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The Great American Scaffold

*Intertextuality and identity in
American presidential discourse*

FRANK AUSTERMÜHL



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The Great American Scaffold

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The Great American Scaffold. Intertextuality and identity in American presidential discourse

by Frank Austermühl

The Great American Scaffold

Intertextuality and identity in
American presidential discourse

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CHAPTER 1

American echoes

On intertextuality in American presidential discourse

On January 20, 2001, George W. Bush took the presidential oath of office, stepped onto the podium, and prepared to carry out his first public act as President of the United States – his inaugural address. At this point, probably a fair share of the audience was waiting for one of the linguistic phenomena that had become known to the American and global public as “Bushisms.” The new president, however, did not stumble and indeed delivered what E. J. Dionne, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, referred to as a “forceful” and “excellent” speech (2001, A9).

Following the generic norms for a presidential inaugural address, Bush opens by acknowledging the guests of honor, first the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, then former presidents Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton.

With the opening sentence of the speech that followed the salutation, Bush, and along with him his speechwriting team headed by Michael Gerson, chose a page from the playbook of the Great Communicator and patron saint of the Republican Party, Ronald Reagan. Bush’s statement, “[t]he peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history, yet common in our country” (“First Inaugural” 1),¹ is more than a faint echo of Reagan’s own first inaugural address. On January 20, 1981, also after acknowledging the guests of honor, Reagan himself opened his address with the following words:

To a few of us here today, this is a solemn and most momentous occasion; and yet, in the history of our Nation, it is a commonplace occurrence. The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place as it has for almost two centuries and few of us stop to think how unique we really are.

(“First Inaugural” 1)

Bush’s predecessor, Bill Clinton, also wandered the great American echo chamber of presidential discourse in his two inaugural addresses. The influence of Clinton’s

1. All speeches quoted in this study will be cited using a short title rather than a year, so as to allow readers to immediately identify the type and topic of the speech cited. All speeches cited in this book are referenced in a separate bibliography (see Appendix).

role model, John F. Kennedy, whose hand the 16-year old Clinton had shaken in the White House Rose Garden in 1963, is clearly visible, at times taking on an almost obsessive dimension. Assuring his audience in his 1993 inaugural address that “[w]e have heard the trumpets. We have changed the guard. And now, each in our own way and with God’s help, we must answer the call” (“First Inaugural” 3), Clinton belatedly answers Kennedy’s call to Americans to free themselves from the stasis of the Eisenhower years, issued 32 years earlier:

Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation” – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself. (Kennedy, “Inaugural Address” 2)

The references to the speeches of Reagan and Kennedy by Bush and Clinton represent more than mere rhetorical tributes to the modern idols of their respective parties or a rhetorical symbol for the changing of the guards in the American executive. By invoking the shining lights of the Republican and Democratic parties, Bush and Clinton state their individual and ideological preferences, signaling at the same time their political origins and futures. Furthermore, given the bi-partisan appeal of both Kennedy and Reagan, the new presidents Clinton and Bush also acknowledge and proclaim their individual, party transcending places in the presidential genealogy.

Two call slips from the Library of Congress (LOC), shown in Figures 1 and 2, illustrate that intertextual references in presidential speeches, such as the quotations and stylistic parallels shown above, are not simply coincidental by-products of standardized rhetorical traditions but represent a deliberate element of the speechwriting process.

On January 3, 1989, two members of George H. W. Bush’s inaugural committee, Rita Solon and Peggy Noonan, checked out a total of eleven tapes from the library’s Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Record Sound Division. Among the tapes was footage – available as silent movies only – from the inaugurations of William McKinley (1901), Teddy Roosevelt (1905), and Calvin Coolidge (1923).

In 2001, members of George W. Bush’s staff requested a total of 18 tapes on the inaugurations of George H. W. Bush and Clinton, including CBS News items on topics like the “Cost of Clinton Inaugural,” “Clinton’s Inaugural music,” as well as Clinton’s “Pre-inaugural hoopla.” A handwritten note attached to the call slip explains the specific purpose of the tapes. It says: “Videotapes requested by Geo. W. Bush transition team ca. 12/21/00 for study of past inaugural celebration activities in Washington, D.C.”

1-3-89

to call

MOTION PICTURE, BROADCASTING
AND RECORDED SOUND DIVISION

Request to View Motion Picture Material

Name: Rita Solon / Peggy Noonan

Inaugural Committee: 252. 3130

Viewing date: _____ Hour (approx.): _____

LC Shelf number:	Title:	Film date:
FLA 2983	Pres. McKinley's Escort going to Capitol	1901 (Silent)
FEA 8962	Pres. McKinley inauguration	1901 (Silent)
FLA 1741	Pres. Roosevelt's Inauguration	1905 (Silent)
FDA 2438	An Inaugural Souvenir (Post Newsweek Production)	1973
VBB 0264-0276	CBS News Special Report: The Presidential Inauguration	1981
FCA 5026	The Inaugural story 1969 (Nixon)	1969
FDA 1469	Inauguration Ceremonies Jan 20 1973	1973
FAA 2040	Inauguration of Pres. Coolidge	1923 (Silent)
FCA 4756	Inauguration of Pres. L.B.J.	1965
FCA 7610-7611	CBS: Special Report: Nixon: the next 4 yrs.	1973 (r)
VBC 6957	Reagan Inauguration	1985

NOTE: Requests must be received at least one day prior to the viewing date. No more than 50 reels of material will be made available on a single viewing date. Films may be reserved in the viewing room for no more than three days. Please return the films to the designated shelf areas when you have finished viewing them.

89-15 (rev 12/78)

anything produces 1929 is silent

Figure 1. Library of Congress Call Slip from January 1989

12-22-00

Order for videocassettes from Boyers. Pat Loughney

David, can you please send a request for the following LC tapes from Iron Mountain storage in Boyers, PA:

VSA 5443 NBC Evening News, 1989-01-16
 VSA 5444 NBC Evening News, 1989-01-17 (with NBC Evening News, 1989-01-18)
 VSA 5445 NBC Evening News, 1989-01-19 (with NBC Evening News, 1989-01-20)
 VSA 5345 ABC Evening News, 1989-01-18
 VSA 5393 CBS Evening News, 1989-01-18
 VSA 5494 NBC Evening News, 1989-01-18
 VSA 8983 ABC 20/20, 1989-01-20 (58 minutes) Interview with George & Barbara Bush
 VSA 5346 ABC Evening News, 1989-01-19
 VSA 5394 CBS Evening News, 1989-01-19
 VSA 5346 ABC Evening News, 1989-01-20

1993:

VSC 3578 CBS News, 1993-01-14 (Cost of Clinton Inaugural)
 VSC 3578 CBS News, 1993-01-15 (Clinton's inaugural music) (VAE 2265)
 VSC 3597 CBS News, 1993-01-16
 VSC 3580 CBS News, 1993-01-18 (Pre-inaugural hoopla)
 VSC 3581 CBS News,
 VSC 3603 NBC News
 VSC 3602 NBC News
 VSC 3604 NBC News

VIDEOTAPES REQUESTED
 BY GEO. W. BUSH TRANSI-
 TION TEAM ca. 12/21/00
 FOR STUDY OF PAST INAU-
 GURAL CELEBRATORY ACTIVITIES
 IN WASH. DC PL 3/2/01

Figure 2. Library of Congress Call Slip from December 2000

The integration of new inaugural addresses into the discursive continuum of the American presidency is, however, not something that only interests presidential transition teams, inauguration committees, and speechwriters. The presidents themselves know of the importance of connecting their most public of presidential acts with the words of previous office holders. Kennedy, for example, asked his aide and speechwriter Theodore Sorensen to re-read previous presidential inaugurals and other speeches. Specifically, he wanted Sorensen to study Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, asking him to uncover the "secret" of that speech. The "secret," as Sorensen writes in his memoirs, was that Lincoln used a very high number of single-syllable words (1965, 240–243).

Theodore Windt explains the impact Sorensen's findings had on Kennedy's speech as follows: "The final draft of Kennedy's inaugural contained 951 monosyllabic words, 71 percent of the words in the speech" (1993, 184). Prior to his inauguration, Clinton, for his part, directed his speechwriting staff to study the speeches of Kennedy, Wilson, Lincoln, and Jefferson (Waldman 2000, 31). Reagan's speechwriters did not need any specific orders, as Clark Judge, a former member of Reagan's staff, recalls (2002). "We just knew," says Judge about Reagan's preference for historical references in general and allusions to Franklin D. Roosevelt in particular, who played a significant role in the speeches of the former Democrat Reagan.

One of the consequences of the intertextual nature of presidential discourse is that certain passages from presidential speeches take on a life of their own. Key sections enter the nation's collective discursive memory, and, as a staple element of presidential discourse, these quotations then combine to form a seemingly perpetual intertextual chain. Probably the most prominent example of this particular game of "American whisper" is Lincoln's famous line "the last best hope of earth," a phrase originally found in the final paragraph of Lincoln's 1862 Annual Message to Congress. Presented only ten weeks after Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the full text of the paragraph reads as follows:

We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free – honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth.

("Second Annual Address – December 1, 1862")

Lincoln's "last best hope," has become a constant presence in major presidential addresses, especially within the context of the modern presidency (see Chapter 2). Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, states in his 1939 State of the Union

address: "To us much is given; more is expected. This generation will 'nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth.' ... The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just – a way which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless" (12).

Dwight D. Eisenhower speaks of the United Nations as "the best hope of our age" ("Second Inaugural" 63), and in a very similar fashion Kennedy refers to the United Nations as "our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace" ("Inaugural Address" 2).

Richard Nixon asks, "may God give us the wisdom, the strength and, above all, the idealism to be worthy of that challenge, so that America can fulfill its destiny of being the world's best hope for liberty, for opportunity, for progress and peace for all peoples" ("State of the Union Address 1990" 16). In 1990, George H. W. Bush also stresses America's global responsibilities, proclaiming: "Today, with Communism crumbling, our aim must be to ensure democracy's advance, to take the lead in forging peace and freedom's best hope: a great and growing commonwealth of free nations" ("State of the Union Address 1990" 133). Eleven years later, George W. Bush echoes both his father and Nixon, stating, "a strong America is the world's best hope for peace and freedom" ("State of the Union Address 2001" 145).

Reagan was particularly prone to quoting Lincoln's famous phrase, as evidenced in an address to a joint session of Congress in 1981 – "I am here tonight to reaffirm that pledge and to ask that we share in restoring the promise that is offered to every citizen by this, the last, best hope of man on Earth" ("Joint Session" 108). The phrase appears again in 1982 – "[F]rom now, another Congress and another President, meeting in this Chamber as we are meeting, will speak of us with pride, saying that we met the test and preserved for them in their day the sacred flame of liberty – this last, best hope of man on Earth" ("State of the Union Address 1982" 79); in 1983, in the so-called Evil Empire speech – "Only through your work and prayers and those of millions of others can we hope to survive this perilous century and keep alive this experiment in liberty, this last, best hope of man" ("National Association of Evangelicals" 360); and in 1984, when Reagan asks: "How can we not believe in the greatness of America? How can we not do what is right and needed to preserve this last best hope of man on Earth?" ("State of the Union Address 1984" 93).

Quotations like the ones mentioned above are typical, and rather visible examples of intertextual connections between speeches of American presidents. They are, however, not the only types of intertextuality found in presidential discourse. Like other texts, presidential speeches "exist in relationship to others" (Chandler 1994), and even a cursory analysis reveals numerous discursive similarities in the speeches of America's chief executives. These include shared grammars and

lexicons (discursive intertextuality), functional and situational parallels (generic intertextuality), recurrent topoi (thematic intertextuality), similar argumentative patterns (hypertextuality), and allusions to speeches, names, or places (material intertextuality) (see Section 1.5 for a detailed discussion of these different types of presidential intertextuality).

“Texts are,” as Daniel Chandler points out, “framed by others in many ways” (*ibid.*). In presidential inaugural discourse, the most visible frame is that of the inauguration ceremony. As a specific presidential genre, the inaugural address is part of a carefully designed and meticulously orchestrated event. Thus, the setup of the inauguration, e.g., with regard to the seating of the audience, the taking of the oath of office (including the presence of the first family and a Bible, in many cases a family Bible), and the delivery of the inaugural address (including, since 1965, the teleprompter machines), have changed little over time. Alongside these visual and situational aspects, the functions and themes typically found in inaugural addresses also show remarkable stability over time.

As Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2008) explain, the generic norms of inaugural addresses lead to a standardization of this primary presidential speech act. This standardization is found in other presidential genres, as well, and includes a prevalence of certain recurrent topics, such as freedom or the American mission. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, and particularly after the end of the Second World War, presidential discourse has become more uniform. This can, for example, be seen in the average lengths – in words and/or minutes – of other major presidential speeches, such as the annual State of the Union address. Other structural parallels among presidential speeches include the types of self-images and hetero-images projected by the president, as well as stable argumentative patterns, such as in the representation of the nation’s adversaries and enemies.

1.1 The speeches of American presidents as a cultural intertext

This study of American presidential discourse starts from two basic premises. First, as the initial anecdotes mentioned above indicate, I consider presidential discourse to represent a complex intertextual phenomenon. Inasmuch as the shaping of national and political identities through presidential discourse represents a concerted effort by the nation’s executive elite that transcends chronological and partisan boundaries, presidential discourse constitutes a tightly woven web of American cultural texts. As part of this multidimensional web, presidential speeches and other utterances are interconnected on a number of different textual levels, implemented through specific forms of intertextuality. Presidential

discourse can thus be understood as a network of texts, a “*bibliothèque*” (Grivel 1982, 240), or, to apply a less-often used metaphor, a discursively erected cultural “scaffold.” As a cultural tool, this intertextual scaffold is of essential importance in the identity constructing and identity affirming work of American presidential discourse.

A scaffold prevents the early stages of (cultural) construction work from falling apart, and supports the addition of new levels to the edifice. Moreover, a scaffold also guarantees to uphold the stability of a building’s predetermined shape, and, in doing so, rules out the implementation of alternative designs. With every new discursive contribution, with every new cultural cross-reference, the scaffold is stabilized and strengthened. Simultaneously, with every new utterance the implementation of an alternative design of Americanness outside clearly established systemic boundaries becomes less likely.

As “a mosaic ... or intersecti[on] of various texts (Landwehr 2002, 3) any text is, as Roland Barthes writes, “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (1978, 146). According to Chandler (1994), “the concept of intertextuality reminds us [that] texts owe more to other texts than to their own maker. With regard to presidential discourse, the vertical dimension of intertextuality means that, as Wayne Fields explains, “no president since George Washington has stood alone on the inaugural platform. All have, consciously or not, been attended by predecessors, most obviously those with a special hold on their own understanding of the office” (1996, 114). This study of presidential discourse is carried out from an institutional perspective, i.e., I consider the American presidency as a whole – as opposed to individual office holders – to be the author of the speeches analyzed here. Analyzing presidential discourse within the paradigm of intertextuality emphasizes both the interconnectedness of presidential speeches as well as the restrictions imposed on the creation of new texts by previous productions of the institution of the presidency. As Julia Kristeva states, “[e]very text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it” (quoted in Culler 1981, 105). As we will see, in the context of the discourse of American presidents, intertextuality can indeed become a straitjacket for the most powerful person in the world as it constrains, for example, the types of texts that the chief executive can refer to, or prescribes certain themes that need to be touched upon.

As a second main premise, I posit – admittedly a bit simply – that presidential discourse *matters*, i.e., it exhibits a powerful pragmatic dimension. This pragmatic dimension goes beyond the immediate political and persuasive functions of everyday political talk and has deep-reaching cultural implications. Beyond their political value, American presidential discourse primarily represents a cultural phenomenon. As such, presidential discourse and the manifold intertextual

relationships that exist among individual instances of presidential discourse fulfill numerous essential cultural functions.

From a cultural and intercultural studies perspective, presidential discourse first and foremost contributes significantly to the formation and affirmation of identities. For one, this process of identity construction takes place on the level of the national culture, in that it influences and manipulates the way Americans see themselves and their country. In addition to shaping American self-perception, presidential discourse further defines the nation's perception of its political system, its political institutions, and its political actors. On all levels – the cultural, the systemic, the institutional, the ideological and the individual – presidential discourse aids in the creation of homogenized and politically powerful assumptions, attitudes, and images. These beliefs are in turn employed to strengthen the individual and institutional positions of both individual presidents and the presidency in general within the American political system as well as to motivate the American body politic to support a specific agenda or to legitimize concrete political decisions and actions.

In proposing an approach that analyzes American presidential discourse from both a cultural and intercultural as well as an intertextual perspective, the gap in previous research on this topic can be closed. First, with its origin in an international American studies environment, the proposed study is driven by the conviction that public discourse, especially when implemented by powerful political actors, creates a window into the culture of a nation. Additional motivation derives from the fact that the discourse of primary political agents is often all but neglected in cultural studies in general (see below). With the underlying assumption that political discourse in general and presidential discourse in particular play significant roles in shaping American culture and American national identity, the focus of this research is on the ways in which the combined discourse of American presidents achieves this.

As a combined cultural and intercultural phenomenon, presidential discourse is an example of an identity creating usage of language. Exercised within the politically powerful and culturally constructive institution of the American presidency, I consider this discourse to be decisive in the definition of standardized auto- and hetero-images of both the American president and the American presidency, as well as constitutive of American political ideology and cultural identity. As an intertextual phenomenon, presidential discourse represents a tightly woven network of texts transcending historical, partisan, and personal categories. Individual implementations of presidential discourse contribute continuously to a carefully erected scaffold that is essential in securing the pre-designed shape of the above-mentioned identities and in avoiding alternative images of the American nation, its political system, and its presidency.

My approach of defining the combined discourse of American presidents as an intertext, and thus as a single coherent object of study, aims at adding a more holistic perspective to the study of presidential discourse. As previously mentioned, this new focus does not lie on individual presidents but on the institution of the American presidency itself. I will thus go beyond studying individual speeches, speakers, or genres, proposing instead to investigate presidential discourse as one text, or more specifically, as one large, cultural intertext. Within such an intertextual framework, the combined public speeches of American presidents – with a primary focus on major addresses² – represent one textual universe and as such one singular object of study. Accordingly, this study involves the analysis of the various forms of intertextuality, i.e., the various levels on which presidential texts are interconnected, as well as the study of the pragmatic functions of these various forms of intertextuality in particular and of presidential discourse in general.

1.2 POTUS speaks

As Martin Medhurst (2008b) writes in his historical overview of the field of presidential rhetoric, the discourse of American presidents has been an object of study since the early twentieth century. Yet, it was not until the 1980s “that communication scholars began to recognize and articulate a specific interest in the presidency and in presidential rhetoric as a specialization within the larger world of rhetorical studies” (3). It was also in the 1980s that the public addresses of American presidents began to evolve as an area of interest for political scientists. Here, the article “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency,” co-authored by James Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette in 1981, gave rise to the concept of the rhetorical presidency, to be discussed in greater detail below. In 1984, Windt described the new interdisciplinary field of presidential rhetoric as

a new discipline of study within the field of rhetoric and within presidential scholarship. Scholars in this discipline are concerned with how public language and public arguments influence the exercise of presidential power. The principal goals of these studies are descriptive and critical works that help in understanding the contemporary American presidency and proscriptive studies of how the rhetorical presidency functions and should function. (1984, 33)

2. Major addresses (including inaugural and State of the Union addresses) are defined as speeches that are broadcast live to a national audience, usually at prime time.

Windt identified four main categories of studies: “criticisms of single speeches, criticism of rhetorical movements, development of genres of presidential speeches, and miscellaneous articles on various ancillary topics dealing with presidential rhetoric” (ibid., 26). Writing in 1996, Medhurst states that Windt’s analysis “is still generally true, with a few studies of presidential campaign advertising, some full-length rhetorical biographies, and a few general studies of presidential communication having been completed in the interim” (1996b, xx). The analyses of both Windt and Medhurst underline the lack of holistic, institutionally oriented studies, a fact that prompts Hart to demand a “moratorium on traditional case studies,” criticizing that in such an approach “each president, each rhetorical situation, is presumed unique instead of part of a continuing story. Individual cases are rarely treated additively to determine what larger tale they might tell” (2002, 703). My study does propose to look at the entire “story,” aiming at identifying stable discursive patterns – “the ontology of presidential discourse,” as Hart puts it (696) – in American presidential speeches.

Windt’s definition of the field shows that the public discourse of American presidents can be, and usually is, analyzed from two different, yet overlapping perspectives. Depending on the perspective chosen and on their academic origin, scholars interested in the topic will either focus on the rhetorical presidency or on presidential rhetoric. As Medhurst explains in the introduction to the 1996 book *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, these two labels represent two different theoretical constructs, “one rooted in the discipline of political science, the other most at home in speech communication; one grounded normatively in the U.S. Constitution, the other grounded, if at all, in the constantly changing dynamics of human persuasion” (1996b, xi). Furthermore, as Medhurst also points out, “at the most basic level these constructs point to two different objects of study: the presidency in one case and rhetoric in the other” (ibid., xii).

1.2.1 The rhetorical presidency

The concept of the rhetorical presidency, developed by Ceaser et al. in “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency” published in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* in 1981, and further developed in Glen Thurow and Jeffrey Wallin’s book *Rhetoric and American Statesmanship* (1984) and in Jeffrey Tulis’ *The Rhetorical Presidency* (1987), represents a political science perspective. More specifically, as Ceaser et al. state, “the problem is ... not one simply of individual rhetorics, but is rather an *institutional* dilemma for the modern presidency” (1981, 161; emphasis mine). One year prior to “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency,” Sidney Blumenthal had

already pointed to the importance of presidential discourse in both campaigning and governing and the disappearing boundaries of the two in his book *The Permanent Campaign* (1982). The object of study in both publications, as in the rhetorical presidency tradition in general, is the institution of the American presidency as discussed in the foundational works by Edward Corwin (*The President: Office and Powers 1787–1957*), Clinton Rossiter (*The American Presidency*), or Richard Neustadt (*Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*) and in later research carried out by Thomas Cronin and Michael Genovese (*The Paradoxes of the American Presidency*), Michael Nelson (*The Presidency: A History of the Office of the President of the United States from 1789 to the Present*), or James Pfiffner and Roger Davidson (*Understanding the Presidency*).

As mentioned, the main focus of this sub-discipline is on the office of the president of the United States, and scholars working within the rhetorical presidency paradigm look at the way in which the public discourse of American presidents has changed the interpretation of the role of the nation's chief executive, and how this in turn has affected the power balance envisioned by the authors of the U.S. Constitution. For Tulis, the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt (in particular his successful public campaign for the Hepburn Act) and Woodrow Wilson are decisive in the establishment of the rhetorical presidency. Wilson's decision to break with a century-old tradition and to address the members of Congress in person (instead of submitting a written report), and his overall re-interpretation of the presidential office symbolized the advent of what Tulis calls "a second constitution," one that he sees as being in stark contrast with the original plans of the Founders. "The resulting hybrid presidency," explains Tulis, "stem[s] from the competing logics of an old Constitution and a relatively new, superimposed, constitutional understanding" (1996, 5).

Ceaser et al. identify three main factors that aided in the establishment of the rhetorical presidency. The first factor was the introduction of a "modern doctrine of presidential leadership" (1981, 161), i.e., a deliberate, public re-interpretation of the office of the president and a reversal of the nineteenth-century image of the president as a mute tribune. The leadership styles of Roosevelt and Wilson play a significant role in the development of the rhetorical presidency. While it is fair to say that Roosevelt's presidency, and the many public acts of a number of nineteenth-century presidents, have paved the way for the rhetorical presidency, "it was Wilson, however, who brought popular speech to the forefront of American politics by his dramatic appearances before Congress – breaking more than a century's precedent of presidential nonattendance – and by his famous speaking tour on behalf of the League of Nations" (ibid., 162).

Wilson, who had been a professor of history at Princeton and then the university's president before running for, and winning, the governorship of New Jersey, had laid out the theoretical principles for his new doctrine of the presidency in a number of publications. Of central importance is his doctoral dissertation, published in 1885 under the title *Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics*. In this comparative study of the American and British political systems, Wilson points to the need for greater openness of the American system to public opinion. "In Wilson's view, the greatest power in modern democratic regimes lay potentially with the popular leader who could sway or – to use his words – 'interpret' the wishes of the people" (Ceaser et al. 1981, 163). In a second book, entitled *Constitutional Government in the United States* and first published in 1908, Wilson stresses the fact that the American president is the representative "of no constituency, but of the whole people" (1961, 68). Consequently, "his is the only national voice in affairs.... When he speaks in his true character, he speaks for no special interest" (ibid., 68).

