, who led the USA into a 'bad war'. This analysis challenges this popular narrative, and resituates the wartime rhetoric of both presidents in their proper socio-historical contexts.

Perhaps, when it comes to mobilizing public support for war, there is no such thing as a 'good president'. Indeed, discourse analysts interested in challenging call-to-arms rhetoric should not fall into the trap of imagining that only certain 'bad' people are capable of manipulating the public. Instead, they should be prepared to question and challenge the call-to-arms discourse of *any* political leader at *any* historical moment.

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Notes

1. Bar-Lev (2007) argues that both Bush and FDR demonize an enemy in their call-to-arms rhetoric. In fact, he suggests that CDA scholars have unfairly singled out Bush for demonizing an enemy, while failing to appreciate that the same demonization strategy is evident in the rhetoric of FDR during the so-called 'good war' (p. 190).
2. See Habermas (1976) for a social-scientific analysis of the role of legitimation in advanced capitalist societies; see Pomerantz (1986) for an examination of the use of extreme lexis in legitimation discourse; see Jaworski and Galasinski (2000) for a study of how forms of address are used to (de)legitimize interlocutors in a political debate; for a CDA perspective, see Martín Rojo and Van Dijk (1997) on legitimation as it occurs pragmatically (legitimizing an action), semantically (legitimizing a representation) and socio-politically (legitimizing a discourse) in anti-immigration rhetoric; for another CDA perspective see Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999), who also examine the legitimation rhetoric used to deny immigrants' rights by integrating systemic-functional and (intertextual) discourse-historical analyses.
3. The concept of soft power follows Gramsci's (1971) view of hegemony, which posits that politics is essentially a struggle for power that depends on achieving consent rather than merely using force. Thus, soft power is contrasted with hard (military and economic) power – though hard power can, of course, be used if soft, symbolic power fails.
4. In this study, all four speeches were mass mediated to vast numbers of people. Roosevelt's addresses were disseminated over the radio, which, by the onset of World War II, had become the primary news medium for American families (Horten, 2002: 2). Meanwhile, Bush's speeches were also mass mediated – on television, in newspapers, over the radio and on the Internet.
5. I follow Bakhtin (1986) in defining genre as a typified, recurrent, relatively stable social action characterized by its own thematic content, style and compositional structure. See Graham et al. (2004) for a discussion of the four generic features of 'call-to-arms' speeches. See Lazar and Lazar (2004) for an analysis of the generic macro-strategy of 'out-casting' – whereby enemies are constructed, criminalized, 'orientalized' and (e)vilified.
6. See, especially, Van Dijk (1998) for a discussion of the role of ideology in developing Us/Them polarity, and see Leudar et al. (2004) for a discussion of Us/Them membership categorization.
7. Throughout this article, I will find it useful to capitalize Us and Them (and related pronouns) when I am referring to this general binary. As noted below, 'Us' and 'Them' are generic thematic meanings that are realized by more specific tokens in given texts. For example, the broad category Us might be realized in a given text by appropriate personal pronouns (e.g. us, our, we), the names of 'friendly' nation-states (e.g. America), or the names of 'civilized groups' (e.g. the world). Meanwhile, the broad category Them may be realized by appropriate personal pronouns (they, them, their, etc.), the names of 'unfriendly' nation-states (e.g. Germany, Iraq, etc.) or the names of 'uncivilized groups' (e.g. the Taliban, al Qaeda, the Gestapo).
8. *The Washington Times* reports that, for the fifth time in five surveys, American historians ranked FDR the best US president in history – Bush ranked among the worst (Wetzstein, 2010).
9. Zinn (2003) reports that with Hitler marching across Europe, the president saw an opportunity to simultaneously stop Germany's aggressive military campaign, bolster a waning domestic economy and supplant Britain as the world's leading economic power by seizing foreign markets and resources, such as oil (p. 413). In fact, the president had been promising Winston Churchill, in private meetings and correspondence throughout the summer of 1941, that American forces would soon enter the war (Fleming, 2001: 84). And his administration was secretly planning – as was leaked to the press just days before the attack on Pearl Harbor – a strategy to invade Germany and other nations in 1943 (Fleming, 2001: 1).