Ceaser et al. see Wilson's ideas as motivated by two main strategic considerations. First, bypassing Congress and directly talking to the American people would allow the chief executive to compensate for the office's constitutional lack of legislative initiative. "In advancing policy, deliberative, intra-branch rhetoric thus becomes secondary to popular rhetoric, and the President 'speaks' to Congress not directly but through his popular address" (1981, 163). Second, for Wilson, public discourse was an essential tool of visionary presidential leadership. As Thurow states, "the presidency is not primarily an office of constitutional responsibilities and republican instruction, but an office of popular leadership" (1996, 23). For Wilson, this also meant that "presidential speech ... should articulate what is 'in our hearts' and not necessarily what is in our Constitution" (quoted in Ceaser et al. 1981, 162). In 1909, in a tribute to Lincoln, Wilson summed up his vision of presidential leadership and the importance of public presidential discourse:

A great nation is not led by a man who simply repeats the talk of the street-corners or the opinions of the newspapers. A nation is led by a man who hears more than those things; or who, rather, hearing those things, understands them better, unites them, puts them into a common meaning; speaks, not the rumors of the street, but a new principle for a new age; a man in whose ears the voices of the nation do not sound like the accidental and discordant notes that come from the voice of a mob, but concurrent and concordant like the united voices of a chorus, whose many meanings, spoken by melodious tongues, unite in his understanding in a single meaning and reveal to him a single vision, so that he can speak what no man else knows, the common meaning of the common voice. Such is the man who leads a great, free, democratic nation. (2006, 102–103)

The second and third constitutive elements of the rhetorical presidency, i.e., advances in transport and communications technologies as well as changes in presidential campaigning, are closely related, as Robert Denton and Gary Woodward explain: “The final factor contributing to the supremacy of the rhetorical presidency is the modern electoral campaign. Contemporary presidential campaigns require national travel, public performances, image creation, issue definition, and the articulation of problem solutions” (1998, 184).

As the campaigns of 1896 and 1900 had shown, the railway system proved an important medium in presidential communication, one that Wilson used extensively in his campaign. “Wilson was the first victorious presidential candidate to have engaged in a full-scale speaking tour during the campaign” (Ceaser et al. 1981, 166). Developments in other media technologies, such as film, newsreel, phonographs, printing, and radio, as well as the introduction of modern marketing strategies into political campaigning, also aided in the rise of the rhetorical presidency. As Denton and Woodward point out: “The mass media have increased the size of the audience, provided immediate access to the public, and changed the mode of communicating with the public from primarily the written word to the spoken word delivered in dramatic form” (1998, 184). For Ceaser et al., these technological developments “ha[ve] given the President the means by which to communicate directly and instantaneously with a large national audience, thus tearing down the communications barrier on which the Founders had relied to insulate representative institutions from direct contact with the populace” (1981, 164). Changes in election campaign strategies and the decreasing importance of traditional party structures further strengthened the president’s direct bond with the people. Wilson’s campaign and successive presidency also represent the beginnings of the notion of the permanent campaign. “With Wilson the distinction between campaigning and governing is blurred, as both involve the same essential function of persuading through popular oratory” (ibid., 166).

These technological and strategic changes – initiated by individual presidential campaigners in the nineteenth century, further developed by William Jennings Bryan and Theodore Roosevelt during the campaigns of 1896 and 1900, successfully applied by Roosevelt during the campaign for the Hepburn Act, and finally institutionalized by Wilson – contributed greatly to the simplification of presidential texts (see Chapter 2). With spoken delivery replacing written messages, oral presidential discourse – with shorter text, sentence, and word lengths, a more restricted vocabulary and higher degrees of repetition – became more accessible to greater parts of the American populace. And with technological advances, above all in transport and communication, and a successive widening of the right to vote, the president’s ability to reach as many Americans and American

voters as possible as well as his ability to be both heard and understood by them increased dramatically.

The rhetorical turn in the presidency and the re-adjustment of the relationship between the president and the people represents a major change in the political landscape of the United States, a development that Keith E. Whittington explains as follows:

The revaluation of constitutional structures would provide the president with a direct relationship to the American people, and the old party apparatus would be transcended by presidential interpretation of the popular will. Parties were no longer necessary as intermediaries between the president and the people....
(1997, 205)

Consequently, “the new rhetorical presidency was less formal and more popular, less argumentative and more assertive. The characteristic presidential speech in the twentieth century has been directed at popular rather than congressional audiences and has been oral rather than written” (ibid., 204).

For many observers, above all those having a political and/or constitutional perspective, the rhetorical presidency represents a negative development, one that stands in opposition to the ideas of the nation’s Founders. As Craig Allen Smith and Kathy Smith explain, “this was a Constitution drafted by men who grudgingly added a chief executive late in the process, fearful that the young country might fall prey to some unscrupulous, silver-tongued demagogue” (1994, 14). Tulis considers the rhetorical presidency to be “more deleterious than beneficial to American politics because the rhetorical presidency is not just the use of popular leadership, but rather the routine appeal to public opinion. Intended to ameliorate crises, the rhetorical presidency is now the creator of crises, or pseudo-crises” (1987, 181). This aspect will be further discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 4. It should also be noted that the concept of the rhetorical presidency has been strongly criticized by a number of authors (see, for example, Medhurst 1996b) and that Tulis provided a revision of his initial thesis – yet without changing his main thesis – in an article published in 1996. Following a discussion of the concept of presidential rhetoric, I will present the main points of criticism in a separate section. A comprehensive review of the literature on the rhetorical presidency would, however, go beyond the purpose of this introductory chapter.³

3. For a more detailed and comprehensive discussion of the rhetorical presidency, see Medhurst (1996a and 2000), as well as Aune and Medhurst (2008).

1.2.2 Presidential rhetoric

While research on the rhetorical presidency usually takes on a rather narrow, constitutional perspective – often closely related to a discussion of the modern presidency (see, for example, Teten 2003 and 2008) – the field of presidential rhetoric offers a much wider range of perspectives and methods. As Medhurst explains,

if one conceives the principal subject of investigation to be rhetoric rather than the presidency, then the nature, scope, and presumptions change rather radically. Under this construct the presidency is the particular arena within which one can study the principles and practices of rhetoric, understood as the human capacity to see what is most likely to be persuasive to a given audience on a given occasion. (1996b, xiv)

For the most part, publications on presidential rhetoric come from scholars engaged in communications or rhetoric departments, above all in the United States. Their research is regularly published in journals such as *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, or the numerous journals of American communication associations, e.g., the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. In addition to these and other journals, there are two major book series on presidential rhetoric: the *Praeger Series in Political Communication* and Texas A&M University's *Presidential Rhetoric Series* (edited by Martin Medhurst). Between 1990 and 2010, 52 books had been published as part of the *Praeger Series in Political Communication*. Of these 52, four carry the subject indicator “political science,” one “military studies,” and two “popular culture.” All other contributions have been classified by the publisher as belonging to the subject area “communication.” The *Presidential Rhetoric and Political Communication Series*, launched in 1996, currently lists 22 books (mid-2013). The titles of the books reflect the diversity of the contributions to this series, and to presidential rhetoric in general, ranging from *Green Talk in the White House: The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology* (T. Peterson 2004) to *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda* (Kimble 2006).

Outside these series and journals there exists a large and impressive body of research on presidential discourse as well. Here, again, communication studies oriented approaches dominate. One of the best known, and most often quoted, works on presidential discourse is Campbell and Jamieson's 1990 book *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance* (published in a revised and updated version as *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* in 2008). I will discuss Campbell and Jamieson's generic theory of presidential discourse in greater detail in Section 2.5.

A closer reading of the publications in the series and journals confirms the positions expressed by Windt, Medhurst, and Hart mentioned above that the

study of individual speeches and rhetorical movements dominates the scholarship on presidential rhetoric. A second aspect that becomes obvious when reviewing the academic provenance of the authors who publish in said series and journals is that there seems to be a significant lack of contributions from cultural studies in general and from American studies in particular. One consequence of this phenomenon, which will be further discussed below, is a paucity of research on the link between presidential discourse and American culture in general, and American national identity in particular. Indeed, the authors of a report prepared by the National Task Force on the Theory and Practice of the Rhetorical Presidency for the Tenth Annual Texas A&M Conference on Presidential Rhetoric in 2004 conclude that “the president’s role is central to the process of defining [American national identity] is undeniable” (Henry et al. 2008, 351). The task force therefore calls for an “expansion of scholarship on the presidency and national identity” (ibid., 350).

Given this analysis, the overall lack of cultural studies and American studies contributions to the scholarship on presidential discourse is noteworthy, as is the case for linguistic analyses. The intercultural and interdisciplinary perspective of this study emphasizes the central role of political discourse, or more precisely, the discourse of primary political institutions, for the understanding of larger cultural phenomena. This view is supported by Roger Silverstone, who states that these discourses “offer [a] major route into the study of contemporary culture” (1994, 182). As Cary Nelson and Dilip Gaonkar point out, “cultural studies has [always] been deeply, if broadly, textual and rhetorical in its methodology” (1996, 9). What is often missing though, is the analysis of discourse produced by primary, powerful political agents in concrete political settings.

Thomas Rosteck underlines the mutual interests of rhetorical studies and cultural studies, stating:

At a glance, then, cultural studies and rhetorical studies seem to share in much that is taken to be important these days: both aiming to reveal the relationship between expressive forms and social order; both existing within the field of discursive practices; both sharing an interest in how ideas are caused to materialize in texts; both concerned with how these structures are actually effective at the point of “consumption”; and both interested in grasping such textual practices as forms of power and performance. (1999, 2)

Like Silverstone, Rosteck highlights the potential benefits that a rhetorical approach could have for the study and understanding of foreign cultures: “Rhetoric’s current ascendancy may be due in part to its central concern, that of understanding how language and other symbolic systems provide frameworks through which we make sense of experience, construct our collective identity, produce meaning,

and prompt action in the world” (ibid., 2). This potential has, however, so far not been realized. “Cultural studies,” says Rosteck, “has shown a reluctance to consider discourses that are overtly political” (ibid., 10). And, James Arnt Aune, states: “All too often cultural studies displays a benign neglect of political rhetoric and an accompanying inattention to the strategic dimensions of politics” (1994, 269). Rosteck therefore concludes that “more cultural studies attention to the actual institutions and organization of real (as opposed to academic) politics” (1999, 11) is needed.

Accordingly, this study aims at opening both research and teaching in American studies to rhetorical and discourse analytical approaches. The potential advantages of such an approach are explained by Rosteck, who states that rhetorical studies can offer “to American culture studies a peculiar correcting lens emphasizing how the genre of political and institutional discourse might be usefully and oppositionally critiqued and how such discourse is not an adjunct to cultural understanding but is rather part and parcel of it” (ibid., 21).

Queries of the main cultural studies databases show that, as Aune puts it, “the cultural studies tradition, rightly drawing attention to issues such as gender, performance, and desire in popular media, has been less skilled in analyzing conventional political discourse” (1998, 85). A search for the title phrase “presidential rhetoric” in the *MLA International Bibliography*, for example, yields a total of only eight hits for the years 2001 to 2010 and only four hits for the years 1991 to 2000. Search variations, such as “presidential discourse” or “political discourse” combined with “America” or “American,” only slightly increase the list of results (many of which, however, do not relate to the United States).

Searches in additional cultural studies and American studies databases underline the benign neglect mentioned by Aune above. A search for the title phrase “presidential rhetoric” in *American Quarterly*, the journal of the *American Studies Association*, brings zero results for the period from 1996 to 2010. The same result is found for the title keywords “rhetoric” and “discourse.”

This lack of cultural studies research on the presidency as a site of real power, both politically and culturally, becomes even more striking when compared to the body of research published on the topic in the leading academic journal on the presidency, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.⁴ From 2001 to 2010, we find a total of 16 contributions with the title words “presidential rhetoric” or “presidential discourse.” The article titles stress the variety of the topics dealt with and the

4. See, however, the growing scholarship on representations of the presidency in popular culture, for example, Melissa Crawley’s *Mr. Sorkin Goes to Washington: Shaping the President on Television’s The West Wing* (2006) or Trevor Parry-Giles and Shawn J. Parry-Giles’ *The Prime-time Presidency: The West Wing and U.S. Nationalism* (2006).

importance that the journal's editor, George C. Edwards, and the discipline of presidential studies give to the topic, despite being rather critical of presidential rhetoric research methodology (see Edwards' 1996 contribution to the first volume of the Praeger series, entitled "What Difference Does It Make?").

Internationally, the situation appears strikingly similar. Before its merger with *American Studies*, George Washington University's *American Studies International* journal had not had a single publication between 1986 and 2004 featuring the above mentioned title phrases. A similar lack of results can be found in the two main publications of the German Association for American Studies, the quarterly *Amerikastudien – American Studies*, and the monograph series *American Studies*. While there are no contributions with the title phrases "presidential rhetoric" or "presidential discourse," there is, however, a special 2008 edition on the Bush presidency. In addition, in the same year, the association's annual conference focused on the topic of the American presidency, which resulted in the 2011 edited book *The American Presidency*.

Within the German American studies context, from which this study originated, three volumes – all edited by Paul Goetsch and Gerd Hurm between 1992 and 1994 – stand out: *The Fourth of July: Political Oratory and Literary Reactions, 1776-1876*; *Die Rhetorik amerikanischer Präsidenten seit F. D. Roosevelt* (including a comprehensive annotated bibliography); and *Important Speeches by American Presidents after 1945*. This last publication, a special issue of the teaching oriented journal *Anglistik & Englischunterricht*, and Gunnar Schanno's textbook *cum* CD-ROM *20th Century Speeches: A Collection of Speeches From Britain and the US*, published by Cornelsen, stress the above mentioned didactic potential of presidential discourse.

Furthermore, with Götz-Dietrich Opitz's *Manifest Destiny im Kalten Krieg: die Inaugurationsreden US-amerikanischer Präsidenten im Spiegel des rhetorischen Millennialismus* (1993) and Gabriele Reinartz's *Die amerikanische "Jeremiade" als rhetorische Strategie im öffentlichen Diskurs: Disillusionment in Eden* (1993), there are two monographs that focus on the puritan tradition of American public discourse and its role in the creation of American national identity. Both books represent examples of fruitful cultural studies approaches to presidential discourse, in particular with regard to the periods that the studies cover (1945 to 1989 and 1750 to 1850, respectively).

The notion of the jeremiad, along with the more general theme of civil religion, is also explored in two more recent German dissertations – Veronika Casper's analysis of the rhetoric of Jesse Jackson (2003) and Sonja Schwarz's comparative analysis of the role of religion in speeches by John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush (2010). Christine Sing's *And so Today, A New Season of American Renewal*

has Begun (2008), on the other hand, looks at the use of metaphor in presidential speeches, in particular those expressing the concept of newness.

The few publications on presidential discourse written in German indicate a broad thematic variety. While Christine Wächter's *Language is a Virus: Sprache und Politik im Wahlkampf der Ära Reagan* (1996) represents a linguistic perspective, two dissertations written at the University of Hamburg focus on media aspects of political communication. These are *Theatralische Politik made in USA: das Präsidentenamt im Spannungsfeld von moderner Fernsehdemokratie und kommerzialisierter PR-Show* by Ralf Stegner (1992) and *Politische Bildstrategien im amerikanischen Präsidentschaftswahlkampf 1828–1996* by Marion Müller (1997). Finally, Hans-Dieter König's *George W. Bush und der fanatische Krieg gegen den Terrorismus* (2008) – a psychoanalytical study of autocracy in America, as the subtitle states – completes this smorgasbord of German scholarly interest in American presidential discourse.

This overview of publications on presidential discourse produced by members of American studies or cultural studies departments in the United States and abroad suggests that these disciplines have thus far paid less attention than one would imagine to the discourse of arguably the most powerful political institution in the world.

Within the above-mentioned rhetoric and communications oriented approaches, where the study of presidential discourse as a cultural artifact also might deserve more attention, it is above all the works of Vanessa B. Beasley (see, for example, her 2004 book *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric*) and Mary E. Stuckey's 2004 *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* that consider the link between American self-images and presidential discourse as their core object of study. While Stuckey's study focuses on presidential discourse as a means of cultural inclusion and exclusion with the ultimate aim of coalition building, Beasley aims at identifying sets of shared and stable beliefs expressed through American presidential discourse from 1885 to 2000.

Like Beasley's and Stuckey's research, my own study focuses on the identity creating and identity affirming power of the American presidency in general and of presidential discourse in particular. In addition to focusing on the notion of identity, I am starting from the assumption that as a collective intertext the speeches of American presidents are both linked to each other as well as to other significant cultural texts in numerous ways. This notion of presidential intertextuality and its role in defining identities have so far not been at the center of research on presidential discourse. The most notable exception here is the study of presidential genres, above all Campbell and Jamieson's *Deeds Done With Words*, which addresses questions of generic intertextuality (but not identity). Intertextual relations between texts based on their belonging to the same genre represent

in themselves an intertextual phenomenon, one described by Gérard Genette as “architextualité” (1997a, 1) and by Wolfgang Heinemann as “typologische Intertextualität” (1997, 34–35).

Recurrent themes of presidential speeches, or thematic intertextuality, have also been studied (see, for example, Bellah 1967; Toolin 1983; Friedenberg 1993; Sigelman 1996; Lim 2002; and Valenzano 2002), but these studies often emerged from within the discussion of American civil religion and did not contain an explicit intertextual or even comparative dimension. In addition, the other types of intratextual relations that I will analyze, i.e., similar linguistic characteristics (discursive intertextuality), recurrent argumentative patterns (but see Oddo 2011) and images (hypertextuality), and the role of allusions (material intertextuality) have so far received little attention.

1.2.3 Towards presidential discourse analysis

As mentioned above, the concept of the rhetorical presidency has not been without controversy. Medhurst summarizes the criticism aimed at Tulis in five points. Four of those relate to Tulis’ handling of the notion of rhetoric itself. In particular, Medhurst states, “the term *rhetoric* ... often appears to be rather narrowly drawn, referring primarily to emotional appeals to ignorant audiences” (1996b, xiv; emphasis in the original). As a consequence, rhetoric is reduced to a “false form of political action rather than as being, in and of itself, a type of action – symbolic action.” Furthermore, scholars working within the rhetorical presidency paradigm are criticized for presuming that “the only form of rhetoric that is meaningful to governments is policy oriented rhetoric,” thereby neglecting epideictic instances of presidential rhetoric. Finally, and related to the first point, Medhurst criticizes Tulis’ “theoretical understanding of rhetoric” in general, noting a lack of an in-depth discussion of the notion of rhetoric (*ibid.*, xiv).

Above all, however, the notion of the rhetorical presidency has been criticized for establishing an over-simplified division between a rhetorical and a non-rhetorical presidency (*ibid.*, xiii). For Tulis, the presidencies of Roosevelt and Wilson are decisive in the establishment of the rhetorical presidency. As discussed previously, Wilson’s decision to break with the century-old tradition established by Jefferson and to address the members of Congress in person, and his re-interpretation of the presidential office symbolize the advent of what Tulis calls a second constitution, one that is in stark contrast with the original plans of the Founders. This idea of a “big bang theory” of the rhetorical presidency has, however, been criticized by a number of scholars, who point out that contrary to the image of a mute tribune, nineteenth-century presidents frequently used public discourse as a means of political leadership. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated

in Chapter 2, the discursive and linguistic patterns of presidential inaugural and State of the Union addresses clearly change at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially with regard to the ways in which presidents address their national audience. As I will show, a clear reduction of distance between the president and the people – achieved through public discourse – is at the heart of the rhetorical presidency. Here, the presidencies of Roosevelt and Wilson did indeed have a decisive impact.

In my mind, however, criticism of the rhetorical presidency paradigm should focus less on whether there is indeed a clear divide and more on the cultural consequences of institutional presidential discourse, which have essentially been mostly ignored by proponents of the concept. Tulis' work focuses on the presidency, and above all on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. In this theoretical framework, the audience of the rhetorical president is reduced to a political tool through which the chief executive exerts pressure on Congress. By focusing almost exclusively on the power dimension of presidential discourse, the concept of the rhetorical presidency neglects the manifold representations and negotiations of identity carried out in and through political and presidential speeches. By concentrating on the systemic position of the presidential office, Tulis' political science perspective ignores such issues as presidential images of self and others as well as the symbolic dimension of the office. Furthermore, while Tulis highlights changes in political campaigns, especially presidential ones, and the role of technology in the establishment of the rhetorical presidency, he fails to explain the nature of the relationship between the president and the people and their mutually determining identities, as well as the discursive and political strategies central to the formation of this relationship.

To better understand the communion of the American president with his people, and the strategic and technical developments that facilitated this communion, it would indeed be necessary to return to the "un-rhetorical" nineteenth century and analyze the history of political campaigning (see, for example, William Harrison's log-cabin campaign or Bryan's 1896 campaign), the self-representation of presidential candidates, and the role that technology played in the president's metamorphosis from "mute tribune" to "voice of the nation" (see, for example, the impact of the penny press or advances in transportation technologies). This would reveal that the creation of the rhetorical presidency cannot be explained by a big bang theory, but should be perceived as a gradual evolution that was decisively catalyzed by what could be called the oral turn in presidential discourse in the late nineteenth century.⁵

5. For more on nineteenth-century presidential discourse, see, for example, Dorsey (2002) and Medhurst (2008a).

As has become clear in the above literature review, I will be using the term “discourse” to refer to my object of study. While discourse is undoubtedly a multi-faceted and sometimes rather fuzzy concept, it does accurately express the multi-dimensional nature of the speeches of American presidents. For the purpose of this study, the notion of “discourse” refers to “conventional ways of talking that create and perpetuate systems of ideology, sets of beliefs about how the world works and what is natural” (Johnstone 2008, 29–30). Inasmuch as this study is interested in the social and cognitive consequences of presidential utterances, i.e., their identity creating potential, it is related to research carried out within the framework of discourse analysis (see, for example, van Dijk’s [1997a] *Discourse Studies*, Fairclough’s [2003] *Analysing Discourse*, and Wodak et al.’s [1999] *Discursive Construction*), above all in critical discourse analysis (CDA; see, for example, Weiss and Wodak’s [2003] *Critical Discourse Analysis*) and political discourse analysis (PDA; see, for example, Wilson 2001).

As research carried out by scholars in CDA has shown, the public discourse of a nation’s political elite plays a central role in the construction of national unity and identity. Wodak et al. summarize the link between the discourse of the politically powerful and Benedict Anderson’s idea of nations as imagined communities (1991) as follows:

If a nation is an imagined community and at the same time a mental construct, an imaginary complex of ideas containing at least the defining elements of collective unity and equality, of boundaries and autonomy, then this image is real to the extent that one is convinced of it, believes in it and identifies with it emotionally. The question of how this imaginary community reaches the minds of those who are convinced of it is easy to answer: it is constructed and conveyed in discourse, pre-dominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity is thus the product of discourse. (Wodak et al. 1999, 22)

According to Norman Fairclough, “language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs” (1993, 134). These aspects, as well as CDA’s basic premise of language as a form of social action and its stated goal of identifying the link between language use and social and cultural reality, is of central importance in the study of American presidential discourse. In this context, it is also essential to note that the impact of discourse is not a one-directional phenomenon, i.e., going, in our case, from the presidency to the people. As Fairclough and Wodak point out:

[D]escribing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship:

the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. (1997, 258)

Similar to Fairclough, Teun van Dijk also stresses the multidimensionality of discourse. In particular, he identifies three dimensions: (i) discourse as language use, (ii) discourse as a psychological/cognitive phenomenon aimed at the “communication of beliefs,” and (iii) discourse as a social phenomenon, referring to the interaction of different social groups (1997b, 2). These three aspects form “a discourse triangle” (*ibid.*, 24), the nature of which van Dijk explains as follows:

Each point of the triangle is related to the two others. We are unable to explain text structure and interaction without a cognitive account, and cognition without the realization that knowledge and other beliefs are acquired and used in discourse and in social contexts; whereas cognition, society and culture, as well as their reproduction, need language, discourse and communication. (*ibid.*, 24–25)

In the context of this study, the “socially constructive effects of discourse” (Fairclough 2003, 3) on the belief system of the American nation are of particular importance.

1.3 Hypotheses

My research is guided by a group of four main hypotheses, each of which has a number of sub-hypotheses. First, I posit that intertextuality in American presidential discourse manifests itself on five different levels, i.e., there are five discrete, yet interconnected types of presidential intertextuality. Second, I state that presidential discourse in general and the various forms of presidential intertextuality in particular serve a specific set of pragmatic purposes. Third, I claim that among these pragmatic functions the creation and control of a standardized model of American national identity is of paramount importance. Fourth, I further claim that another, equally important purpose of presidential intertextuality is the promotion of a standardized, unitary model of the modern American presidency.

Taken together, I expect the five types of presidential intertextuality to contribute to a high degree of stability of American presidential discourse – manifest, e.g., in recurrent discursive and thematic trends and patterns – and to high degrees of predictability and conformity. Furthermore, and as mentioned above, I see intertextuality in American presidential discourse as symbolizing a scaffold that supports the creation of American identity and at the same time assures that this process of identity creation follows a pre-established, culturally and politically acceptable design. Finally, I believe that intertextual references in presidential

discourse play a significant role in underscoring the uniqueness of the presidential office and establishing the image of a powerful, unilateral executive.

As a general caveat, I should add here that while I do consider presidential discourse as representing both a powerful political tool in and by itself and a way of adding to the political weight of the institution of the presidency, I am aware that measuring that power and the impact that presidential discourse has on political decisions or concrete legislative measures is a complex matter, one that I am not proposing to attempt in this study. A number of scholars are skeptical about the effectiveness of presidential discourse in moving public opinion or successfully influencing legislative decisions. The case against the political power of presidential speeches has, for example, been made in George C. Edwards' *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit*. Citing examples such as Bill Clinton's failure to get his health care plan to "even a vote in either house of Congress" (2003, 7) or Ronald Reagan's inability to "obtain ... congressional support for the Contras in Nicaragua" (ibid., 8), Edwards declares: "[P]residents usually fail in their efforts to move the public to support them and their policies" (ibid., ix). Richard J. Powell and Dean Schloyer reach a similar conclusion with regard to the president's ability to influence congressional floor votes, stating: "The findings suggest that presidential speechmaking has very little impact on the likelihood that members of Congress will support the president's position on roll call votes" (2010, 123). Reed L. Welch, while acknowledging that public presidential appeals can be more successful with certain demographic groups (educated, male, white, elderly) than with others, also concludes that the president has "limited success in even communicating his message to the public." Nevertheless, Reed admits that "[t]he president at the right times can use the bully pulpit to tremendous political advantage" (2003, 263).

There are, however, also studies that do suggest that, under the right circumstances, rhetorical appeals by a president can indeed influence the behavior of members of Congress and the public. Brandice Canes-Wrone, for example, in her study of George W. Bush's statements regarding the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security posits, "Bush's appeal underscores that a president may employ the bully pulpit to pressure congressional members to enact his policy initiatives" (2006, 3). She also stresses the fact that "the president's proposals for potentially significant legislation virtually always make it on to the congressional agenda," admitting, however, that "we do not know the extent to which the president's public statements facilitate this process" (ibid., 245–246).

Canes-Wrone's assessment that "[i]t is also possible that presidential public statements serve as cues for members of Congress" (ibid.) is shared by Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, who "argues that instead of moving public opinion, presidential

speeches act as informational cues for legislators” and states that “[p]residential rhetoric increases the president’s legislative success on votes pertaining to policies that are both salient and complex” (2010, 415). Referring to Edwards’ research on the limited impact of presidential discourse, he concludes that “[p]residential rhetoric matters to the president’s relationship with Congress, despite the limited impact it appears to have on public opinion” (ibid.). Similar to the findings in Canes-Wrone’s study, Eshbaugh-Soha’s results show that “the largest and only statistically significant impact of presidential attention is for the salient, complex policy area” (ibid., 426). In addition, by spending more time talking about these salient and complex issues, presidents “increase the probability of [their] success on a roll-call vote” (ibid., 431). Andrew W. Barrett, finally, finds a similar correlation in his 2004 study, writing, “there is a strong, statistically significant and positive relationship between the number of times per month a president speaks publicly in support of a particular bill and the president receiving his legislative wish regarding that piece of legislation” (363).

In light of President Obama’s inability to pass a bill for expanded background checks for gun buyers after the Newtown shooting (and a number of impassioned speeches on his part) or his unsuccessful attempts to control the 2013 debt ceiling debate, doubts as to the direct transferability of political discourse into political power are warranted, especially when factors such as partisanship, ideology, and presidential approval rates are likely to be more decisive.

In this context, it is thus important to note that I do not equate presidential discourse with political power *per se*, or state that presidential discursive action will automatically translate into legislative success. Nevertheless, and independent of whether one thinks that presidential speeches have an impact on legislative decisions or not, I posit that the combined discourse of American presidents – a combination both symbolized and strengthened by intertextual references – does have an impact on the image that Americans have of the institution of the presidency and on that institution’s ability to get other political actors to do what it wants.

Creating a positive image of the presidency and of a system of government in which the executive is the dominant actor is a continuous process, to which other social agents such as the news media or the film industry contribute as well. Presidential discourse thus represents a long-term endeavor that aims at, so to speak, preparing the cultural ground for a slow and gradual shift in the balance of power within the American system of governance away from Congress and towards the presidency, including in policy matters. In this context, discursive campaigns, more than individual speeches, play the primary role, especially when they aim at putting pressure on Congress by going public. Edwards warns of the negative effects that such a strategy has:

In going public, the president attempts to intimidate opponents by increasing the political costs of opposition rather than attracting them with benefits. If going public is not a successful strategy and actually makes coalition building more difficult, polarization, gridlock, and public cynicism, which characterize American politics today, are the likely results. (2003, 248)

While, as indicated above, data on the president's ability to influence the voting behavior of members of Congress is somehow contradictory, it seems safe to assume that continued congressional opposition to issues made salient by the president is not an easy feat. This is particularly, but not exclusively so in the context of crisis or conflict, as Murphy explains with regard to George W. Bush's rhetorical strategies after 9/11. Murphy writes, "extraordinary pressure is brought to bear on those who oppose the president because opposition based on practicality and expediency makes no sense in a world governed by theistic essence" (2003, 627). Stressing the president's discursive role as representative of the people (see Chapter 2), Murphy adds, "disagreement can be based only on opposition to the values that the president expresses as the synecdochical voice of the people. To oppose him is to oppose the voice and, not coincidentally, the will of the people..." (ibid.). Few members of Congress (or the media or the public) will be able to withstand such pressure.

1.4 Theories of intertextuality

While this study is an interdisciplinary endeavor, including, as shown above, approaches from political studies, presidential studies, communication, American studies, as well as applied linguistics and discourse analysis, its main theoretical framework consists of theories of intertextuality. Such an intertextual perspective is particularly suited to express the relational nature of presidential discourse and its resulting scaffolding function. It also shows that in the context of presidential speeches, Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of "heteroglossia" (1981, 263) is not only a historical, aesthetic phenomenon but also, and primarily, a political and cultural tool used to implement the institutional functions of the presidency. I thus consider the presence of intertextual relations in presidential discourse to be (i) the results of deliberate decisions on the part of the author, (ii) to be expected and even demanded by the audience, and (iii) to have significant semantic and pragmatic dimensions. Such an interpretive, "post-poststructuralist model of intertextuality" (Hebel 1989, 13), thus stands in contrast to the universal, ontological concept of intertextuality as developed by Kristeva.

Providing an overview of contemporary theories of intertextuality is a challenging task. This has less to do with the scope of the concept itself – after all intertextuality is about relations between text – than with an inflation of often conflicting designations used to refer to the phenomenon. Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, associated primarily with poststructuralist theories, represents an "anonymous, infinite *intertextualité*" (Landwehr 2002, 4) and thus forms one end of a rather long spectrum of concepts and designations. Interestingly, the other end of this spectrum, i.e., quotations as the most tangible form of intertextual references, is also referred to by Gérard Genette as "*intertextualité*" (1997a, 1–2), albeit within a structuralist framework.

The range of intertextual relationships between these two notions of *intertextualité* is rather extensive, with a lack of terminological standardization adding to the difficulty of precisely defining the concept. As mentioned, the scope of intertextual relations ranges from clearly marked and identifiable quotations (Genette's *intertextualité*) to the borderless notion of an intangible textuality (Kristeva's *intertextualité*), and between these two brackets we find numerous forms or types of intertextuality, each of them usually carrying a number of often incompatible designations or labels.

In the following, I am going to present the broad spectrum of interpretations of the "fashionable" term *intertextuality* (Plett 1991, 3) as it has developed since the mid-1960s. In doing so, I will discuss literary, mainly poststructuralist, approaches as well as linguistic ones, the latter often placed within textual linguistics. This overview will also show that the two approaches are by no means incompatible and that, for example, on the systemic level of political language they do indeed overlap significantly. Furthermore, I will propose a typology that can be applied to the analysis of intertextuality in the discourse of American presidents or, for that matter, any collections of texts.

Intertextuality, to try to establish the smallest common denominator for a range of available definitions, refers to at least two separate texts being related to one another. Or, as Margaret Landwehr puts it, "intertextuality [is] generally understood to connote the structural relations between two or more texts" (2002, 2). The fact that both the nature of the intertextual relations and the nature of the related texts themselves are not defined and can be potentially rather complex provides the concept, and those interpreting it, with significant semantic leeway.

1.4.1 Universal intertextuality

Kristeva coined the term "intertextuality" in her 1966 work on Bakhtin's idea of the polyphonic novel, stating that

Bakhtin was one of the first to replace the static hewing of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply exist but is generated in relation to another structure. What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is his conception of the “literary word” as an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context.

(1986, 35–36)

According to Landwehr, the “concept of the ‘polyphonic’ novel ... includes a variety of idiolects employed by characters as well as extra-literary texts such as newspaper articles or anecdotes and, consequently, offers a multiplicity of ways of viewing ‘reality’” (2002, 2). The multiple voices and the multiple realities that they help create have a confrontational, subversive purpose. As Graham Allen states, Bakhtin’s focus on the dialogic aspect of language, “foregrounds class, ideological and other conflicts, divisions and hierarchies within society” (2000, 21). As such, the polyphonic novel is by nature “herrschaftsfeindlich, ideologiekritisch und daher dialogisch” [“anti-authoritarian, critical of ideology, and hence, dialogic”] (Holthuis 1993, 13). As a “microcosm of heteroglossia” (Bakhtin 1981, 411), the novel provides an alternative design of social reality and norm, suspending and subverting the existing, dominant design (Holthuis 1993, 13). The novel’s heteroglossia thus does not only reflect a multitude of voices but also one of consciousnesses (Bakhtin 1981, 366). These multiple voices serve to encourage readers to critically analyze existing ideologies and political and social power relations. As Bakhtin writes: “Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere.... Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account” (1986, 91). Texts that do not show this critical component, i.e., that feature only one (the dominant) voice, are monologic, aimed at supporting the social status quo. I expect presidential speeches to be almost exclusively monologic, i.e., lacking this critical component.

Discussing Bakhtin’s notions of dialog and carnival, Kristeva translates Bakhtin’s “dominantly intratextual” (Pfister 1985a, 2) idea of a dialog of multiple voices within one text into an open, infinite conversation between all texts. Thus, while Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism represents a primarily intratextual phenomenon, i.e., the presence of numerous, competing voices challenging the dominant ideological structures of a text from within, Kristeva’s is an intertextual concept, set against the background of the universal connectedness of all texts. For her, “tout texte est un intertexte; d’autres textes sont présents en lui, à des niveaux variables.... L’intertextualité, condition de tout texte quel qu’il soit, ne se réduit évidemment pas à un problème de sources ou d’influence” (Barthes 1973, 1015).

Landwehr explains the development from Bakhtin's concept of dialogism to Kristeva's notion of intertextuality as follows: "Kristeva substitutes the term 'text' for Bakhtin's 'word' and points out that the 'horizontal' axis of subject/addressee and the 'vertical' axis of text/context bring to light the important discovery that "each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (2002, 3).

Yet, the shift from word to text is not the only difference between the two approaches. As Henriette Herwig explains, Bakhtin saw his notion of dialog as a way of criticizing socialist realism, while Kristeva's critique – like that of her fellow members of the Parisian *tel quel* group – was directed at bourgeois idealism and its belief in "the autonomy and identity of the subject, the work, and the identifiability of meaning" (2002, 166). As Hans-Peter Mai states, Kristeva's theory of intertextuality is politically motivated:

Intertextuality is one lever in her theoretical attempt to dislocate the mainstays of the "bourgeois world". Hence, Kristeva's intertextuality is a far cry from taxonomic. In her eyes it is a politically transformative practice. In the last resort, hers is a political concept which aims at empowering the reader/critic to oppose the literary and social tradition at large. (1991, 41)

Henning Tegtmeier points to another difference between Bakhtin and Kristeva, stating that while Bakhtin's notion of dialogism was meant to represent a literary, ideological, and critical quality of selected, extraordinary works of literature, Kristeva's concept was seen as a characteristic of all texts (Tegtmeier 1997, 52). For Kristeva, intertextuality is an inherent quality, a "*conditio sine qua non*" (Hebel 1989, 22) of any text "and its process of signification" (*ibid.*, 12).

In addition to expanding *in extremis* the notion of intertextuality, Kristeva's approach also encompasses the total liberation of the notion of the text itself. As Holthuis points out, Kristeva "radicalizes" Bakhtin's concept of dialogism not only by defining intertextuality as a general and genuine property of all texts – thus equating intertextuality with textuality – but also by defining text as a diachronic and synchronic "historio-cultural paradigm," a borderless combination of all existing meaning systems and cultural codes (Holthuis 1993, 14). According to Herwig, in the context of Kristeva's "*texte général*," any pre-text is composed of the entire corpus of all texts, including their codes and ideologies (2002, 167), i.e., the notion of text does not only refer to literary or other written or spoken texts but to any cultural structure or system. Thus, history and society as well are texts that can be read and integrated into other texts. A text thus becomes "open, dynamic, and polysemous space, an endless process of signification" (Hebel 1989, 10). As we will see in the context of American presidential discourse, this potential

openness can, however, be culturally constrained, for example, by the expectations of the respective audience or rhetorical traditions.

1.4.2 Descriptive approaches to intertextuality

Kristeva's open, infinite concept of intertextuality is contrasted here with approaches that focus on intertextuality as traceable and tangible references to individual texts, groups of texts, as well as their underlying codes or meaning systems (see Pfister 1985a, 15). Aimed at identifying the various forms and functions of more or less deliberate intertextual references between texts or groups of texts, these approaches are referred to as local or descriptive. As I will point out later, both perspectives do indeed overlap, especially on a systemic, discursive level. Figure 3 provides readers with an overview of the main types of intertextuality discussed in this chapter.

Type	Authors	Level	Pre-texts
Universal			
	Kristeva	Open	All texts; culture in general
Specific			
Discursive, <i>Systemreferenz</i>	Pfister	Linguistic system	Language use (political language)
Generic, Architextuality, <i>Textsortenreferenz</i>	Genette, Heinemann	Genre, text types	Groups of texts (inaugural addresses)
Thematic, <i>Mythenreferenz</i>	Pfister, Nünning and Jucker, Steyer	Text themes	Cultural topoi, myths (American Dream)
Hypertextuality	Genette	Rhetorical and argumentative patterns	Entire texts (Odyssey → Ulysses; Us-vs.-Them)
Material, Allusions, <i>Einzeltextreferenz</i> ,	Plett	Concrete individual texts	Quotes, references to people, sites
Metatextuality	Genette	Commentary, critical reflection	Editorial
Paratextuality	Genette	Textual "neighbors"	Preface, headings
Autotextuality	Broich, Dällenbach	Texts by same author	References to previous speeches (Second → First Inaugural)
Intermediality	Rajewsky	References across different media	Films in book, speeches in films
Interdiscursivity	Fairclough	Discourse from other areas	Medical language (America's economy as patient)

Figure 3. Types of intertextuality

Kristeva's post-structuralist theory of intertextuality, which sees texts as belonging to a global, open, and infinite universe of texts, has drawn significant criticism. While her basic idea of the universal interconnectedness of all texts is not negated, her approach has been called "undifferentiated" (Holthuis 1993, 15) and its analytical merit has been doubted. As Heinrich Plett states, "this school has never developed a comprehensible and teachable method of textual analysis. Its publications are marked by a strangely abstract quality, at a decided remove from reality" (1991, 4). Tegtmeier puts it more bluntly, stating that "Kristeva's notion of intertextuality is useless for literary or linguistically-oriented analyses of texts. The reason for this lies in the extreme expansion of her concept" (1997, 56). And Hebel concludes: "It appears safe to contend from today's point of view that an interpretive approach to intertextuality will prove to be the more fruitful perspective for scholars of literature, even though the original dimension of this critical concept must not be forgotten" (1989, 13).

Thus, while Kristeva's followers stuck to the "postulate of the open, self-reproducing text and hence the idea of the universal intertext," a second, more descriptive school developed that saw intertextuality not as a general quality of text but as a specific and strategic one (Holthuis 1993, 16). The focus of this approach was thus "on the relations set up by intertextuality, trying to come to terms with their specific nature" (Hebel 1989, 12).

This new perspective placed emphasis not only on identifying concrete, tangible forms of intertextuality but also on understanding their semantic and pragmatic potential. "Approaches to intertextuality as a device to establish relations with other texts or other points of reference," writes Hebel, "soon began to emphasize the significance of these relations for the meaning of the individual text" (ibid.). As Anna Solin explains, "the notion of intertextuality offers a perspective on texts which emphasizes the relational nature of textual meaning: meaning is seen as emerging from the relations texts have with other texts" (2004, 267–268). The more contained, finite notion of "intertextuality no longer destabilizes the text or disseminates its meaning infinitely, but rather enhances the constitution of meaning" (Hebel 1989, 13). Such an approach also means that the roles of author and audience become more important, as

both reading and writing are seen as processes of interacting with prior texts, writers, and conventions. Texts are studied as combinations or blends of multiple voices, some explicitly marked, others more subtle. However monologic or self-sufficient a text may appear to be, it is seen as woven out of threads of other texts. However creative or unique a text may seem, it is analyzed in relation to the conventions it rests on. (Solín 2004, 267–268)

For the purpose of text analysis it is thus essential to accept that “both producers and recipients of texts experience a text in relation to their knowledge of and experience with other texts, i.e., against the background of previously produced and received texts” (Fix 2000, 31). Solin, building on Fairclough, states:

[T]ext production is conceived of as a historically, culturally, and socially grounded practice in which diverse existing texts, genres, and discourses are drawn on. The interpretation of texts is affected by intertextual nuances in the sense that interpreters bring other additional texts to the interpretation process, not just (some of) the texts that have shaped production. (2004, 270)

Intertextual relations introduce a significant amount of “additional meaning” into a text. To fully capture this “so-called semantic explosion, triggered by intertextual relations,” writes Hebel, it is essential “to apprehend the semantic potential of the text as far as possible, without unduly disregarding the never-closing gap between the text’s polysemy and the individual reader’s interpretive – intertextual – competence” (1989, 13).

As Hebel states, “in which way the infinity of possible intertextual relations can be utilized in the act of interpretation depends on the individual critic’s definition of the intertext” (13). Of the four possible options that Hebel presents – (i) the referring text as intertext; (ii) the intertext as something outside the referring text; (iii) the intertext as the universal text of all texts in Kristeva’s sense; and (iv) the intertext as a combination of referring text and pre-text – my own approach is most in line with the fourth approach, which follows Michel Arrivé’s definition of the intertext as “l’ensemble des textes entre lesquels fonctionnent les relations d’intertextualité” (quoted in Hebel 1989, 14). In general, and in the particular context of this study, “this approach offers a pragmatic solution that should enable scholars to (re)direct their energy to the analysis of this network of relations instead of wasting it and defining artificial and eventually ineffective limits” (*ibid.*, 14).

In contrast to Kristeva’s post-structuralist model, Pfister presents the descriptive model of intertextuality as a structuralist or hermeneutic approach that sees intertextuality as only referring to deliberate, intended and marked references between texts or groups of texts (see 1985a, 25). He considers these references to reflect the «hard core» of intertextuality (*ibid.*, 27). Most discussions of this hard core of tangible intertextual references establish a basic dichotomy, distinguishing between one-to-one relations and one-to-many relations. Heinemann, for example, identifies two main types of intertextual relations between texts, referring to them as “typological” on the one hand and «referential» on the other hand (1997, 34–35). Ansgar Nünning and Andreas Jucker (1999, 171), like Ulrich

Broich and Manfred Pfister (1985, 48–57), differentiate between “Systemreferenz” [systemic reference] and “Einzeltextreferenz” [single-text reference]. Systemic intertextuality, or typological intertextuality in Heinemann’s terminology, is characterized by references to textual patterns or generic conventions of a group of texts, while single-text references – which Heinemann himself calls “referential intertextuality” – represent concrete, often explicitly marked references to a specific individual pre-text or pre-text segment. The tangible presence of the pre-text leads Plett to refer to this type as “material” intertextuality (1991, 7). Typological intertextuality – Broich and Pfister, using Genette’s terminology (see below), refer to it as “Architextualität” (1985a, 5) – focuses on the fact that each text is influenced by generic aspects (Heinemann 1997, 34).

Typological intertextuality is thus based on the existence of “relative equivalence between the texts belonging to the same genre” (34). As a result, typologically intertextual texts exhibit genre-specific structural and functional properties, causing Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Dressler to state that, in a general sense, typological intertextuality “is responsible for the development of text types as groups of texts with typical characteristic patterns” in the first place (1981, 13).

The second type of non-universal intertextuality, i.e., referential or material intertextuality, is characterized by the “explicit quotation of elements of a specific pre-text” (Heinemann 1997, 34). These quotations can have “different degrees of completeness and explicitness” (ibid., 34–35). Following Holthuis, Heinemann further divides the concept of referential intertextuality into two sub-categories, i.e., “textoberflächenstrukturelle Referenz” and “texttiefenstrukturelle Referenz.” The former is characterized by a directly observable presence (on the text’s structural surface) of the pre-text in the meta-text (i.e., the referring text), while the latter consists of a number of indirect forms of references or repetitions, such as “allusions, paraphrases, translations, as well as didactic or aesthetic editions of texts,” which are more deeply embedded in the text (ibid., 35).

While the notion of systemic intertextuality is usually seen as a generic phenomenon, i.e., as typological intertextuality, Pfister expands the meaning of the term and its scope in an important way. According to Pfister, systemic references go beyond the level of the generic. He states that the broadest interpretation of systemic intertextuality consists of “references to the linguistic code and the general normative system of textuality” (1985b, 53). Thus, language itself becomes the widest point of reference within the concept of systemic intertextuality, a rather open interpretation that Pfister himself is cautious of, admitting that in this context it would be better to speak of “using” (the linguistic code) than of “referring” to it (ibid., 54). This type of intertextuality thus belongs to the “extreme margins

of intertextuality” (ibid., 53) and will only become visible if deliberately applied in opposition to established linguistic norms.

Pfister’s expansion of systemic intertextuality to the level of the linguistic codes does prove especially fruitful if the notion is seen as referring to a linguistic sub-system. Hence, if we see systemic intertextuality as referring to the patterns and norms of socio-culturally pre-determined language use – Pfister himself explicitly refers to political and ideological discourse – then it becomes an independent type of intertextuality, which needs to be separated from typological intertextuality (ibid.,).

A second important addition to intertextual typology on the part of Pfister, and hence a more differentiated way of representing systemic intertextuality, is his inclusion of references to myths or archetypes (ibid., 56). Nünning and Jucker also mention this type of thematic intertextuality – i.e., the continued presence of and references to specific topoi or myths – but situates it not within the realm of systemic intertextuality but sees it rather as a third type, situated between systemic/typological intertextuality on the one hand and referential intertextuality on the other hand (1999, 171).