10. Indeed, the president capitalized on this isolationist sentiment in his 1940 campaign, promising Americans that he would never send troops into a European conflict and assuring them that he would maintain neutrality and peace at all costs.
11. Reportedly, President Bush also considered instigating an attack in order to justify the invasion of Iraq. According to *The New York Times*, a memo from a 2003 meeting between President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair reveals that Bush suggested provoking a confrontation with Saddam Hussein: 'The US was thinking of flying U2 reconnaissance aircraft with fighter cover over Iraq, painted in UN colours', the memo says, attributing the idea to Mr Bush. 'If Saddam fired on them, he would be in breach' (Van Natta, 2006: para. 22).
12. Fleming (2001) suggests that the idea for using Japan as a backdoor into war with Germany was in circulation shortly after FDR's re-election. A silent embargo – which essentially cut Japan off from major resources like scrap iron and oil – began in August of 1941. According to historian Howard Zinn (2003), FDR and his administration knew that this policy was likely to incite Japanese aggression (p. 411).
13. Interestingly, FDR never once mentioned Germany in his famous 'day of infamy' speech delivered on 8 December 1941. The radio address the next day is quite a different story.
14. No formal declaration of war had been made. In fact, Hitler was still considering whether or not to declare war on the United States (see note 17).
15. In his history of the German–Japanese alliance, Meskill (1966) puts it emphatically: 'the German and Japanese governments had devised neither a plan nor a machinery for strategic coordination by December 1941. No military talks had been held' (p. 51). Of course, Germany, Japan and Italy had signed the Tripartite Pact in 1940, but, contrary to popular belief, Hitler was *not required* to declare war against the United States simply because Japan had attacked America (Love, 1995). Japan and Germany had agreed to 'a defensive alliance that required Germany to come to Japan's aid only if Japan were attacked' (p. 101). Herman Goering, commander-in-chief of the German Air Force, confirmed this, stressing that 'since Japan was the aggressor, we [Germany] had no treaty obligation to side with her' (quoted in Kittredge, 1955: 738).
16. Of the many histories that I have consulted (Black, 2003; Collier, 1981; Deighton, 1993; Love, 1995; Maddox, 1992), *not one* suggests that Germany encouraged the Pearl Harbor attack. In fact, all the historians who specifically take up the question of German culpability for the attack on Pearl Harbor (Fleming, 2001; Kittredge, 1955; Meskill, 1966; Presseisen, 1969) state rather unequivocally that Hitler did not know about it, let alone urge the Japanese to do it. In fact, Herman Goering, a close associate of Hitler, testified that 'the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor came as a complete surprise' to Hitler and everyone else (quoted in Kittredge, 1955: 738).
17. FDR's own Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, verified that FDR purposefully avoided declaring war on Germany because he considered it wise 'to wait and let Hitler and Mussolini issue their declarations first' (quoted in Kittredge, 1955: 737). Thus, the bellicose 9 December speech was a continuation of FDR's policy of 'goading Hitler into declaring war' (Love, 1995: 100). In fact, according to Kittredge (1955) and Meskill (1966), even after the Pearl Harbor attacks, Hitler *vacillated* about whether or not to wage war against America. His 'hesitation ... seems to have ended when he learned of the terms of President Roosevelt's broadcast address on December 9' (Kittredge, 1955: 737).
18. It is now well-known that before September 11 – and indeed before Bush's inauguration – members of the Bush administration had considered preventive military action against Iraq. See Hybel and Kaufman (2006) for an outstanding historical analysis. See Dunmire (2009) for an intertextual analysis that situates the post-9/11 'Bush Doctrine' among its earlier post-Cold War articulations.

19. Before and after the 9/11 attacks, as much as 70 percent of the American public consistently favored using military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power (Huddy et al., 2002: 448).
20. Importantly, the address was delivered just three days before Congress voted – arguably in violation of the Constitution – to authorize the president to use force in Iraq.
21. Indeed, this speech, outlining the ‘threat’ from Iraq, mentioned terror or terrorism 35 times – twice more than the speech of 20 September 2001.
22. To save space, I have chosen not to include some other negatively moralized processes associated with Them. Specifically, the terms *bomb*, *impose*, *torture*, *assault* and *violate* are used almost exclusively to represent Their actions.
23. The number following each word indicates the number of instances the word is associated with Us across the four speeches.
24. I have included verbs in the present-perfect tense (e.g. *have enjoyed*). This tense indicates that something happened at an unspecified time before the present moment. Present-perfect verbs may also, of course, take the passive form (e.g. *have been accepted*).
25. I put off discussing how Their past is construed in FDR’s 9 December 1941 address as well as Bush’s 7 October 2002 address. I will discuss these in a separate section later on when I explore how membership in Their side is demarcated.
26. Bush often adopts this strategy when he represents Saddam Hussein as a lone transgressor who threatens not just a few people, but the entire world.
27. It is important to point out that I am assuming, in my analysis, that a vision of the future can be represented not just through the use of the future tense (e.g. we will not let ourselves be attacked again), but also in terms of present plans for the future (e.g. we are sworn to prevent ourselves from being attacked again).

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John Oddo is a doctoral candidate in the Rhetoric and Composition program at Kent State University, Ohio, USA. His research interests include 'call-to-arms' rhetoric and the legitimation of war by powerful agents. Currently, he is researching the news coverage of Colin Powell's 2003 UN address.