Kathrin Steyer, taking a similar approach, distinguishes between a “synchronic perspective” of intertextuality (1997, 98) – including both text-to-text and text-to-text-type relations – and a “diachronic perspective” (ibid., 101). This latter perspective allows accounting for intertextual references whose precise reference points, such as the myths mentioned above, are no longer explicitly marked. Steyer’s focus lies on key lexical elements that have become fixed forms of expressing “thematic and argumentative” patterns (ibid., 101–103). Steyer’s diachronic perspective thus combines thematic intertextuality with a new kind of structural intertextuality that Genette refers to as hypertextuality (see below).

1.4.3 Genette’s notion of transtextuality

In his 1982 book *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (published in English as *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* in 1997), French structuralist Gérard Genette developed a five-level typology of interrelationships between texts. Genette introduces the term “transtextuality” – “all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (1997a, 1) – as an umbrella term for five subtypes of intertextual relations.

Genette calls the most tangible type of relations “intertextuality” (ibid., 2). As mentioned above, this concept presupposes “the literal presence of one text within another” (Genette 1997b, viii). It includes the three sub-types, quotations, plagiarism, and allusions. As Genette states, “in its most explicit and literal form,

[intertextuality] is the traditional practice of *quoting* (with quotation marks, with or without specific references)” (1997a, 2; emphasis in the original). Quoting is thus very close to plagiarism, which Genette describes as a less explicit, “undeclared but still literal borrowing” (ibid., 2). Allusions, the third type in this category, appear, as Genette states, “in still less explicit and less literal guise” (ibid., 20). Genette defines allusions as “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible” (ibid., 2). Genette’s intertextuality is thus identical with Plett’s notion of “material intertextuality” (1991, 7), or with the terms referential intertextuality or *Einzeltextreferenz* introduced earlier.

Genette’s second sub-category – that of architextuality – has already been mentioned above as being related to broader typological or generic notions of intertextuality. Genette defines architextuality as “the entire set of general or transcendent categories – and types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres – from which emerges each singular text” (1997a, 1).

Third, paratextuality refers to a text’s relations to its paratexts, such as titles and subtitles, prefaces, book covers, illustrations, and, as Genette states, “many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic,” i.e., whether introduced by the author or others (ibid., 3). Genette describes the paratext in the following way: “More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, ... a ‘vestibule’ that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back” (1997b, 1–2; emphasis in the original).

The fourth type of intertextual relationship is governed by the concept of commentary. Genette refers to this type as “metatextuality” (1997a, 4). Metatextuality represents a critical phenomenon, “unit[ing] a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it” (ibid., 4).

Metatextuality is closely related to, and sometimes difficult to differentiate from, Genette’s fifth and final type of transtextuality, which he refers to as “hypertextuality.” Genette defines this concept as follows: “By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.” It is, as the subtitle of Genette’s book states, “a text in the second degree ..., i.e., a text derived from another preexistent text.” Genette refers to Virgil’s *Aeneid* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses* as “two hypertexts (among others) of the same hypotext: the *Odyssey*” (ibid., 5).

As the above overview has shown, there is a wide variety of intertextual relations between the two extremes of the intertextuality continuum, Genette’s

structuralist definition of intertextuality as “the literal presence of one text within another” (*Paratexts* viii) and Kristeva’s universal notion of intertextuality.

Presidential discourse is, of course, part of Kristeva’s universe of texts. As an element of this ever-expanding library, any form of public utterance will be set against the background of previous verbal and non-verbal textual products. Nevertheless, and following the above-mentioned criticism of the lack of usefulness of the global intertextuality concept for textual analyses, for the purpose of this study the focus will lie only on types of intertextuality that fall within the descriptivist paradigm, i.e., types that are tangible and identifiable in concrete texts. Within this approach, however, the widest possible net will be cast, i.e., Pfister’s notion of “Systemreferenz” (1985b, 53) will be included as representing intertextuality on the level of political language or discourse. The other types included in the analysis are architextuality, i.e., intertextuality of the level of genres, thematic intertextuality, hypertextuality, and material intertextuality, or allusions. Meta- and paratexts, while significant in political discourse in general, are not primarily a direct product of the presidency, and are therefore excluded from the analysis.

1.5 A typology of presidential intertextuality

With regard to the various forms of intertextuality present in presidential discourse, relations and interactions between presidential texts themselves and between presidential texts and other culturally significant texts can be expected to take place on five levels. These levels or types exhibit different degrees of intensity and visibility, and have various, overlapping functions. In the following, I will describe these five levels along with the attributes associated with each type of intertextuality.

1.5.1 Forms of intertextual relations in presidential discourse

First, intertextuality in presidential discourse is established through and made visible by the use of common linguistic features that, over the years, have become standardized. This type of discursive or systemic intertextuality is characterized by repetitive textual, syntactical, and grammatical phenomena, such as uniform text, sentence, and word lengths, the predictable use of active and passive voices, as well as standardized syntactical and pronominal choices. Discursive intertextuality thus sits at the interface between global and local concepts of intertextuality. It represents the widest of the concentric circles comprising the typology of presidential intertextuality represented in Figure 4.

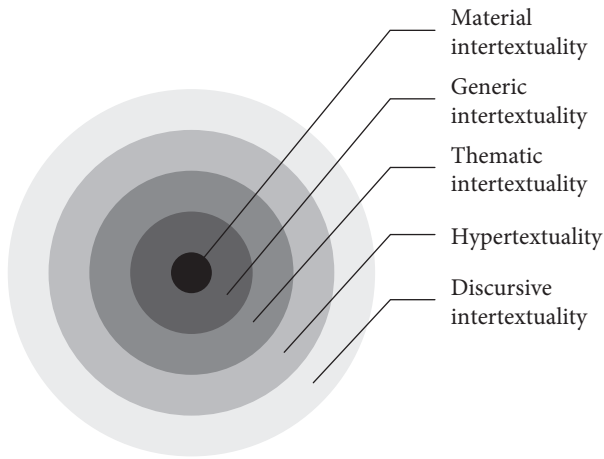


Figure 4. Types of intertextuality in presidential discourse

Closely related to occurrences of intertextuality on a discursive level are intertextual parallels between individual implementations of presidential speeches on the level of the text type or genre. The above-mentioned notions of typological reference or architextuality describe this phenomenon. Here, parallels between presidential speeches originate from their belonging to the same groups of texts. Examples of this type of intertextual relationship include invariant speech settings, recurrent formal procedures, standardized rhetorical formulas and speech structures, controlled text lengths, recurrent thematic foci, as well as stable speech functions.

The repetition or consistent appearance of a set number of topics relates to a third kind or level of intertextuality, i.e., the notion of thematic intertextuality or *Mythenreferenz* mentioned above. This type of intertextuality – which is not restricted to specific genres – promotes the continuous presence of a set stock of themes or topoi in presidential discourse.

The pragmatic dimension of these themes becomes apparent when seen as forming part of a fourth kind of intertextuality, a relationship between texts that, as described above, Genette referred to as “hypertextuality.” Here, relationships between texts are based on shared textual and argumentative patterns. In this context, the hypotext does not represent a single pre-text, but rather a kind of rhetorical template that can be filled, among other things, by the culturally stable myths and topoi previously mentioned. Hypertextuality is a transgeneric phenomenon that provides speakers with time-tested discursive strategies that combine argumentative patterns with stable sets of attributes.

Finally, intertextuality in presidential discourse can be found in the form of material intertextuality, i.e., allusions, both implicit and explicit, to other texts through quotations or paraphrases. Here, the continuous presence of a rather stable set of selected, positively connoted pre-texts (including references to people and sites of memories) plays mainly an identity affirming role but can also be employed as a critical tool.

These five levels of intertextuality vary greatly in their degrees of visibility, or intensity. While explicit quotations represent easily identifiable, concrete examples of intertextual references, common discursive patterns will be less concrete and more difficult to spot. Seen within a system of widening concentric circles, material intertextuality comprises the core or innermost circle, while intertextuality on the discourse level forms the widest and least defined circle. Nevertheless, these less tangible intertextual relationships clearly exist and play a powerful role in supporting the various pragmatic functions of presidential discourse.

These different types of intertextuality serve to establish a matrix of discursive norms that regulates and controls presidential discourse. This includes numerous aspects of presidential discourse, such as speech lengths, grammatical patterns, speech settings, argumentative strategies, thematic choices, and acceptable sources for presidential quotations. The intertextual perspective taken in this study thus is also directed at, as Hart demands, “identify[ing] the invariant features of presidential discourse” (2002, 703).

1.5.2 Functions of intertextual relations in presidential discourse

I expect the various types of intertextual relations in presidential discourse to support three primary groups of overlapping functions. With regard to American culture and the political system of the United States, presidential discourse in general and presidential intertextuality in particular (i) contribute to the controlled development of identity designs; (ii) provide support for the political agenda of the current administration and for the individual office holder; and (iii) call, on an institutional level, for a strong, unilateral executive.

First, and in the most general sense, the main cultural function of presidential discourse and of presidential intertextuality is the creation of various instances of identity. As previously suggested, presidential discourse – as a cultural phenomenon – aims at the creation and continued affirmation of American national identity, of what it means to be an American. Here, it is especially presidential inaugural addresses and, to a lesser extent, the annual State of the Union addresses that exhibit constant elements of the American creed in a celebration of American-ness. Furthermore, particularly in speeches with a foreign and security policy

focus, alterity-based definitions of what it means to be an American can be anticipated, especially through the creation of contradistinctive images of un-American otherness. As a consequence, presidential discourse contributes significantly to the creation and subsequent affirmation of a specific set of beliefs shared by the vast majority of Americans. As Denton and Woodward point out:

Political consciousness results from a largely symbolic interpretation of socio-political experience. To control, manipulate, or structure the interpretation is a primary goal of politics in general. A successful politician will use rather specific linguistic devices that reinforce popular beliefs, attitudes, and values. Politically manipulated language can promote and reinforce the existing political regime or order. (1998, 45–46)

This statement emphasizes the inseparable link between a nation's self-understanding and its appreciation of its own political system. Thus, going beyond the cultural function of identity construction, the presidential intertext serves a more specific purpose with regard to the representation of the political system of the United States. On a systemic and ideological level, and closely linked to the cultural level, uniform presidential discourse thus glorifies the political system chosen by the United States. American images of otherness that are continuously used in the process of national identification usually focus on the uniqueness and superiority of that system, and – deriving from this – on the exceptional nature of the nation itself. Thus, the apotheosis of the political system, which lies at the heart of America's civil religion (see Chapter 3), leads to a symbolic unification of system and nation, with presidential intertextuality serving as a primary medium for the perpetuation of cultural meaning.

Second, in addition to shaping and controlling American national identity, presidential intertextuality also pursues more self-serving and more immediate political purposes. One of these is the legitimization and justification of political agendas in general and specific political actions in particular. A second political pragmatic dimension of presidential intertextuality focuses on the presidential persona and aims at portraying the individual office holder as presidential, i.e., as a worthy successor of such presidential greats as Washington, Lincoln, or Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The third and arguably most important group of functions of presidential intertextuality focuses not on individual presidents but on the presidency as an institution. In this regard, the intertextual scaffold serves to shape, support, and protect the specific identity of the presidential office. Through continuously affirming the special status of the presidency, presidential discourse aims at projecting among the American public the need for a strong, unilateral executive. Here, intertextual references serve the long-term institutional purpose of establishing

among the public a bias towards the presidency as the main political agent of the American political system.

1.6 Methodology

The study presented here proposes a historically and textually comprehensive analysis, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, of American presidential discourse that includes all presidents from George Washington to George W. Bush as well as a variety of text types, including inaugural addresses, State of the Union messages, and major foreign and security policy speeches. Speeches with a domestic and economic policy focus, as well as campaign speeches were excluded from this study but are discussed in a separate publication (see Note 6).

The study is both corpus-based and corpus-driven, comprising, first of all, all inaugural addresses and State of the Union messages from George Washington to George W. Bush. These two genres represent the most significant instances of public presidential discourse. The inaugural corpus includes 55 speeches with a combined length of about 130,000 words. The State of the Union corpus contains 220 speeches from 1790 to 2008 with a total word count of about 1.76 million.⁶ To allow for the analysis of historical trends, these two main corpora were further divided into four sub-corpora, representing four major, and admittedly rather large, eras in American history: 1789 to 1859; 1860 to 1901; 1905 to 1945; and post-1945.

Furthermore, an additional corpus comprising major addresses on foreign and security policy from the post-World-War-II era was prepared as a contemporary supplement to the analysis of inaugural and State of the Union addresses. For this corpus, one speech was selected from every presidential term (election year speeches were omitted). The foreign policy corpus thus comprises 18 speeches with a combined length of about 58,000 words.

All corpus texts are available in electronic format. Wherever possible, quotes from the speeches are taken from *The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, published by the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) and the page numbers given refer to these papers. Where possible, quotes from speeches that are not part of the *Presidential Papers* are taken from the speech archive of *The American Presidency Project*, an excellent website maintained by John Woolley and Gerhard

6. The State of the Union corpus also includes three speeches given by George H. W. Bush (1989), Clinton (1993) and George W. Bush (2001), respectively, briefly after taking office. While these speeches were not called State of the Union addresses they have been included in the corpus as in reality they fulfill the same purpose.

Peters at the University of California at Santa Barbara (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>). Any meta-textual information included in the speech texts, e.g., footnotes, indication of audience approval like applause or laughter, and cross-references to other texts were deleted. The digitized corpus was analyzed using the concordance software MonoConc. Results were cross-checked using Word Cruncher and, where necessary, MS Excel. Given the fact that in this study the computer-assisted corpus analysis is seen as a precursor to and thus combined with a more detailed, hermeneutic qualitative analysis and the close reading of the speeches, the corpus was not tagged.

While frequency, cluster, and collocation analyses were carried out for the entire corpus, the processing of the corpus data varied slightly according to the type of intertextuality studied. The broadest, quantitative analysis was carried out to identify patterns of discursive intertextuality (Chapter 2). Here, basic statistical data, for example, regarding text lengths, was calculated. In addition, the frequencies of selected terms and groups of terms (above all pronouns) and their distribution trends, as well as collocational patterns of key terms (e.g., “President,” “Congress,” “evil”), were identified. The analysis of thematic intertextuality is based on a content analysis of the major themes of inaugural addresses (Chapter 3). The discussion of hypertextuality is based on a close reading of presidential speeches that is supported by selected frequency and collocation analyses, e.g., for keywords such as “evil” or “freedom” (Chapter 4). The identification of presidential allusions, finally, is the result of a close reading of the selected texts, guided by the analysis of relevant secondary and metatexts, such as newspaper reports or individual case studies of the respective speeches (Chapter 5). Additional methodological information is included, where necessary, in the respective chapters. Unless otherwise indicated, all tables and charts in this study have been created by the author.

1.7 Chapter overview

This book is divided into six chapters. Chapters 1 and 6 serve as the introduction and conclusion to the study. The four chapters in between deal with the four main types of presidential intertextuality identified above: discursive and thematic intertextuality, hypertextuality, and allusions. Given the existing body of research on generic aspects of presidential discourse, architextuality will be dealt with more briefly as part of Chapter 2.

In this first, introductory chapter, the aim is to establish the study’s theoretical frame of reference, while simultaneously demonstrating the lack of research on presidential discourse within American cultural studies and describing the

methodological approach chosen. While focusing mainly on theories of intertextuality, the study's theoretical framework reflects its interdisciplinary nature and combines approaches from presidential studies, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.

Chapter 2 analyzes the outermost of the concentric circles of presidential intertextuality. Here, the focus is on identifying manifestations of uniform patterns of presidential language on the discursive and systemic levels as well as the pragmatic functions associated with them. Further consideration will be given to the occurrence of intertextuality on the level of text types, or genres. This type of generic intertextuality allows us to gauge the impact that specific text types and their inherent norms and characteristics have on presidential discourse in general.

Chapter 3 focuses on thematic intertextuality in the most prominent of American presidential text types, the inaugural address. Here, my main interest lies in identifying, describing, and analyzing patterns of recurrent content, indicating an intertextual relationship between and dependency among presidential speeches established through the topoi that they deal with. I expect to find in the speeches analyzed a relatively fixed set of stable and re-occurring topoi and myths. I further expect these themes to be reflective of the president's role within the framework of American civil religion.

Chapter 4 deals with the notion of hypertextuality, or structural intertextuality, to use Steyer's term. This type of intertextuality describes the fact that texts are interrelated through and influenced by their adherence to similar argumentative or narrative structures and the application of parallel strategies of thematic development. In particular, I will study the occurrence of what I call the "Us-vs.-Them hypotext." Many of the speeches analyzed here are crisis or war speeches, but we can also find a significant number of inaugural and State of the Union speeches that recur to this discursive template and its standardized form of creating images of selves and others.⁷

In Chapter 5, the focus will be on the most concrete and most tangible type of intertextuality: allusions. Following Hebel (1991), the term allusion is used to refer to a range of text-to-text references, including quotations and paraphrases. Both their usage and the main categories of presidential pre-texts involved will be explored.

7. A second American hypotext – the jeremiad – is discussed in a separate publication (see Austermühl 2014). While the Us-vs.-Them hypotext is primarily intercultural and mostly applied in foreign and security policy contexts, the jeremiad is an intracultural phenomenon and predominant in a national setting (e.g., in presidential campaign discourse).

In the concluding Chapter 6, I will present the main findings of my study, highlighting the intertextual nature of American presidential discourse and its different forms. Additional discussion will address the main functions of presidential intertextuality within the overall phenomenon of public presidential discourse. The main focus will be on the identity affirming power of presidential discourse, as well as the use of intertextual devices to support institutional and individual agendas.

Given the scope of the topic, there are, naturally, a number of aspects that could not be addressed in this study. First, as previously mentioned, two types of intertextuality forming part of Genette's taxonomy were excluded from the analysis since they are not a primary product of the presidency. These are paratextuality and metatextuality. Intermediality (see Rajewsky 2005) is another highly interesting type of intertextual relation that deserves separate scrutiny (see, for example, the role played by Kennedy's inaugural address in Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July*). Furthermore, no attempt is made to study what Fairclough refers to as "interdiscursivity" (1992, 124–136), i.e., instances of discourses from other disciplines entering the realm of presidential discourse.⁸ The use of metaphors in political discourse would also have been too large a topic for this book. Readers are directed to publications such as Nicholas Howe's *Metaphor in Contemporary American Political Discourse* (1988); Jonathan Charteris-Black's (2005) *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*; *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, edited by Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo (2008); and Kathleen Ahrens' "Examining Conceptual Metaphor Models Through Lexical Frequency Patterns: A Case Study of U.S. Presidential Speeches" (2011). Questions of the staging and performativity, which, while central to any mediated presidential speech, are of particular importance in inaugural State of the Union addresses, are also not included in this study. These topics are discussed in detail in Chilton (2004), Wodak (2011), and Charteris-Black (2013).

The central consideration in this study lies in the international dimension of presidential discourse. Hence, the speeches selected for analysis tend to have a stronger focus on foreign and security policy issues. Consequently, domestically

8. Nevertheless, interdiscursivity is often visible in presidential discourse. Medical discourse, for example, including diagnostic and therapeutic jargon, is rather typical for economic and social policy speeches. See, for example, Johannessen's analysis of Reagan's first inaugural address (1986) and Mio's "Metaphor and Politics" (1997).

oriented speeches, e.g., on economic and social matters or campaign discourse, are underrepresented.⁹

Speechwriting, finally, is a topic that cannot be dealt with in this study either. There were two main reasons for this decision (aside from natural time and space constraints): First, for the purpose of this study, the institution of the presidency, and not individual office holders, is considered as the author of the speeches analyzed. In this context, and contrary to the views expressed in some intertextual approaches, it must also be emphasized that authorship does play an important role in this study. Here, I follow Susan Stanford Friedman, who, drawing on Nancy K. Miller's feminist theory of arachnology (1986), points out that "where Barthes's text is an infinite web seemingly spinning itself, Miller insists on reintroducing the spider – as author, as subject, as agent, as gendered body, as producer of the text" (1991, 158). She asserts, quite rightly in my mind: "We must separate the concept of intertextuality from the death of the author" (159). Second, presidential speechwriting has been discussed in a number of comprehensive studies, most prominently in *Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond*, edited by Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst (2003), and in Robert Schlesinger's 2008 *White House Ghosts: Presidents and their Speechwriters*.¹⁰ Readers will find these studies highly insightful.

9. See, however, Austerlühl (2014). For more on these speech topics in the discourse of American presidents, see, for example, Wood (2007) as well as Aune and Rigsby (2005). For presidential campaign discourse, see Kendall (1995) and Benoit (2007).

10. See also Vaughn and Villalobo's (2006) study of staff influences on presidential speech-making.

CHAPTER 2

“The voice of the nation”

The democratization of American presidential discourse

John F. Kennedy took the oath of office of President of the United States on one of the coldest days Washington had seen in decades. The night before the inauguration, a blizzard had buried the nation's capital under several inches of snow, and on the day of the inauguration, on January 21, 1961, the square atop Capitol Hill connecting the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, and the Capitol itself, on the East Steps of which the inauguration was to take place, was covered by a shiny white blanket of snow. Like a mirror it reflected the bright winter sun, making it impossible for Robert Frost to read a new poem, entitled “Dedication,” that he had written just the night before in honor of his fellow New Englander. Not even Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson's famous effort to shield Frost's eyes from the blinding sun with his top hat could remedy the situation. In the end, the 86-year-old Frost had to improvise by reciting from memory his well-known poem, “The Gift Outright.”

Russell Baker, a reporter for the *New York Times* covering the inauguration, in reference to the extreme temperatures, described “a Siberian wind knifing down Pennsylvania Avenue ... [that] turned majorette's legs blue, froze baton twirlers' fingers and drove beauty queens to flannels and overcoats” (quoted in Dallek 2003, 322). The young president, however, took off his coat and hat, and endured the three-and-a-half-hour-long inauguration ceremony seemingly unfazed by the bitter cold. Kennedy's defiance of and apparent immunity to the elements was a calculated demonstration of strength by a chronically sick president whose physical feebleness and political inexperience were being scrutinized by his political opponents both at home and abroad. Nikita Khrushchev, for example, considered the president “too intelligent and too weak” (ibid., 407). Closer to home, Lyndon B. Johnson, before he became Kennedy's Vice President and when he was still the powerful majority leader of the Senate, had even mocked the junior senator from Massachusetts by asking, “Sickly, sickly, yaller, yaller, how can this guy be president?” (quoted in Matthews 2001, 295).

As Robert Dallek writes in his biography of John F. Kennedy, *An Unfinished Life*, “[n]othing worried Kennedy more about his appearance than the effects of

the cortisone that he took to control his Addison's disease. He was reluctant to take his pills, which made him look puffy faced and overweight" (2003, 322). On the day of the inauguration, however, Kennedy's physical appearance could not have been in stronger contradiction to the many references to his poor health. Kennedy had spent the weeks before the inauguration in Florida and "despite only four hours of sleep following an inaugural concert gala the previous night" (*ibid.*) he looked tanned and rested. On Inauguration Day, dressed in just a suit jacket and wearing neither hat nor gloves, Kennedy, at 43 the youngest president-elect in the history of the office, looked younger and more vigorous than ever.¹¹

The impression that Kennedy's appearance left on the audience was exactly what he had hoped for: "He's one of the handsomest men in American political life," wrote a female Washington columnist, who compared Kennedy to a Hemingway hero (*ibid.*). She continued, "[H]e has conquered serious illness. He is as graceful as a greyhound and can be as beguiling as a sunny day" (*ibid.*). Kennedy's assistant Evelyn Lincoln summed up the impression that Americans had of their new president as follows: "He looks like such a new, fresh man, someone in whom we could have confidence" (*ibid.*). The election of Kennedy symbolized a generational changing of the guard, and the physical contrast between Kennedy and his predecessor Eisenhower was striking, as Thurston Clarke writes: "Kennedy was young and deeply tanned, whereas President Eisenhower was bald and blinking" (2004, 5).¹²

Yet his visual appearance was not the only demonstration of Kennedy's vigor on Inauguration Day. The most forceful manifestation of his fitness to serve and to lead was yet to come. Kennedy, who during his days in the Senate and over the course of the presidential campaign had gained a reputation as a gifted speaker, would very much rely on the inaugural address itself, his first public act as president, to dispel any lingering doubts about his ability to lead the nation. Kennedy – and, with him, his speech writer Theodore Sorensen – had started working on the inaugural address immediately after the November election, and Kennedy knew that it would provide an opportunity not only to celebrate the end of the Eisenhower era and the beginning of the reign of a new generation of

11. Underneath his suit Kennedy was actually wearing long underwear, "so that on this cold day he could shed his overcoat and appear youthful and vigorous" (Clarke 2004, 6). In this context, see Wodak (2011) on the notion of performance in political discourse.

12. A picture taken by a UPI journalist during Kennedy's speech symbolizes the generational change: While Kennedy is delivering his speech in jacket and tie – with his breath clearly visible in the cold air – Eisenhower is observing his successor, dressed in a heavy overcoat and scarf, with his hands warm in his coat sleeves (<http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2005/05/09/books/kennedy184.jpg>).

Americans, but also to present himself to the American people and the history books as a strong and self-confident leader. In the inaugural address, the passage that can best be seen as the rhetorical counterpart to Kennedy's airy dress comes almost in the middle of this short, powerful speech:

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility – I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it – and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

("Inaugural Address" 2–3)

This personal and emotional passage represents the speech's climactic moment. It follows directly upon the description of the life-threatening danger that the Soviet Union represents for Kennedy's America and for the rest of the free world. Americans are living, according to Kennedy, in an "hour of maximum danger." Without stating the exact nature of the threat to the nation's security, Kennedy employs the inaugural speech to demonstrate to his nation and to the entire world that he is not only ready but indeed looking forward to being America's leader in these troubled times. And just as the president's appearance defies the wintry weather in America's capital, so does he confront the freezing temperatures of the geopolitical world by saying – actually almost shouting, as the speech's recording reveals – "I do not shrink from this possibility. I welcome it" (2). The oath-like nature of this statement and the emotional and highly personalized way in which Kennedy expresses it symbolize his acceptance of the time-tested role of America's president-as-hero.

2.1 Defining America's discursive space

In the passage from Kennedy's inaugural address quoted above, the anaphoric repetition of the personal pronoun "I" focuses the spotlight on the presidential persona as the main actor, not only in the inauguration drama, but also in the American political system in general. Its effect is further enhanced by the fact that the personal pronoun "I" is rarely found in inaugural addresses (see below). In addition, Kennedy's speech also exemplifies how American presidents – by combining the use of the presidential "I" with an embrace of the national "we" – establish a bond between themselves and the people: "I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and

all who serve it – and the glow from that fire can truly light the world” (3). By using the collective pronouns “we” and “us” in close proximity to the individual “I,” Kennedy makes the American people his allies in the defense of freedom (while at the same time excluding, or at least marginalizing, Congress and other national actors), thus, as we will later see in greater detail, establishing a rhetorical coalition that is central to the power of the modern presidency.

The study of the use of pronouns is a central part of discourse analysis. As Fairclough says, “language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs” (1993, 134). In the case of presidential discourse, pronouns play a central role in the unification or polarization of the audience (see also Dörner 1993; as well as King and Anderson 1971). The importance of these lexical elements lies in the fact that they are widely used by discursive agents to establish lasting patterns of representation of the self and the other. In presidential discourse pronouns play a key role in the president’s attempt “to identify himself as one of the public in the speech” (Teten 2003, 333), while at the same time excluding the constitutional competitors, above all Congress, from this politically powerful covenant. If “presidents develop a symbolic identification between themselves and the nation” (Ragsdale 1987, 705), then an analysis of pronominal usage and distribution should shed light on exactly how this identification is achieved in presidential discourse.

These initial examples of pronominal usage, taken from one of the most memorable examples of American political oratory, illustrate the pragmatic power of the first person singular in constructing the image of a strong, reliable leader.¹³ Yet despite its obvious functional importance, historically speaking, presidential self-references in the form of personal pronouns actually seem to be disappearing from inaugural addresses, as Figure 5 indicates.

While, as these diachronic trends show, the presidential “I” and other forms of self-reference, such as “me,” “my,” and “myself,” are diminishing in frequency, the use of the collective “we” (including “us,” “our,” and “ourselves”) has grown steadily ever since Washington’s first inaugural address. These initial observations lead to general questions about the use of and the relationship between the singular and plural forms of the first person. Is not the slow disappearance of the “I” in presidential inaugural addresses contrary to the idea of the modern American presidency, which sees the president as the dominant actor in the American political system, the leader of the American empire, and the nation’s sole representative? If America

13. For in-depth analyses of the relationship between presidential discourse and leadership, see, for example, Dorsey (2002), *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership*; Hargrove (1998), *The President as Leader*; Hart (1989), *The Sound of Leadership*; or Smith and Smith (1994), *The White House Speaks*.

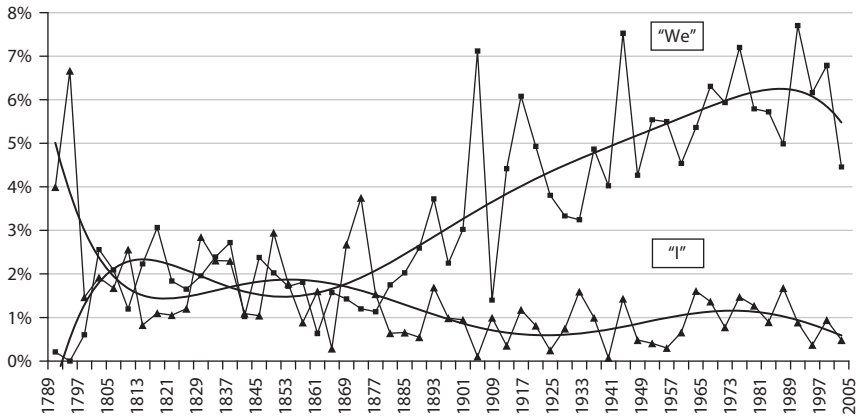


Figure 5. Percentage of "I" and "we" references in inaugural addresses, by year¹⁴

is becoming more powerful in the world and the American president is becoming more powerful in the political system of the United States, why is this not reflected in a higher degree of self-reference? Is the representation of the collective as the main American actor in presidential speeches not leading to the demise of the leading role of the president in political discourse and hence in discursive politics? Could it not be argued, then, that the most powerful political figure in the most powerful nation in the world is hiding behind a collective, abstract "we"?

As discussed in the previous chapter, the notion of the rhetorical presidency critically refers to a modified American political system in which the discursive strategies of presidents have altered and even reversed the power balance between the branches of government envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. With regard to the articles of the Constitution, presidential strategies of "going public" (Kernell 1997) have thus moved Article II into the center of the American political system. If, as Tulis claims, this power shift between Congress and the president has been caused by the public discourse of the chief executive, through which a special relationship has been established between the president and the people, then we would expect not only an increase in the use of the collective "we" (representing the constitutional role of head of state) but also an increase in the use of the presidential "I" (stressing the new role as chief legislator). As shown above, however, this does not seem to be the case, at least not in inaugural speeches.

14. Unless otherwise indicated, all charts and tables in this and subsequent chapters have been generated by the author for the specific purpose of this study. The focus is on descriptive statistics.

As Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe point out, “in terms of identity construction and interpersonal relations, the use of pronouns is revealing” (2006, 115). In the following, I therefore propose to enhance the initial inquiry into the use of pronouns in presidential discourse and to place it within the context of the democratization and popularization of American political discourse in general, and American presidential discourse in particular. In doing so, I am especially interested in how presidents present themselves to the American public, how they present other, perhaps competing actors, like Congress, and how they use the auto- and hetero-images created through these representations to construct a unique presidential identity in which institutional and cultural dimensions of the presidency merge.

Following my earlier assumptions regarding presidential intertextuality, I expect to find stable patterns of language use – above all on a syntactical and pronominal level – and image creation across historical, partisan, and personal lines. These patterns are consequences of discursive strategies and represent the widest circle of presidential intertextuality.

The analysis of the semantic relations between the American people and their only directly elected national candidate, between the collective “we” and the individual “I,” is especially important in the context of the modern media democracy, in particular when it comes to the management of participants in social discourse. The manifold opportunities for going public, i.e., for circumventing congressional debate by opening up a direct channel between the president and the people, greatly enhance the American president’s possibilities for leadership. It solidifies the president’s image as the lone leader of the nation and inescapably links the definition of that nation with the presidential office. Thus, the popularization of the discourse of American presidents is directly related to the iconization of the office.¹⁵ The semantic give-and-take between the “we” and the “I” that we saw in Kennedy’s inaugural, and the bonding between the President and the nation (while ignoring Congress and Constitution alike), represent a forceful confirmation of Wilson’s statement that “there’s but one national voice, and that is the voice of the president” (quoted in Pestritto 2005, 192).

The dialectical, yet lopsided relationship between the president and the people reflects a discursive union between these two dominant national agents and often leads to an equating of the office with the nation. The nature of this symbolic parity is the result of a historical development, and the semantic roles present in presidential discourse need to be seen within this diachronic framework. The

15. For an overview of the presidential hero image, see Lawrence and Jewett’s (2002) *The Myth of the American Superhero*, in particular Chapter 7, entitled “Superheroic Presidents Redeem the Nation”).

historical development of presidential discourse is characterized by a redistribution of America's public "discursive space" (Culler 1981, 38) and the reduction and, finally, removal of the distance between America's presidents and its people. This process, which can be described as the democratization or popularization of presidential discourse, is accompanied and accelerated by democratic and political as well as by strategic and technical factors, such as the decline of political parties, the expansion of franchise, the sophistication of campaign strategies, and technological advances in transportation and communication.¹⁶

2.1.1 Reducing the distance

In the following section, I will look at general patterns of presidential language use at a systemic level, that is, I will be trying to identify elements of systemic or discursive intertextuality. In doing so, I am particularly interested in specific linguistic phenomena such as text, sentence and word lengths, as well as the readability levels of presidential speeches, as expressed through so-called type-token ratios and the Flesch Reading Ease Index, as well as the use of the active and passive voice. Furthermore, one particular aspect that will be analyzed is the role played by personal pronouns in providing a specific picture of social interaction within the American political system. We will see how general linguistic trends merge with a specific use of pronouns to promote the democratization and popularization of presidential discourse. The discursive strategies employed by American presidents to foster this democratization and to strengthen the office of the president by means of a communion with the American people have shown remarkable stability and continuity since at least the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Within my model of presidential intertextuality, I consider that the discursive strategies employed by American presidents represent a persistent intertextual link between their particular speeches. I situate this type of intertextuality at the systemic level of general language use.

I will start by charting the democratization of presidential speeches as a general historical trend and show its consolidation in the twentieth century. I will then analyze the use of personal pronouns, specifically the first person singular and plural, in major presidential speeches. In doing so, I will first look at the occurrence of "I" and "we" in inaugural and State of the Union addresses from 1789

16. For a history of the American party system, see, for example, Hofstadter (1969), Bibby and Maisel (2002), and Disch (2002). For a detailed description of the development of presidential campaigns, see Melder (1992) as well Shade, Campbell, and Coenen (2002). The influence of various types of technology on presidential communication is described in Warren (1968), Swanson and Mancini' (1996), and Stempel (2003).

to 2008. Based on this diachronic study, I will then focus on the post-World War II era, comparing the use of personal pronouns across a broader spectrum of more contemporary presidential text types. The latter will not only include inaugurals and State of the Union addresses but will also take into account major domestic and economic policy speeches, foreign and security policy speeches, as well as nomination acceptance speeches. This approach will allow for a comparison of campaign (pre-presidential) and governing (presidential) discourse styles and to identify differences in epideictic and deliberative rhetoric commonly associated with ceremonial and policy-oriented speeches, respectively. Furthermore, analyzing the use of personal pronouns across a broader range of presidential text types in the light of varying congressional majorities will allow us to see the influence that partisan politics have (or do not have) on specific aspects of presidential discourse. Finally, comparing pre-presidential and presidential speeches will enable us to see differences and similarities in the campaign and governing phases of the presidency, allowing us not only to identify the core discursive ingredients of the “permanent campaign” (see Blumenthal 1982) but also to demonstrate the shift in the role of the presidential speaker from “prophet to priest” (see Marty 1974).

Following the quantitative comparative analysis of the use of pronouns, I will take a closer look at the main actors in presidential speeches and their representation by the presidential speaker. In doing so, I will differentiate between subjects and agents, since I view these as belonging to different systems of interpretation, one being a grammatical category, the other a dramatic one. I believe that this perspective and the separation of the grammatical subject from the dramatic agent, combined with a qualitative analysis of the different groups represented by the personal pronoun “we,” will lead to a reassessment of Barbara Hinckley’s statement that “the main character and the drama of American government is the collective ‘we’” (1990, 40). We will see that beyond the grammatical and syntactical surface, the “we” is considerably less dominant and less monolithic than is sometimes suggested, while the “I” is not as invisible as it might appear at first glance.

In their speeches, American presidents enter numerous flexible coalitions with at least three types of “we,” establish clear hierarchical patterns in the relationship with these other actors, and, more often than not, become the focal point of their own discursive action. This dominant position of the president within the American discourse system becomes even more apparent when studying stable patterns of the representation of Congress in presidential discourse and when contrasting the concordances typically found in association with the legislative branch with those found in combination with the president.

Seen within a dramatic, narrative framework, the position of the president as the only active agent gains even more strength. This active and energetic presidential image, which is further supported by the disappearance of the passive

voice in presidential discourse, develops into a heroic one when the president confronts his domestic or international opponents, thus contributing to his exceptional status as the nation's leader. This idea of the heroic presidency is further cultivated in presidential discourse by the infusion of negatively charged "devil terms" (see Section 2.3.3), such as "threat," "danger," or "terror," aimed at creating an "I"-friendly context of fear and insecurity, which reduces the collective "we" to passive petitioners and enables the president, as commander-in-chief, to assume his canonical role as the nation's defender, thereby, at least temporarily, augmenting the power and independence of the presidential office.

2.1.2 Popularizing public discourse

The nature of the semantic roles in presidential discourse, which were briefly exemplified earlier with regard to Kennedy's inaugural, and the changes that they have undergone need to be seen in the larger historical context of the democratization of the presidential office. This popularization of presidential discourse is both characterized and fuelled by democratic-political and strategic-technical factors alike. Linguistically, the redistribution of the American discursive space is illustrated by reduced text, sentence, and word lengths, decreasing type-token ratios, decreasing degrees of syntactical complexity, and increasing levels of readability. These statistical trends demonstrate both the standardization and simplification of presidential discourse, making presidential speeches more accessible and reproducible. The following charts show these general trends for presidential inaugural addresses and State of the Union addresses dating back to 1789.

As Figure 6 indicates, the total lengths of presidential inaugural addresses diminish over the course of the period studied, with the average length decreasing from about 3,000 words per speech in the nineteenth century to slightly fewer than 2,000 words in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Looking at the left- and right-hand sides of the graph, we can also see that the average lengths of post-World War II speeches closely resemble those of speeches in the early Republic from Washington to Monroe, the exceptions being the two shortest speeches in American inaugural history, Washington's second (135 words) and Franklin D. Roosevelt's fourth (558 words).¹⁷

This same trend towards shorter speeches, albeit with larger deviations, can be seen in State of the Union addresses. Known until the twentieth century as the

17. The record for longest inaugural address (8,841 words) belongs to William H. Harrison (1841). Harrison spoke for 90 minutes in bitterly cold rain. One month later he died of pneumonia.

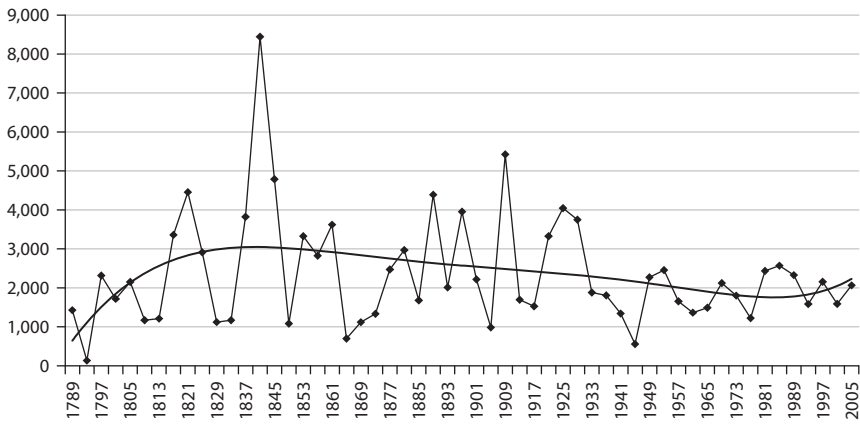


Figure 6. Inaugural address lengths (in words), by year

Annual Message to Congress, the State of the Union address is generally a longer speech, or rather document, since more often than not it has been delivered, quite literally, to Congress as a written document. The written form of the State of the Union addresses greatly contributed to the expansion of their lengths. The tradition of not delivering the annual message in person, as prescribed in the Constitution, was established by Thomas Jefferson, who compared the act of presenting the speech to the behavior of a king or emperor, calling it “an English habit, tending to familiarize the public with monarchical ideas” (quoted in Healy 2008, 36).¹⁸

More than a century after Jefferson’s decision, Wilson broke with this de-facto ban on all personal appearances by presidents before Congress.¹⁹ In April 1913, the newly elected President Wilson convened both houses of the American Congress in a special session in order to urge the members to adopt his reform proposals for tariff barriers,²⁰ making him the first president in 112 years to personally address the U.S. Congress. By the time Wilson delivered his first annual message in December 1913, he had addressed two more special sessions of Congress. It is

18. While many scholars support the claim that Jefferson was opposed to delivering a speech that to him was an “aristocratic imitation of the British monarch’s speech from the throne” (Kolakowski and Neale 2006), others have pointed out that his decision to deliver a written message instead of following the examples set by Washington and Adams was because of his poor rhetorical skills (see, for example, Bernstein 2003, 89).

19. Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi criticized Wilson’s decision to break with the Jeffersonian tradition, saying, “I regret this cheap and tawdry imitation of English royalty” (quoted in Healy 2008, 63).

20. His proposals would later become the Underwood-Simmons Act, which achieved the most significant reductions in tariff rates since the Civil War.

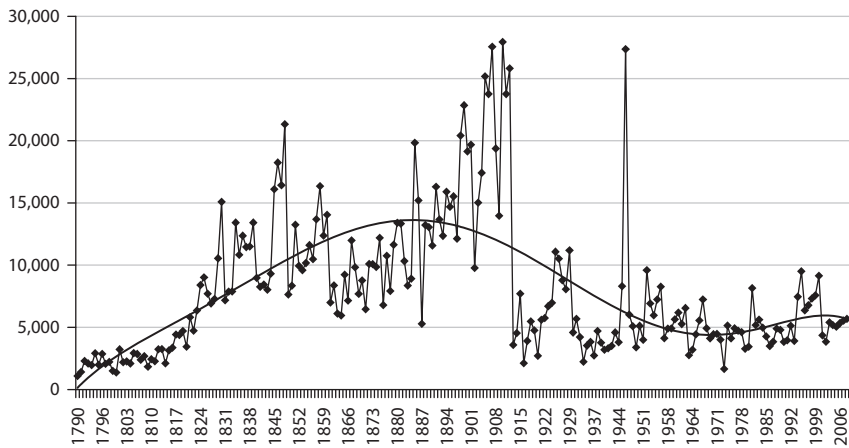


Figure 7. State of the Union speech lengths (in words), by year

indicative of the political dimension of presidential discourse that the speech that introduced the rhetorical presidency was a policy speech strongly influenced by the discourse of Wilson's New Freedom presidential election campaign.

With the decision to promote his tariff reform plans in person before the legislature, and to continue this strategy in his first annual message, Wilson established a tradition of going public that has become part and parcel of American politics. The move from written to oral delivery naturally also influenced the formal nature of the State of the Union address, most notably with regard to the volume of the message (see Figure 7). Prior to Wilson's presidency, the average length of the State of the Union address was 9,886 words. After (and including) Wilson, this number decreased to 5,534 words. The exception here is Truman's 1946 message (27,355 words), which was, however, not delivered in person but sent to Congress in written form.

The trend toward less complex discursive structures observed on the textual level can also be found on the syntactic level. Overall, the average sentence length in inaugural addresses has decreased from more than 60 words in the late eighteenth century to fewer than 20 words in the late twentieth century.

Comparing sentence lengths before and after 1900, we see that inaugural addresses from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries comprise on average 38 words per sentence, while their counterparts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries contain an average of 22 words per sentence. With more than 60 words per sentence, the first two presidents, Washington and John Adams used the most long-winded sentences, while, on average, the Texans Johnson and George W. Bush used the shortest sentences in inaugural history.

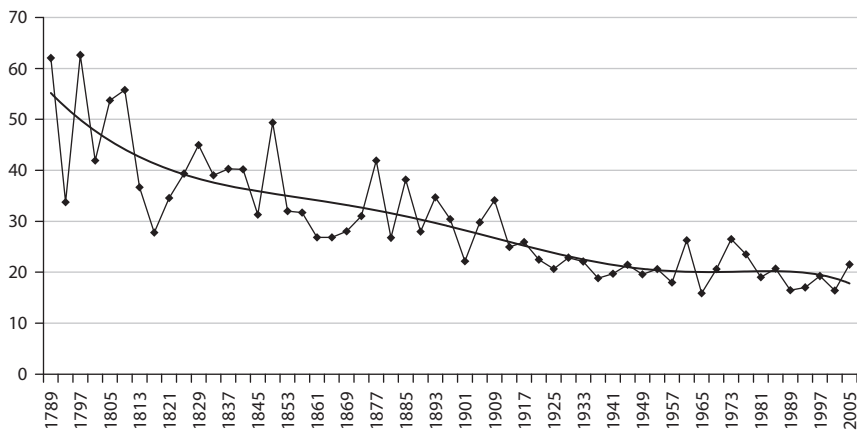


Figure 8. Average sentence lengths (in words) in inaugural addresses, by year

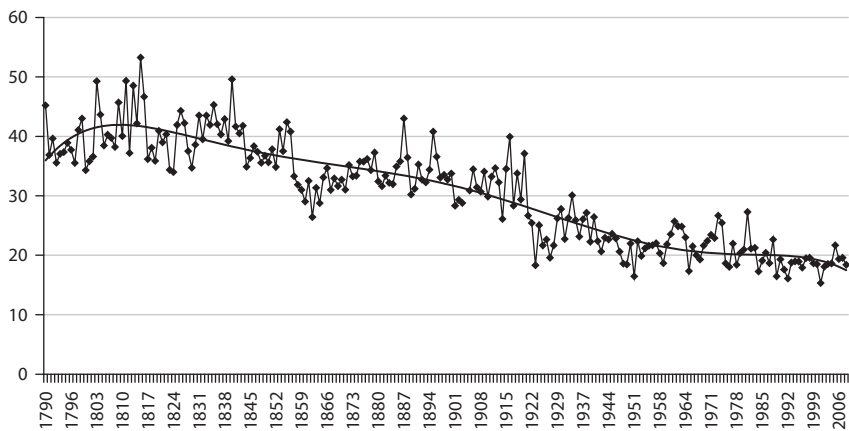


Figure 9. Average sentence lengths (in words) in State of the Union speeches, by year

A steady decrease in average sentence lengths can also be found in State of the Union addresses. Here, average word-per-sentence values range between 51 (Monroe’s second) and 18 (Truman). Here again, a comparison of the pre- and post-1900 eras illustrates the magnitude of the change. While sentences had an average length of 37.5 words in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that number dropped to 23.6 words in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Yet another indicator of the simplification of presidential discourse can be found when speeches are analyzed on a lexical level. Looking at the type-token ratio (TTR) of State of the Union addresses, we can see that this value, which signals the lexical variety (or lack thereof) of a given text, continually decreases over

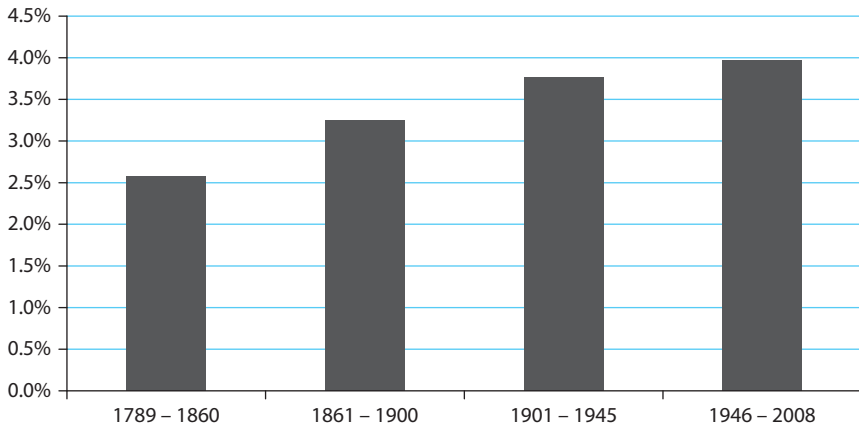


Figure 10. Type-token ratios (in percent) in State of the Union speeches, by historical period

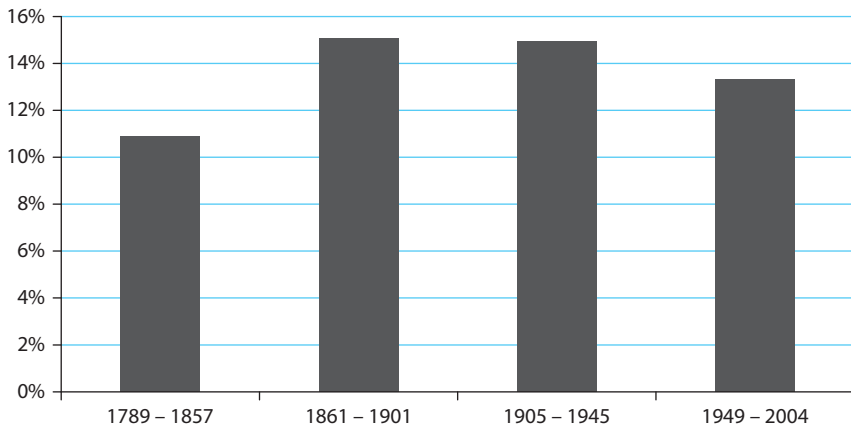


Figure 11. Type-token ratios (in percent) in inaugural addresses, by historical period

time. The type-token ratio relates the individual words, or types, of a text to the number of times (tokens) that each type is used in the text. The lower the type-token ratio of a text, the more reduced the vocabulary. By contrast, a high TTR indicates greater lexical variety. TTRs, however, do tend to increase when text lengths decrease. Thus, the trend to shorter State of the Union addresses, and to shorter presidential speeches in general, will by itself influence the TTRs.

The increase in the type-token ratios of twentieth and twenty-first century State of the Union addresses is not, however, reflected in inaugural addresses, as inaugural addresses are generally considerably shorter than State of the Union

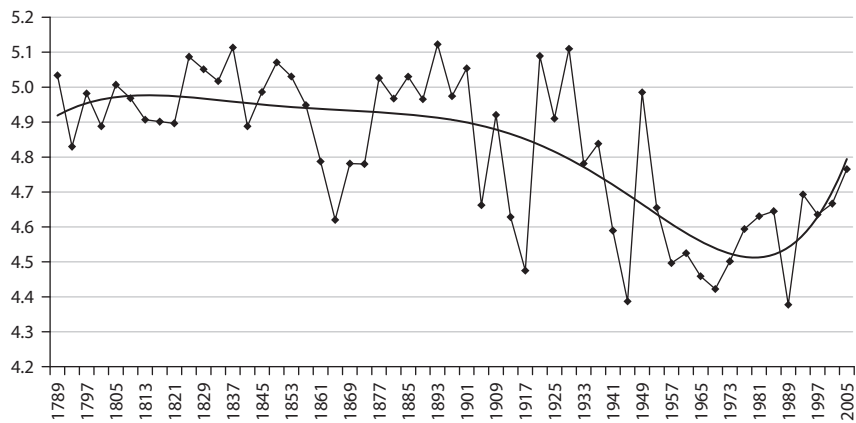


Figure 12. Average number of characters per word in inaugural addresses, by year

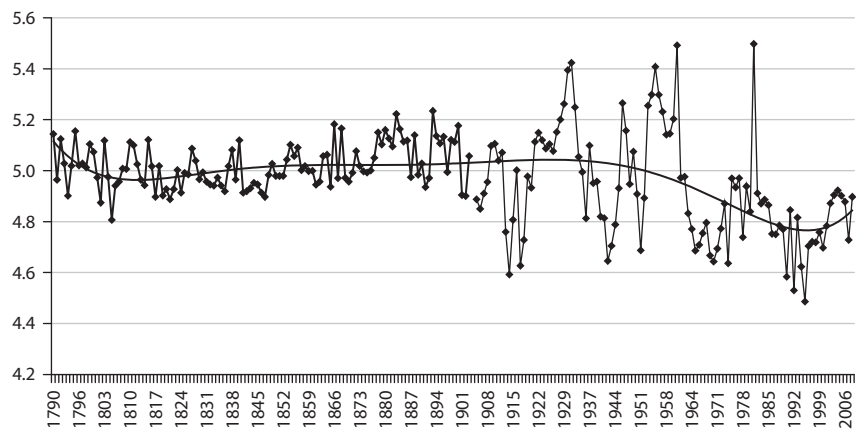


Figure 13. Average number of characters per word in State of the Union speeches, by year

messages. Thus, they usually show a higher TTR, which does not necessarily reflect a higher degree of lexical variety.

A second trend with regard to vocabulary in presidential speeches consists of the use of ever-shorter words. While during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the typical word length was between 4.8 and 5.2 characters per word, this value has dropped to an average of 4.6 characters per word for the inaugurals after World War II. The importance and deliberativeness of this is illustrated by David Ryfe’s observation that in the preparation of his fireside chats, Franklin D. Roosevelt “read each draft, paying careful attention to word length and the number of S’s (because of a missing tooth)” (1999, 90).

For State of the Union addresses, however, this historical trend is less significant. Here, word lengths averaged 5.0 characters per word in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and 4.9 characters per word in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Elvin Lim, in his study of the rhetorical patterns of State of the Union addresses, points out another indicator of the popularization of presidential discourse, noting an "intensified de-intellectualization of American presidential rhetoric" (2002, 333).²¹ Citing a decrease in references to cognitive processes (such as "analysis" or "inference") and to legal and judicial terms (e.g., "official" or "evidence"), the use of less abstract language, and an increase in the use of casual or slang expressions, Lim concludes "that recent developments in the postwar period (such as television and the increased usage of direct primaries) have fostered a heightened reverence of the judgment, and rhetoric of the common man" (ibid.).²²

The ability to speak the language of the common people is especially important in campaign settings and other, less formal circumstances like town hall meetings.²³ In these meetings, as in Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats," the speaker's goal is to create an atmosphere of intimacy between himself and the audience, an attempt that is characterized by a conversational and personal style.²⁴

The changes in presidential discourse on the textual, syntactical, and lexical levels described above all indicate a simplification of the presidential discourse system. A look at the readability scores of inaugural and State of the Union addresses confirms this observation. The readability of presidential discourse as expressed in the Flesch Reading Ease (FRE) Index increases continuously throughout the course of American political history (Flesch 1946, 149).

Comparing pre- and post-1900 figures shows significant changes in readability levels of presidential discourse. Inaugural addresses from 1789 to 1897 have an average FRE of 35 (30 for State of the Union addresses), while nineteenth and twentieth century inaugurals have an FRE score of 54 (46 for State of the Union

21. For a more in-depth discussion of this topic, see Hofstadter's (1963) *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* and Lim's (2008) *The Anti-intellectual Presidency*.

22. The importance of the ability to project this common-man image in presidential campaigns is discussed in detail in Austerlühl (2002).

23. The importance of this type of presidential campaigning is most visible in the fact that, starting in 1992, one of the televised presidential debates is implemented in a "town hall format," where candidates respond to questions put by members of the studio audience rather than those of a moderator.

24. For an in-depth description of the history of the fireside chats and Roosevelt's discursive strategies, see Buhite and Levy's (1992) *FDR's Fireside Chats*.

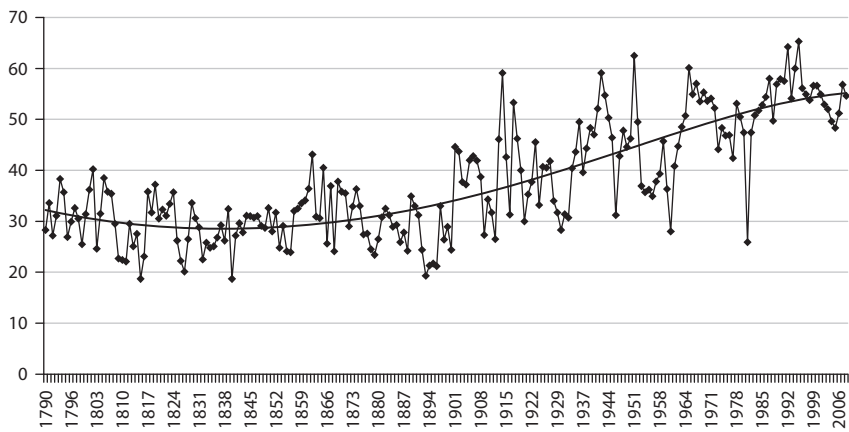


Figure 14. Flesch reading ease index of inaugural addresses, by year

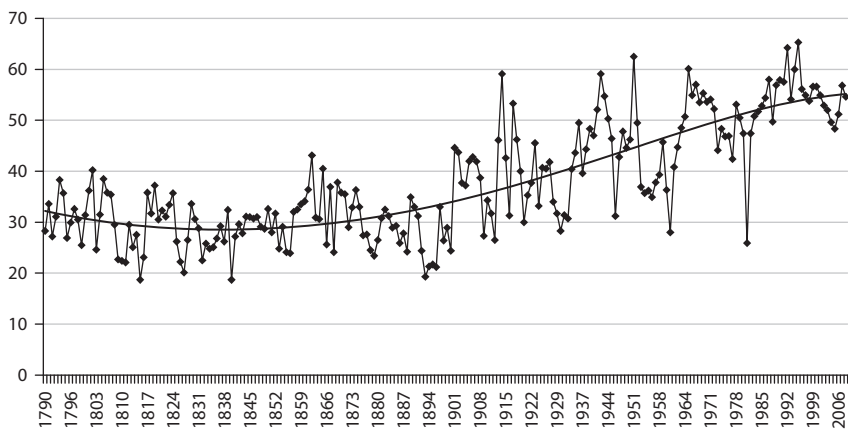


Figure 15. Flesch reading ease index of State of the Union speeches, by year

addresses). This trend towards greater readability of presidential speeches is quite similar to the expansion of the eligible electorate.²⁵

25. In the early Republic, only land-owning white men had voting rights. By 1850, voting rights had been extended to virtually all white males. Over the course of the next 120 years, three constitutional amendments greatly enhanced the electorate. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment provided for the enfranchisement of black males. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment extended voting rights to women. Finally, in 1971, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment lowered the voting age to 18 in all American elections.

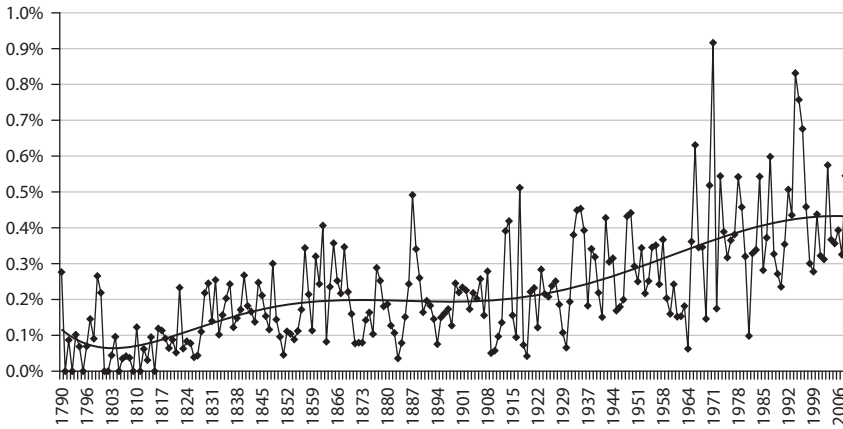


Figure 16. Percentage of “people” references in State of the Union speeches, by year

The democratization of presidential discourse is symbolized by references to the word “democracy” itself. In State of the Union addresses, the word “democracy” appears a total of 176 times. Of these, 174 occurrences are from twentieth and twenty-first century speeches, the majority of them (117) from the period after the end of the Second World War. From 1790 to 1899, only Franklin Pierce (1852) and Andrew Johnson (1865) referred explicitly to this founding principle of the American republic. The analysis of inaugural speeches provides a similar picture. Until 1897, “democracy” appears only five times. From 1901 to 2004, it is referred to 51 times.

The populist trend in presidential discourse is further illustrated by a growing number of references to “the people.” As Figure 16 indicates, this trend is most visible in State of the Union addresses. A major part of the references to “the people” comes as part of quotational allusions to the preamble to the U.S. Constitution (“We the People”) (see Section 5.2).

2.2 The “I” in presidency – Personal pronouns in presidential discourse

The democratization of presidential discourse and the growing importance that the people (and the president as their representative) gain in the discourse of modern presidents is accompanied and symbolized by a significant increase in the use of the collective pronoun “we,” while, as we have seen with regard to inaugural addresses, the individual pronoun “I,” representing the presidential persona, seems to be losing discursive ground.

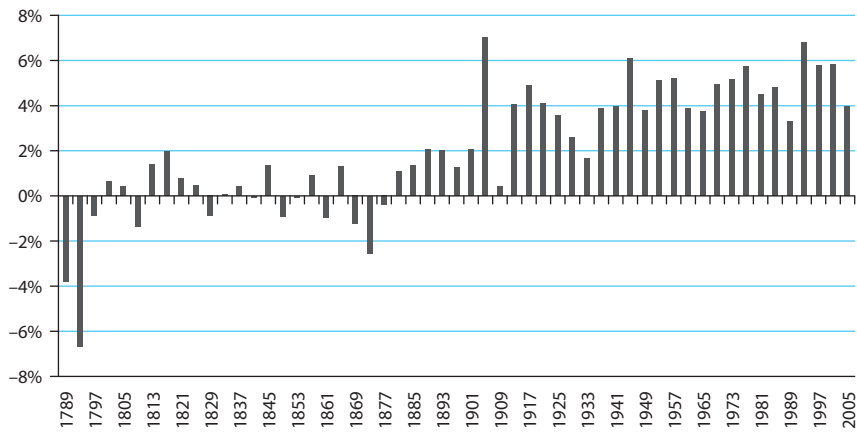


Figure 17. “I” vs. “we” percentage balances in inaugural addresses, by year

The percentage of occurrences of the pronoun “I” (including “me,” “my,” and “myself”) as a part of the total word count of inaugural addresses has continually decreased over the 200-year history of this particular presidential speech genre. At the same time, occurrences of the collective “we” (and variations) are increasing. While the decrease in the use of “I” is a slow and steady development, the occurrences of “we” have dramatically increased with the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, which again points to their time in office as the great divide in American presidential discourse.

Figure 17 shows the balances between the “I” and “we” percentages present in inaugural speeches, indicating the dominance of collective references in twentieth century presidential discourse. These data also illustrate the important role that Theodore Roosevelt played in the development of the rhetorical presidency.

It is important to note that the increase in the collective “we” and the decrease in the individual “I” do not constitute a zero-sum game and are not at all proportionally related. While the use of “I” has decreased by a total of 0.6 percent over the course of two centuries, the occurrences of “we” have increased by 600 percent during the same period. A comparison of the data from inaugural addresses with that of State of the Union addresses confirms the overall increase in the use of “we,” although the trend in the usage of “I” presents a different picture.

The data again show the watershed that the Roosevelt and Wilson presidencies represent, yet they also indicate, probably due to the Whig interpretation of the presidency by Wilson’s successors, that the trends in the use of the collective “we” do not become permanent until the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

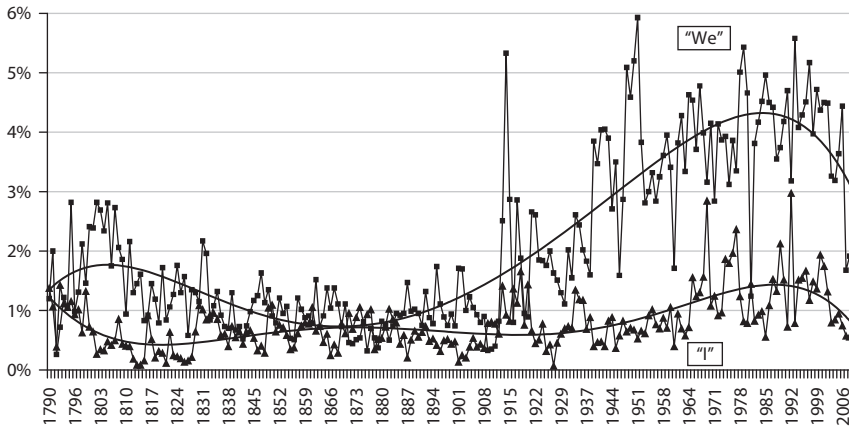


Figure 18. Percentage of "I" and "we" references in State of the Union speeches, by year

As shown in Figure 18, the use of the personal pronoun "I" in State of the Union addresses overall is not decreasing, as it is in the case in inaugural addresses. Given the fact that State of the Union addresses contain elements of both celebrative and deliberative rhetoric, this seems to indicate a higher degree of personal involvement by the president when speeches become more policy-oriented. State of the Union addresses are important presidential legislative tools and, in general, tend to be more subject matter-oriented than inaugural addresses, often-times taking on the form of a presidential report of previous achievements and an agenda, or "laundry list," of the administration's future plans. Here, the presence of the presidential "I," demonstrating the personal involvement of the Legislator-in-Chief, is apparently considered much more expedient than on more festive occasions. This claim is supported by the fact that the State of the Union addresses not following the trend described above – i.e., speeches that show a "we"-"I" ratio similar to that of inaugural addresses – were all delivered in times of war and were thus dominated by an external threat to the American nation. This is most visible in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 speech, which became known as the Four Freedoms speech, Truman's 1951 speech during the Korean War, and George H. W. Bush's 1991 speech shortly after the beginning of the first Gulf War.

Given the fact that the State of the Union address is clearly more partisan than the inaugural address and that, as a presidential duty prescribed in the Constitution, it is also symbolic of the systemic tensions between the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government, we can also deduce that the higher degrees of presidential self-reference in State of the Union addresses can be seen as an attempt at asserting the power of the presidency, both in historical/constitutional

and in contemporary/political terms.²⁶ In Section 2.4, I will discuss how the constitutional and partisan dimensions of presidential speechmaking influence the creation of images of the president and other government representatives.

2.2.1 Text types, congressional majorities, and the use of pronouns

In the following, I intend to monitor the distribution of the “I” and “we” pronouns in presidential discourse, taking into consideration usage variations according to historical eras, text types, and domestic political power balances. To do so, I will first chart the occurrences of “I” and “we” in inaugural and State of the Union addresses for four historical periods. I will then concentrate on the postwar era, while at the same time enhancing our corpus by adding post-World War II speeches on domestic and economic policy as well as speeches covering foreign and security policy.

Categorizing the data gained in the analysis of presidential inaugural and State of the Union addresses according to central periods of American history confirms that the discourse of the American collective initiates during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the presidential “I” dominates the national “we” in the timeframe from the birth of the republic to the presidency of McKinley, we see quite a different situation in the twentieth century. This change is especially prominent in inaugural addresses (see Figure 19).

Looking at State of the Union addresses, we can observe a trend similar to that seen in inaugural addresses. The distance between the “I” and the “we,” however, is not as pronounced as in inaugural speeches. We also see that presidential self-references are significantly more frequent in post-World War II speeches. This seems to indicate a relationship between America’s growing global power and the growing assertiveness (see Lim 2002, 335–338) of the nation’s main international representative, a development also reflected in the transformation of the presidency and

26. The constitutional dimension of the State of the Union address is clearly visible in the speech’s setting and procedure. The State of the Union address is delivered inside the House of Representatives Chamber in the U.S. Capitol. The President is escorted into the chamber by a specially appointed committee of members from both congressional bodies, and his Secret Service detail is not allowed to enter the chamber itself. The partisanship of the event is symbolized by the behavior of the congressional audience, with frequent interruptions, mostly for applause, from one or both sides of the chamber’s aisle separating Republicans and Democrats, and above all by the almost immediate rebuttal of the President’s speech by the congressional minority. This party response, established in 1966, is delivered by a carefully chosen, prominent member of the opposition party. Since 1976, U.S. television networks have reserved a slot for the opposition party directly following the end of the State of the Union address.

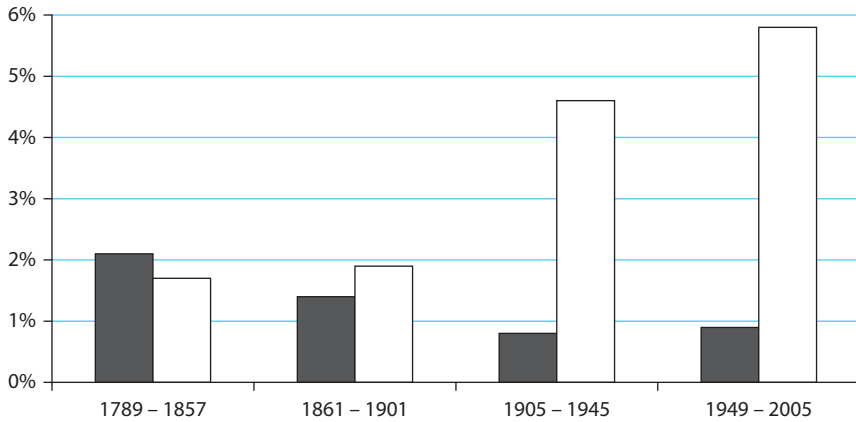


Figure 19. “I” (gray bar) and “we” (white bar) as percentage of total word count in inaugural addresses, by historical period

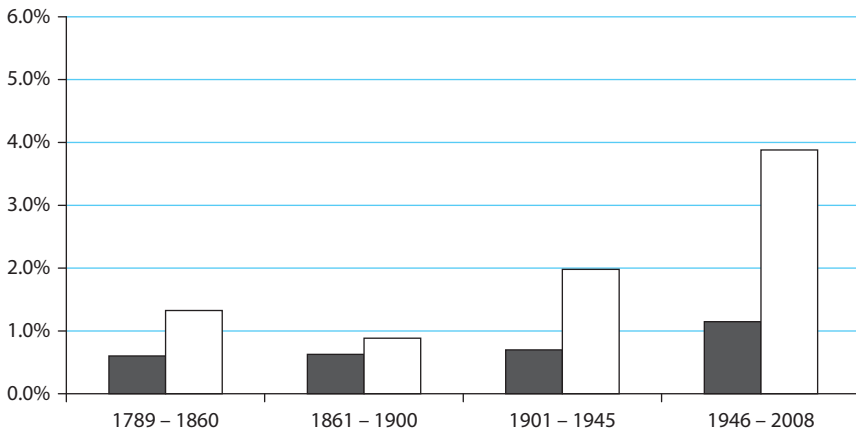


Figure 20. “I” (gray bar) and “we” (white bar) as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, by historical period

the organizational structure of the White House during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt (see Rozell and Pederson 1997).

The differences in the data between inaugural and State of the Union addresses reiterate the influence of text types on the representation of the presidential self. In the following, I will therefore analyze the impact of the Aristotelian distinction of epideictic versus deliberative rhetoric on the prevalence of the “I” and “we” pronouns occurring in a multiple-text-type corpus of post-World War II speeches.

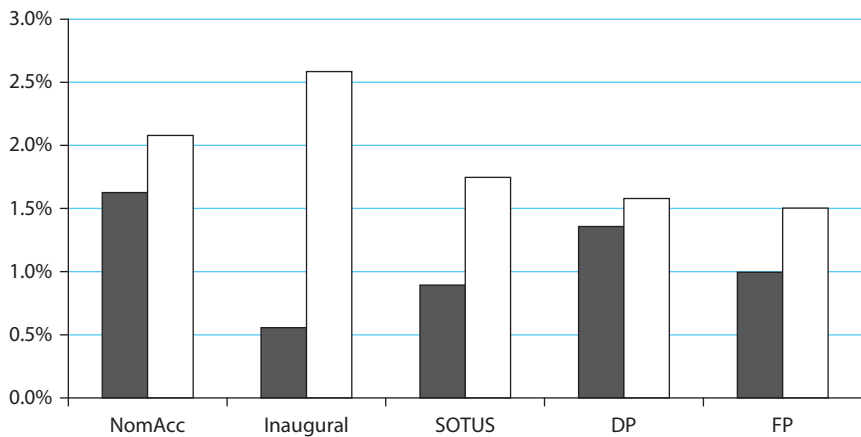


Figure 21. “I” (gray bar) and “we” (white bar) as percentage of total word count, by speech type

Figure 21 shows the occurrences of “we” and “I” in nomination acceptance speeches (NomAcc), inaugural addresses (Inaugural), State of Union addresses (SOTUS), economic and domestic policy speeches (DP), as well as foreign and security policy speeches (FP). The celebration of the American “we” is directly related to the nature of the inaugural address as a speech of national self-celebration and unification. The dominance of the collective can be explained by the main pragmatic functions of inaugural addresses, which include the reunification of the people in the celebration of common values (see Section 2.5 and Chapter 3). The influence of epideictic rhetoric on the distribution of pronouns is also visible in State of the Union addresses. As a hybrid text type, the State of the Union not only serves as a policy-focused report, but also represents an identity creating and affirming interpretation of the American way of life through the current holder of the presidential office. Furthermore, the mixture of domestic, economic, and foreign policy topics usually present in State of the Union addresses can be upset by dramatic external events, thus altering the textual norms usually associated with the genre.²⁷

When looking at presidential speeches that are dominated by one or several policy issues, as is often the case in major speeches on domestic and economic policy or foreign and security policy, we can see a further shift towards establishing

27. This can, for example, be seen in State of the Union addresses delivered during times of war (see Roosevelt, Truman, Johnson, and Nixon as well as George H. W. and George W. Bush). Also, see Reagan’s speech in 1984, which was marked by the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle.

a balanced distribution of “we” and “I.” In speeches dealing with domestic and economic issues, the difference between the “I” and “we” percentages is only 1.3 percent, compared to 4.8 percent in inaugural addresses.

The data from the domestic and economic policy speeches very closely resemble those of nomination acceptance speeches, confirming again the influence that text types have on presidential self-representation. We can also see that in instances of political discourse that most reflect Aristotle’s notion of *genus deliberativum*, a more balanced relationship between the individual speaker and the collective audience can be found. These parallels between campaign and policy discourse also support the idea of the “permanent campaign,” which stipulates a growing similarity of campaign and governing styles, with the former clearly shaping the latter.²⁸ This in turn stresses the constitutive influence that the changing nature of American presidential campaigns as well as modern campaign strategies and technology have had on the institution of the presidency and on presidential discourse.

So far, we have seen that historical developments and text types are variables that influence the representation of the individual and the collective in presidential discourse. Another factor impacting on the executive’s use of “I” and “we” are congressional power balances.

As we can see in Figure 22, a divided government, which sees the White House occupied by one party and at least one chamber of Congress dominated by the other party, leads to a slightly higher level of presidential self-reference overall,

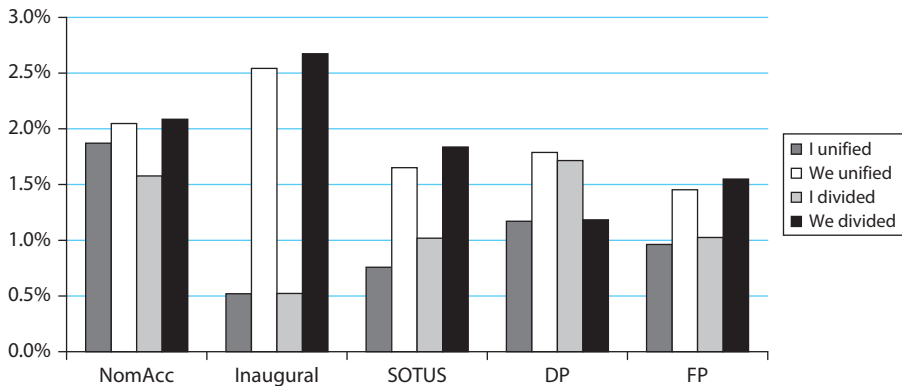


Figure 22. “I” and “we” (in divided and unified houses) as percentage of total word count, by speech type.

28. For a more detailed discussion of the convergence of campaigning and governing, see, for example, Blumenthal (1982); Ornstein and Mann (2000); and Renshon (1995).

most notably in State of the Union addresses and speeches with a domestic and economic focus. In the latter, the use of individual pronouns even exceeds that of the collective “we.” However, if the same party controls both the executive and legislative branches of government, the percentage of collective pronouns is generally lower than in instances of divided government, the only exception being domestic and economic policy speeches. In general, a divided government, and the politically confrontational atmosphere it often creates, seems to contribute to a slight increase in presidential self-reference in the constitutional power struggle between the president and Congress.

2.2.2 On priests and prophets

One of the prominent results of the above text-type-sensitive analysis of the distribution of “we” and “I” pronouns is the exceptional status of inaugural addresses. The discrepancy between this primarily epideictic form of discourse and more deliberative text types is indicative of, and at the same time caused by, the dual role that the president plays within the cognitive system of America’s civil religion (see Chapter 3).

Martin E. Marty refers to these two roles as the “priestly and prophetic mode[s]” of the presidency (1974, 145). These two modes are most convincingly expressed in inaugural addresses on the one hand, and in nomination acceptance speeches on the other hand. According to Marty, the president’s role as high priest of American civil religion, prototypical for inaugural addresses, is “celebrative, affirmative, [and] culture-building” (ibid.). In this context, the solidarity-invoking, inclusive use of “we” is a powerful tool in fulfilling this priestly presidential function. On the other hand, contrary to the unity-enhancing priestly dimension of American civil religion, the prophetic dimension is characterized by Marty as “dialectical” and above all “judgmental” (ibid.). In presidential discourse, the prophetic mode is at its most prominent in campaign speeches, the most personal of political text types. The fact that presidential campaign speeches generally contain strong jeremiadic elements or are even entirely designed as political jeremiads underlines the prophetic dimension of presidential discourse.²⁹

In *Civil Religion and the Presidency*, Richard Pierard and Robert Lindner claim that “while the priestly [mode was] prevailing through the latter half of the [twentieth] century, the prophetic [was] dominating the scene from the foundation of

29. See, for example, the campaigns of Robert F. Kennedy (Murphy 1990) or Ronald Reagan (Johannesen 1986). For the use of the jeremiad in nomination acceptance speeches, see Ritter (1980).

the republic until the mid-twentieth century" (1988, 924). Based on the "we"-"I" ratios of domestic and economic policy speeches and their strong resemblance with that of nomination acceptance speeches, this position needs to be modified, as it shows that the role of the angry prophet is very much part of the discursive repertoire of modern presidents as well. With the president donning the prophet's cloak, taking the side of his ill-guided people while scapegoating Congress and domestic special interests alike, modern governing really does become a permanent campaign.

2.3 On actors and interaction in presidential discourse

As we have seen above, the addition of less epideictic text types to our corpus leads to a modification of our initial observations of the use of "we" and "I" in inaugural addresses. While there is indeed a considerable increase in the use of "we," the findings do not confirm the disappearance of the presidential "I," nor do they indicate that the president is hiding behind the nation. Based on these initial findings, I see the need for a revision of Hinckley's statement that "the main character in the drama of American government is the collective 'we'" (1990, 40). It rather seems that the number of actors in presidential speeches is greater, their semantic roles more diversified and multi-faceted, and their interrelationships much more complex than are often thought.

In her seminal study of the *Symbolic Presidency*, Hinckley analyzed the occurrences of the pronoun "we" in presidential inaugural addresses and economic policy speeches from Truman to Reagan. As shown in Figure 23, in addition to the general "we" category, Hinckley merely acknowledges as actors the president and executive, as well as the American nation and people. Her categorization thus falls short for a number of reasons. First, she does not explain the difference between the American nation and the American people. Second, she does not take into account the other branches of the U.S. government, above all the legislative branch, that are sometimes included in the "we." Third, she does not differentiate between the different types of "we."

Based on four speeches of the same type that Hinckley used in her study, and covering the time from 1989 to 2001, we see that a more in-depth analysis of presidential speeches brings to light a larger and more diverse group of actors.

In the four speeches by Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, there are at least nine different categories of actors:³⁰ the president ("I,"

30. For the purpose of this analysis, the pronominal references of "I," "we," "you," etc. were made explicit and then integrated into the nine categories listed.

Presidents (Truman to Reagan)	Percentage of subject references ^a								
	T	E	K	J	N	F	C	R	Total
Inaugural addresses actor									
<i>I, this administration</i>	12	3	8	13	23	63	16	15	17
<i>The nation, United States</i>	5	0	0	2	4	3	3	2	2
<i>The American People</i>	5	5	10	2	0	3	8	2	4
<i>We</i>	60	63	35	49	51	10	63	58	52
All other actors	18	24	47	34	22	21	19	23	25
N subject references	65	63	40	47	79	30	38	59	421
Economic addresses actor									
<i>I, this administration</i>	28	37	30	–	38	43	31	27	32
<i>The nation, United States</i>	1	0	1	–	2	3	0	1	1
<i>The American People</i>	5	10	3	–	5	6	3	5	5
<i>We</i>	29	47	33	–	38	36	51	43	40
All other actors	37	6	33	–	17	12	15	24	22
N subject references	196	62	86	– ^b	201	159	101	501	1306
Foreign policy addresses actor									
<i>I, this administration</i>	11	–	30	23	37	34	19	14	23
<i>The nation, United States</i>	3	–	4	2	1	8	1	1	3
<i>The American People</i>	1	–	2	0	3	2	–	1	–
<i>We</i>	45	–	34	37	31	32	42	32	39
All other actors	39	–	30	38	29	24	38	52	37
N subject references	299	– ^b	134	81	216	161	74	239	1204

- a. A subject reference indicates any human reference (people, nations, or institutions) used as the subject of the sentence, with each sentence counted once. The first subject only of compound sentences is counted. Rhetorical references to hypothetical people (“someone might say”; “a critic could argue”) are omitted.
- b. No addresses to the nation were given in these categories in the three years.

Figure 23. Presidential actors [according to Hinckley (1990, 40)]

“this president,” “your president,” etc.); the executive branch of the American government, usually referred to as “my administration” or “this administration” (but also represented in expressions like “this government,” where the speech’s context shows that government refers only to the executive); the American government (“government,” “your government,” etc.), comprising both the executive and legislative branch (without mentioning the judiciary, however); the American Congress (“Congress,” “house,” “senate,” “legislatures,” etc.); the American nation (“this nation,” “Americans,” “the American people,” etc.); other nations (“the world,” “other nations,” etc.); moral role models (“Martin Luther King Jr.,” “Founding Fathers,” “Jefferson,” “Washington,” etc.); a divine being or force (“God,” “providence,”

"divine being," etc.); and, most notably in economic policy speeches, political opponents (e.g., "special interests").

Taking a closer look at the use of "we" in the selected speeches, we see that – depending on the respective contexts – the pronoun acts as a stand-in for three main categories of actors. Thus, in inaugural addresses, "we" typically represents the entire nation, demonstrating the inclusive character of this type of epideictic discourse. In speeches dealing with domestic and economic policy issues, however, "we" can, and usually does, represent both the American government (i.e., the executive and legislative branches combined) and the current, presidentially dominated administration. The drama of American government, to stay with Hinckley's image, is hence being played out on a much more populated and frequently confusing stage.

2.3.1 Rhetorical coalitions

The identification of the dominant actors in presidential discourse needs to go beyond a mere analysis of grammatical subjects. Instead, we need to focus on the semantic roles between the aforementioned categories of presidential *personae dramatis*. Such a perspective will enable us to see that it is the American president, the "I," that is always at the center of the discursive action, and not the "we." The president does so by acting either alone or as the dominant figure in a variety of flexible, context-dependent rhetorical coalitions. Within these coalitions, the president is depicted as the more dynamic, trailblazing force, who, again and again, leads his coalition partners in their common endeavors. Thus, no matter if "We, the people," "We, the government," or "We, the administration" appear as grammatical subjects, the presidential "I" is always the only active element.

This hierarchy of agency is often explicitly expressed in presidential speeches. In a speech dominated by economic policy matters, George W. Bush, for example, stresses his role as chief executive by promising the nation: "I'll order the Treasury Department to immediately adjust the amount of money withheld for income taxes, so that Americans will keep more of their paychecks right away" ("Remarks to the Economic Club of Chicago" 31).

This passage underscores the president's traditional role as defender of the interests of the American people, symbolized by the most American of classes, the middle class. Bush uses this symbolic role to pressure the legislative branch into action: "We also know that middle-income families need additional relief. So today I'm asking Congress to speed up three other tax reductions promised in 2001 – tax reductions that will help our middle-income families" (ibid., 32).

Bush's highlighting of his own immediate action ("today") and his urging-on of Congress illustrates a typical pattern of presidential self- and hetero-images, where the executive is described as an active, self-confident and dynamic agent, while the legislative branch is depicted as reactive, hesitant, and slow. Towards the end of his speech, Bush reiterates these images, stating: "I proposed a bold plan because the need for this plan is urgent, and I urge the Congress to act swiftly and pass this bill" (ibid., 33). As these examples indicate, presidential discourse tends to paint the picture of Congress as a sluggish, inert institution generally reluctant to act. Unless motivated by the president, Congress is not able to produce presentable results (for a more detailed analysis of images of Congress in presidential discourse, see Section 2.4 and Austermühl 2012).

While the semantic relations between the president on the one side and government agencies and the legislative branch on the other side are characterized by a clear hierarchy, the relationship between the president and the American people, the third "we" category, is of a more symbiotic nature. The examples taken from George W. Bush's economic policy speech, which, as the title indicates, serves to "strengthen America's economy," indicate that the president presents himself as acting in the role of the nation's representative or spokesperson who, in the name of and for the benefit of the American people, demands that Congress fulfill its duty – as defined by the president – to the people. "For the sake of economic vitality," says Bush, "I'm asking Congress to make all the tax reductions effective this year." Later in the speech he specifically acts on behalf of the older generation: "So today, for the good of our senior people ..., I'm asking the United States Congress to abolish the double taxation of dividends." Thus, the American people become a presidential protégé, a passive entity dependent on the help of the executive.

A second typical representation of the American people in presidential discourse can be found, for example, in Kennedy's inaugural address. Here, we see that the "we" pronoun repeatedly occurs in the immediate textual vicinity of the core values typically associated with the American nation. The following passage, one of the best known from Kennedy's speech, is representative of this phenomenon: "[W]e shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty" ("Inaugural Address" 1). Here, the mythical topoi of sacrifice and success, loyalty, threat, and liberty, enhance the symbolic equation of the national "we" and America's ideational god terms that are so characteristic of inaugural discourse.

The equating of the "we" actor in presidential speeches with America's core values and the close, causal relationship between the nation's expectations and the president's actions foster a symbiosis of people and president that Hinckley calls "symbolic equivalence" (1990, 41). This interrelationship, in which the president becomes America and America becomes the president, supports the notion of

America as "a presidential nation" (Califano 1975). At the same time, the idea of a communion between the nation and its most influential politician highlights the close link between political acts and cultural results. This last aspect is most visible with regard to the creation and affirmation of American national identity through presidential discourse as discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

2.3.2 The presidential hero

As demonstrated above, in their own speeches American presidents are the only protagonists and the only agents actively influencing events. While the collective pronoun "we" accounts for the majority of grammatical subjects, it is too volatile, too fragmented, and too dependent on the president-as-agent to dominate the latter on America's public stage. The passivity of the various agents represented under the "we" umbrella (administration, government, nation) and their subordinated place in the coalitions they enter into with the president further supports this claim. The dominating, event-controlling role of the president unfolds in a context where Congress is portrayed as a constantly reluctant and ultimately reactive entity (see below) and where the public, left with only one visible (and audible) representative, is depicted as a passive, president-supporting mass.

This type of presidential self-representation almost inevitably conjures up an image of the president as a lone leader. This "presidential loneliness" – epitomized in George Tames' famous photograph of Kennedy, entitled "The Loneliest Job" – represents a deliberately designed and discursively constructed concept of presidential leadership that goes far beyond the immediate tactical political interest of an incumbent and thus needs to be understood as a culturally constitutive element of the institution of the American presidency. The image of the heroic president, celebrated in numerous Hollywood movies, resonates elegantly in the "echoes of the past" that Reagan calls upon in his second inaugural address. His description of the heroism of America's "great Presidents" such as Washington ("a general fall[ing] to his knees in the hard snow of Valley Forge") and Lincoln ("a lonely President who paces the darkened halls, and ponders his struggle to preserve the Union") are prototypical of self-representations of American presidents.

The creation of this most dramatic of presidential self-images, to which all modern American presidents (with the possible exception of Carter) contribute continuously, is based on the traditional American image of the president as symbolic leader of the nation (see Fisher 1982). The self-assigned fate of the lonely leader implies the timeless image of the Western pioneer and the can-do spirit of the American frontier, establishing the president as the first man to react to challenges to the community's security and to take the first step into the unknown.

Kennedy's powerful inaugural statement, "I do not shrink from this responsibility, I welcome it," uniquely fulfills these two primary presidential expectations.

The symbolic dimension of the auto- and hetero-images of the presidential hero as the leader of the nation is further enhanced through the presence of presidential opponents in the tradition of Nikita Khrushchev, Slobodan Milošević, or Saddam Hussein. Through the confrontation with the personified evil other, the president becomes the central element in narrative-like representations of international political events.

The discursive duel between the presidential hero and his opponent, which is carried out against the background of a deeper-reaching "us-vs.-them" pattern that is representative of American crisis and conflict discourse (see Chapter 4), underlines the symbolic equivalence between the American president and the American nation. George Reedy describes the political and emotional consequences of such an equation as follows: "The president becomes the nation and when he is insulted, the nation is insulted; when he has a dream, the nation has a dream; when he has an antagonist, the nation has an antagonist" (2000, 443).

The personalization of political conflicts and the discursively constructed protagonist role of the American president thus combine to become a powerful, dramatic instrument in the representation of political events. By generating an "I-friendly" context, so to speak, in which the president becomes the sole national actor, the discursive strategies used in this context are aimed at accumulating political power and increasing the public's acceptance of unilateral executive action (see also Bostdorff 1993).

2.3.3 On god and devil terms

The use of "god and devil terms" (Weaver 1953, building on Burke 1945, 1950) plays a significant role in presidential discourse in general and in the construction of a heroic image in particular. In his 1953 book *Ethics of Rhetoric*, Weaver analyses the lexical level of ethically guided rhetoric, introducing the concept of "term" as a central object of interest. According to Weaver a term is "an incipient proposition, awaiting only the necessary coupling with another term" (211). The semantic dimension of a term is thus only fully defined through its relationship with other implicitly or explicitly mentioned terms, i.e., the term's immediate conceptual context determines both its position with a set of terms and its final meaning.

With regard to the connotations and emotional effects of a term, Weaver distinguishes in general between good and bad terms, i.e., between terms "to which the populace ... appears to attribute the greatest sanction" (ibid., 212). In this

context, the notion of "sanction" can be either positive, or "attractive", or negative, or "repulsive" in Weaver's terminology (*ibid.*). The political potential of these good and bad terms is obvious. They establish a culturally determined conceptual hierarchy, or continuum, that represents a tightly constructed cognitive system. This closed cognitive framework, whose borders are defined by extreme negative and extreme positive terms, influences and controls the reaction of the audience.

The hierarchy's top and bottom terms, or, to stay with the second image, the continuum's positive and negative endpoints are referred to by Weaver, building on Kenneth Burke's notion of "ultimate terms," as "god terms" and "devil terms" (*ibid.*). According to Weaver, "god terms" are rhetorical absolutes, i.e., they are "terms to which the highest respect is paid" (*ibid.*). "Devil terms" on the other hand are in direct opposition to the values expressed by "god terms." They represent, according to Weaver, a "destructive force" (*ibid.*, 222).

A god term establishes a hierarchical ranking of terms, by occupying the top of the hierarchy and subordinating all other terms. "Its force imparts to the others their lesser degree of force, and fixes the scale by which degrees of comparison are understood" (*ibid.*, 212). In general, states Weaver, one single "god term" will be dominant at any given moment, but he admits that "[i]n the absence of a strong and evenly diffused religion, there may be several terms competing for this primacy ..." (*ibid.*).

In the context of America's civil religion we find that the terms typically constituting the American creed – freedom, equality, the rule of law – represent a tight network of god terms that pursue a common goal (see Chapter 3). Weaver, writing in 1953, considers future-oriented and scientific terms such as "progress", "facts" or "science" to represent "uncontested terms" (*ibid.*, 213–214). He also points out that "America" and "American" belong to the group of terms, "which carr[y] the greatest blessing ..." (*ibid.*, 212).

With regard to American presidential discourse, "freedom" becomes the ultimate god term. To assess the value of a god term and to establish its position in the god term hierarchy, Weaver recommends identifying a god term's antonymic relations and the reactions of the reader, or the audience, to the antonyms. "It follows naturally", writes Weaver, "that in the popular consciousness of this country, 'un-American' is the ultimate in negation" (*ibid.*, 219). The political context of the 1950s and the work of the "House Committee on Un-American Activities" during the anti-Communist "witch hunt" of Senator McCarthy, exemplifies the binary structure of Weaver's term hierarchy. As I will show in Section 4.3, the strategic use of a god term does not necessarily imply the explicit mentioning of its antonym (e.g., American vs. un-American). This type of polarization can also be achieved by activating the positive connotations of a term and contrasting them with a semantic field of opposing terms. As Gage Chapel points out in his study of

the discourse of Jack Kemp, the Republican vice-presidential candidate in 1996, the successful use of god terms depends on a balance between the number of god terms and the number of devil terms employed (see Chapel 1996, 358).

God terms develop a discursive dynamic that goes beyond their semantic implications and that allows the speaker to tap into the pragmatic and action-oriented potential of the political sign. The main political goal pursued by the use of god terms are (i) the validation and justification of political decisions, (ii) the creation of political realities, and (iii) forcing the audience to take sides (see Section 4.4 for a more detailed discussion of the pragmatics of contradistinctive discourse strategies).

In addition to ensuring the support of the electorate for political and, often, military actions, god terms serve to communicate to the nation the need for and the inevitability of human sacrifice. For Weaver, this ability to evoke the nation's willingness to sacrifice in the name of a greater good is the core characteristic of a god term (see also the discussion of the *sacrifice* theme in Chapter 3). Weaver states: "The capacity to demand sacrifice is probably the surest indicator of the 'god term,' ... for when a term is so sacrosanct that the material goods of this life must be mysteriously rendered up for it, then we feel justified in saying that it is in some sense ultimate" (1953, 214).

In the context of the image of the presidential hero, the use of devil terms, such as "war," "death," or "terror," plays a significant role. Here again, Kennedy's inaugural is exemplary of the application of these anxiety-creating, negatively charged expressions. Kennedy hears the summoning call for a new generation of Americans, "a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle ... against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself" ("Inaugural Address" 2). Devil terms like these – other candidates include "threat," "danger," "murder," or "attack" – create among the audience a latent, almost impalpable feeling of angst, an atmosphere of insecurity and confusion. Psychologists refer to this kind of language as "dependency-creating" (Brooks 2008).

Figure 24 shows the percentages of devil terms in selected presidential speeches.³¹ As we can see, Kennedy's inaugural contains a relatively high number of devil terms, an unusual phenomenon in this most presidential of genres. This high degree of occurrence seems to indicate a deliberate discursive dramatization of contemporary political circumstances, a strategy that needs to be seen as a reaction to national and international doubts about the leadership capabilities of the young president.

31. The search terms included in this list are: *attack**, *danger**, *fear*, *kill**, *murder**, *terror**, and *threat**.

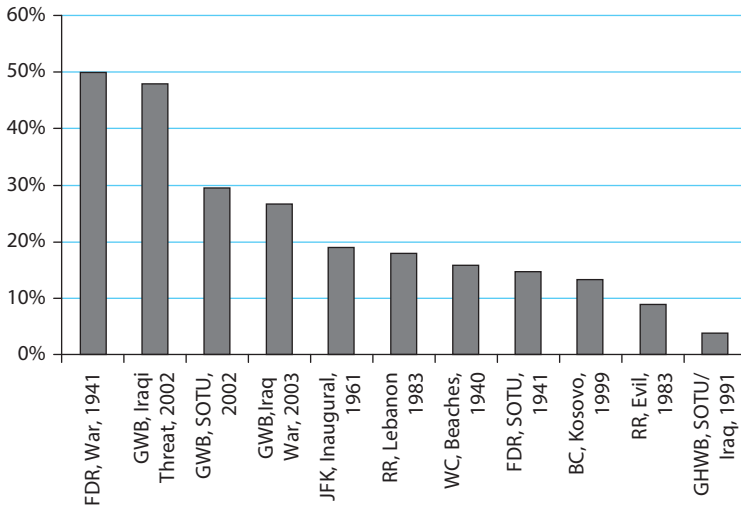


Figure 24. "Devil terms" as percentage of average number of words per sentence, in selected crisis speeches

Another important, yet probably not surprising finding noted in Figure 24, is the extraordinarily high number of devil terms in George W. Bush's speeches following September 11 and during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. His rhetorical "threat level" is far more elevated than, for example, that of Winston Churchill's speeches during the decisive months of World War II. Of all the crisis and war speeches analyzed, only Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech on the day following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 ("a date that will live in infamy") contains more devil terms than Bush's speeches. Roosevelt's speech is, however, a very short speech and is furthermore characterized by eleven repetitions of the words "attack" or "attacked."

In his 2002 State of the Union speech, George W. Bush, like Kennedy in his inaugural speech, personally employs some of the devil terms mentioned above, stating: "I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer." Bush, who in his early months in office had often been described (including by himself), and dismissed by many, as "the MBA president" or "the CEO president," had picked up the rhetorical shield of America's defender after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. On September 20, 2001, during a speech to a joint session of Congress, he publicly accepted this ultimate presidential role in a most Churchillian fashion, declaring:

I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people. The course of this conflict is not known, yet

its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.

(“Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11” 1144)

In describing the negative effects of the rhetorical presidency, Tulis warned of the unbalancing effects this type of fear-inducing language could have on the American political system, stating, “the rhetorical presidency is now the creator of crises, or pseudo-crises” (1987, 181).

While Tulis and many other congressional and presidential scholars tend to see unilateral presidential action as negative, Andrew Rudavelige, in his attempt to chart the “new imperial presidency” (2006, 521), draws a more positive picture of presidential dominance. Acknowledging that today’s “globalized, polarized world seems to call out for endowing leadership sufficient to match its powers to the tasks at hand” (*ibid.*), Rudavelige states:

A nation cannot meet crises, or even the day-to-day needs of governing, with five hundred thirty-five chief executives or commanders in chief driven by as many constituencies and spread across divided chambers. The problems of administration that arose during the Articles of Confederation period in a much smaller country, with a much smaller Congress, in what seemed a much larger world, were sufficient to drive the Framers to submerge their fear of monarchy and empower a single person as president. (*ibid.*)

Rudavelige sees a direct relationship between the power of the presidency and the exclusion of other constitutional actors. Stating that “presidential power, in a real sense, is the residual left over after subtracting out the power of other actors in the system” (*ibid.*), he acknowledges the importance of discourse in general and the strategic use of pronouns in positioning actors within a social and political system. A closer look at the images of Congress – the leading branch of the government according to the original constitutional design – in presidential speeches illustrates the nature of this political zero-sum game.

2.4 Presidential discourse and the unilateral executive

The relationship between the presidency and Congress lies at the heart of the American political system. It represents the struggle between a nationally elected, centralized Executive and a federally elected, diversified Legislative. It also symbolizes the opposition of the powers and needs of the central government and the rights and needs of the states. The framers of the U.S. Constitution envisioned Congress to be the dominant player in the American government. American history, however, seems to have favored the head of the executive branch.

Inherent in the constitutional design of the American political system is a continuous conflict between the president and Congress. Political scientists describe this conflict as "an institutional tug of war" (Genovese 2001, ix), and acknowledge that the Constitution itself "provide[s] little guidance for how presidents and their representatives should deal with the Congress" (Jillson 1999, 238). The vagueness of Article II of the U.S. Constitution, which describes the office of the presidency, has, since its conception, left ample room for interpretation of the role of the executive office.

Many of the framers of the American Constitution were skeptical of the Executive, fearing that its powers might someday outgrow those of Congress. For them, the idea of the separation of powers, or, more precisely, of the sharing of powers, represented an important safeguard against the potential dominance of the Executive. Roger Sherman, a delegate for Connecticut during the Constitutional Convention, expressed the opinion of many of his contemporaries by saying that "the executive magistracy [is] nothing more than an institution of carrying out the will of the legislature into effect" (Farrand 1911, 65).

Sherman, as with many other Founding Fathers, favored a Lockean view of government, one that is based on legislative supremacy – "For what can give laws to another must needs be superior to him" (Locke 2006, 92) – and sees the executive and the judiciary as mere enforcers of legislative will, a position that dominated American politics during the 18th and 19th centuries. Nevertheless, with America's geographic, political and economic growth towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the face of numerous domestic and international crises during the twentieth century, "the genie of presidential initiative and discretion [was let out of] the constitutional bottle" (Jillson 1999, 328). The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a transformation in the interpretation of the presidential office. As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Tulis, this shift led to a clash between the "competing logics of an old Constitution and a relatively new, superimposed, constitutional understanding" (1996, 5).

The conflicting views regarding the proper place of the presidency in the American political system are exemplified by Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh presidents of the United States. Taft represents what some observers call a Whig (or Taftian) theory of the presidency (Gregg 2000, 69), favoring an office that honors the restraints imposed on it by the framers of the Constitution. This point of view suggests that Congress should be the dominant branch and that the president's powers and responsibilities are limited to those responsibilities and powers explicitly enumerated in the Constitution. "The true view of the executive function is," said Taft, "that the president can exercise no power which cannot be fairly and reasonably traced to

some specific grant of power or justly implied and included within such express grant as proper and necessary to its exercise" (1916, 138).

Theodore Roosevelt, Taft's predecessor and also one of his challengers in the presidential race of 1912, symbolizes an interpretation of the presidential office that would later become the dominant image of the modern presidency. In his autobiography, Roosevelt writes:

I decline to adopt the view that what was imperatively necessary for the nation could not be done by the president unless he could find some specific authorization to do it. My belief was that it was not only his right but his duty to do anything that the needs of the nation demanded, unless such action was forbidden by the Constitution or by the laws. (1913, 389)

Roosevelt's approach to government has become known as the "stewardship theory" (see Andrews 1958, 197–200), and was central to the justification of his unilateral political actions.

Taft's successor, Woodrow Wilson, considerably deepened Roosevelt's approach, adding a theoretical dimension to the discussion of presidential power. For Wilson, the "President is at liberty, both in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can" (1961, 70). As David Nichols explains,

Wilson never seriously considered the possibility that his leadership role was inherent in the Constitution. He saw it as the gradual and fortuitous development of political practice, a development that could best be perpetuated and strengthened by his new theory of government. (1994, 16)

Nichols thus places the early beginnings of the modern presidency, usually associated with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, at the turn of the twentieth century. The concept of the modern presidency refers to a "metamorphosis" (Greenstein 1978, 45) of presidential action, and hence of presidential-congressional relations, in four particular areas. First, the modern presidency is characterized by the growing legislative role of the president, leading to his becoming not only chief executive but also "chief legislator." Second, modern presidents have a stronger tendency than "pre-modern" ones to act unilaterally, doing so "through executive orders and other actions not formally ratified by Congress." Third, the modern presidency created an "extensive bureaucracy" to support its legislative initiatives. Fourth, and most important in the context of our study, the modern presidency is defined by the personalization of the office: "Presidents are expected to be symbols of reassurance, possessing extraordinary 'non-political' personal qualities that were traditionally associated with long deceased 'hero presidents'" (ibid., 45–46). Public presidential discourse played, and is still playing, a crucial role in creating this symbolic dimension.

In his criticism of what he calls "the myth of the modern presidency," Nichols stresses the fact that while the enhancement of the executive bureaucracy is for the most part a phenomenon of the twentieth century and clearly associated with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the other three elements of the modern presidency had already been in place by the beginning of the twentieth century. Pointing to the importance of earlier presidents – Lincoln, Jackson, or even Washington – Nichols considers the emergence of the modern presidency an evolving historical process, negating a "big bang theory" of its formation (*ibid.*, 16).

In this development, we see striking parallels to the concept of the rhetorical presidency discussed earlier. According to the concept of the rhetorical presidency, public discourse was instrumental in bringing about a power shift between the two main actors of the American political system. As Kernell (1997) explains, by going public and taking their case to the American people, presidents were able to communicate directly with their national constituency. Summoning the power of public opinion, they looked to put pressure on Congress and in doing so increase their "power to persuade" members of the legislature (Neustadt 1960, 11). The increasingly frequent public appearances of presidents helped to portray themselves not only as symbols of national unity but also as the main agents of political and legislative initiative, regardless of the constitutional powers originally associated with the executive branch.³²

The main overlap between the rhetorical presidency and the modern presidency lies in the personalization of the office. For Wilson, for example, the "personal relationship between the President and the nation had been the key to presidential power in the past and would remain so in the future" (Nichols 1994, 19). One of the instruments for strengthening that relationship was the primary election system for the selection of presidential candidates – a system facilitated by the decline of the party system in the second half of the nineteenth century. Another, far more powerful instrument, was the use of what Theodore Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit," i.e., the public speeches of the president.

32. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is, however, important to note that the impact of presidential discourse on legislative action is difficult to measure, and even considered non-existent by a number of scholars (see, e.g., Edwards 2003). Even in cases where presidential speeches seemed to have had an impact on legislative decisions (see, e.g., Canes-Wrone 2006), other factors, such as partisanship, ideology, and presidential approval rates, are generally rated as more important (see Powell and Schloyer 2010).

2.4.1 From the rhetorical to the imperial presidency

The notion of the rhetorical presidency is in many respects similar to Arthur Schlesinger's notion of the Imperial Presidency. Both concepts see a rise of presidential power as a threat to the constitutional balance.

The imperial, or unilateral, presidency is to a significant extent constructed through presidential discourse. It has been enabled and facilitated by a historically evolved, standardized public perception of the American presidency; a perception that itself has influenced and has been influenced by presidential discourse.

As discussed above, the concept of the rhetorical presidency critically refers to what Tulis calls a "second constitution" (1987, 18), i.e., a modified American political system in which the discursive strategies of presidents have altered and even reversed the power balance between the governmental branches originally envisioned by the framers of the Constitution.

The parallels to the concept of the imperial presidency are obvious. Arthur Schlesinger writes that the imperial presidency has caused "a shift in the constitutional balance – with ... the appropriation by the Presidency, and particularly by the contemporary Presidency, of powers reserved by the Constitution and by long historical practice to Congress" (1973, xxvi).

The Founders, who favored the idea of governments dominated by the demands and actions of the legislature, discouraged any idea that the president should lead the people by stirring mass opinion through the use of rhetoric; their conception was rather that of a constitutional officer who would rely for his authority on the formal powers granted by the Constitution and on the informal authority that would flow from the office's strategic position (Ceaser et al. 1981, 162).

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the political power balance between Congress and the president, as well as the public discourse of presidents, reflected the original constitutional design. Yet, with an increase in America's size and power as well as a sharp increase in public presidential appearances, the "silver-tongued demagogue" that the framers were afraid of had arrived (Smith and Smith 1994, 14).

Presidential discourse, especially during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has been instrumental, if not decisive, in the subversion and realignment of the institutional foundations of the American political system. Presidential discourse brought about a sustainable change in the interpretation of the presidential office, both by the office holders and by the American public. The image of the "mute tribune" (Heale 1982, 1–22) that dominated the self- and public perceptions of the nineteenth century Presidency has long given way to a discursively

constructed portrait of public presidential leadership. Today, the office of the American president is an office based on its ability and willingness to “go public.”

In the following, I will discuss how presidents present their main constitutional competitor, Congress, to the American public. The discussion is based on an analysis of 220 State of the Union addresses from 1790 to 2008. In particular, I will be looking at specific discursive patterns that serve to undermine any congressional aspirations to national leadership and to re-affirm Wilson’s claim that the president’s voice is the only one speaking for the entire nation.

2.4.2 A presidential view of the American political system

An analysis of presidential references to the U.S. Constitution itself, and to other actors of the American government identified in it, shows the degree of presidential manipulation in the public representation of the constitutional power design. In State of the Union addresses – the only constitutionally mandated presidential text type – explicit acknowledgements of America’s founding document (i.e., “Constitution” or “constitutional”) are all but disappearing.

A look at the average percentage per speech of references to the words “Constitution” or “constitutional” grouped by historical eras highlights the degree of neglect that the Constitution is experiencing under the modern rhetorical presidency. While in the first eleven decades of the republic American presidents mentioned the Constitution an average of ten (1789 to 1860) and nine (1861 to 1900) times per speech, presidents from 1901 to 1945 referred to it on average only three times per speech. This number has decreased further after the Second World War.

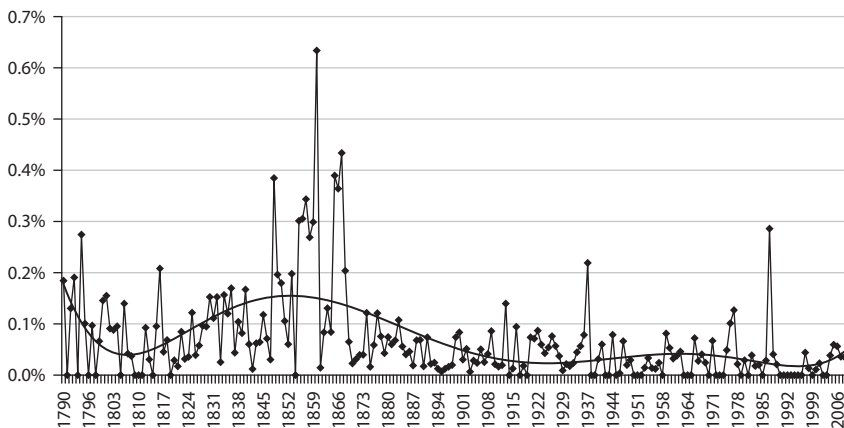


Figure 25. Keyword “Constitution*” as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, by year

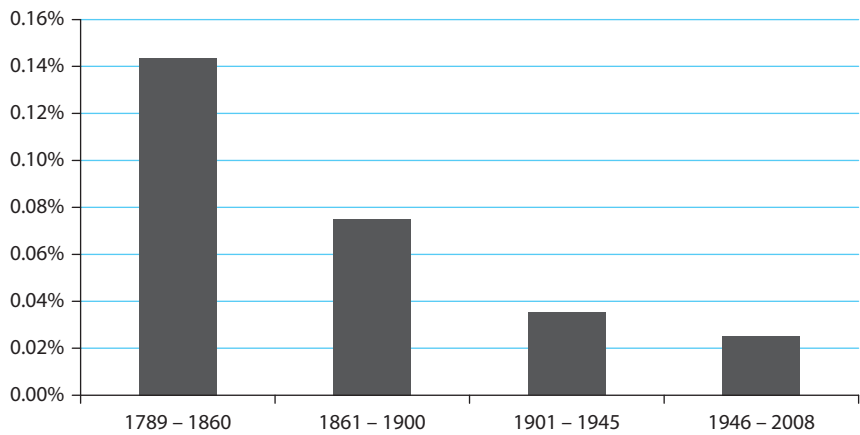


Figure 26. Keyword “Constitution*” as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, by historical period

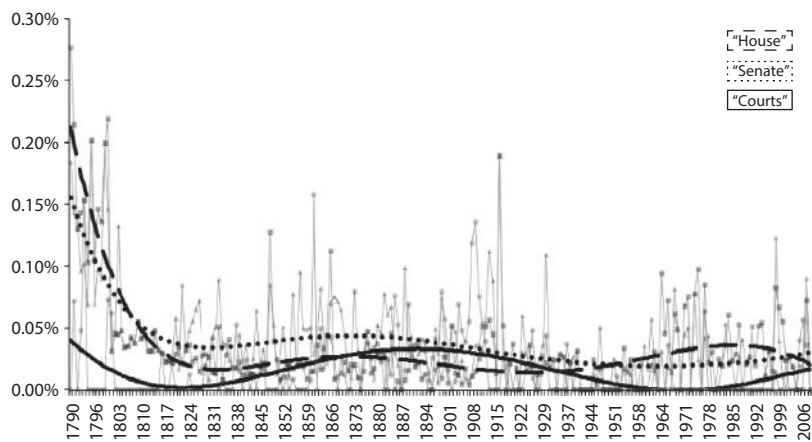


Figure 27. Keywords “Senate,” “House,” and “courts” as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, by year

After 1945, presidents on average refer to the Constitution only once per speech. In 25 out of the 64 post-World War II State of the Union speeches analyzed, the Constitution was not mentioned at all.

An analysis of the occurrences of other constitutional actors, i.e., institutions belonging to the legislative and judiciary branches of the American government, supports our earlier statement that presidents cast themselves more and more often as the sole agent of American government.

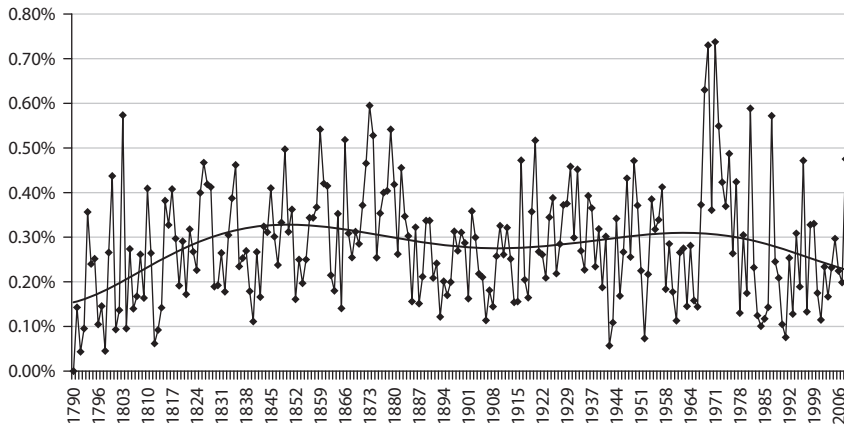


Figure 28. Keyword “Congress” as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, by year

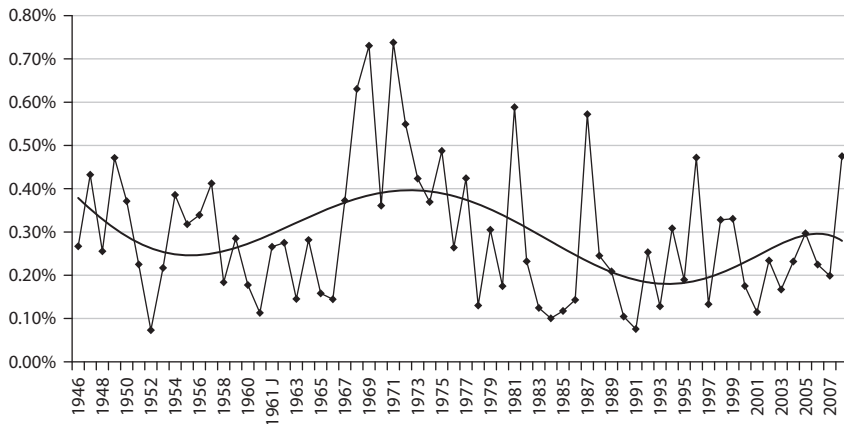


Figure 29. Keyword “Congress” as percentage of total word count in State of the Union speeches, 1946 to 2008

References to the two chambers of Congress (“House,” “Senate”) and to the legislative branch in general (“legislature”) have decreased over time. For over half a century (since 1953), the word “legislature” has not been uttered by an American president giving his State of the Union address to that very body. References to the judiciary (“courts”) are also sparse and declining.

An exception to the president’s ignoring of his constitutional partners is the occurrence of the generic term “Congress.” In the 64 State of the Union speeches from 1946 to 2008, presidents, on average, explicitly refer to Congress 16 times

per speech. As a percentage of the total words of State of the Union speeches, the occurrences of “Congress” have decreased only slightly over time.³³

Presidents addressing a Congress controlled by their own party use the term “Congress” slightly more often (an average of 17.34 times per speech) than their colleagues working within the framework of a divided government (average of 14.91 times per speech). Seen as a percentage of total words, though, this partisan difference effectively disappears, with reference to Congress making up 0.29 and 0.31 percent in divided and unified governments, respectively. However, seen over time, the occurrences of “Congress” in speeches given by presidents facing a hostile Congress, i.e., one controlled at least in part by the opposition party, decrease clearly, a trend in line with our earlier remarks about greater presidential self-referentiality in a potentially hostile partisan environment.

Despite this trend, however, the continued presence of “Congress,” at first glance incompatible with the earlier detected patterns of presidential self-aggrandizement, which are central to the notions of the rhetorical, the modern, and the imperial presidency, cannot be ignored and warrants further examination. Does the continued presence of the legislative branch signal a presidential acceptance of the design of a “Constitution [that] compels a major distinction between popular expectations of the presidency and the realities of governance” (M. Peterson 2000, 478)? Is it indicative of the interdependency of presidential and congressional action that Richard E. Neustadt stresses, by saying that the Constitution established a government of “separated institutions sharing powers” (1960, 29)? Do references to the legislature indicate presidential acceptance of the need for interbranch cooperation? As Mark Peterson writes, “in one sphere after another, the Constitution makes Congress the president’s inescapable partner. Presidents can accomplish little of enduring value without the support or, at the very least, the acquiescence of a significant number of representatives and senators” (*ibid.*).

While these political realities undoubtedly contribute to the continued presence of Congress in presidential discourse, especially in State of the Union speeches, the references to the legislative branch indicate that Congress is assigned a more dramatic cultural role as a strategic political opponent to the president’s actions.

The true nature of the representation of presidential-congressional relations in presidential discourse thus cannot be explained on a quantitative level. To find out how presidents depict the legislative branch of government in their speeches and to understand what strategies, if any, are used to manipulate the public perception of that relationship, a closer reading of the speeches is necessary.

33. This count does not include references to Congress in the salutation of the speech.

The following part of the study is based on a quantitative and qualitative computer-based analysis of the main concordances and collocations involving the term "Congress" and other related terms in a corpus consisting of 218 State of the Union addresses. In particular, I will focus above all on post-World-War-II speeches (i.e., from 1946 to 2008).

2.4.3 A discursive tug-of-war

One rather obvious reason for the presence of Congress in State of the Union speeches is the physical presence of its members. In addition to the salutation, in 17 of the 62 speeches presidential speakers address their audience directly as "Members of Congress." In most cases, the direct address is combined with an appeal for congressional action. Some of these appeals are of a very general nature. In 1992, for example, George H. W. Bush, alluding to Kennedy, addresses his audience as follows: "And now, Members of Congress, let me tell you what you can do for your country" ("State of the Union Address 1992" 159). Some appeals are more specific, clearly signaling the president's legislative goals to Congress and the public alike. An example of this can be found in George W. Bush's 2006 annual message: "I am pleased that Members of Congress are working on earmark reform, because the Federal budget has too many special interest projects. And we can tackle this problem together, if you pass the line-item veto" (Bush, "State of the Union Address 2006").

While Bush acknowledges Congress' constitutional powers, his language nevertheless already foreshadows the type of hierarchical and stereotypical depiction of Congress that I will further discuss below.³⁴

34. The salutations of the State of the Union speeches themselves are indicative of a change in the primary audience of the presidential address that has taken place in the second half of the twentieth century. For more than 130 years, presidents chose one of three standard salutations to open their annual messages to Congress, addressing the audience either as "Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives," or as "Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives," a formula also used by Woodrow Wilson in 1918, despite the fact that present among these "Gentlemen" was the first female Member of the House of Representatives, Jeannette Rankin. Many State of the Union speeches, in accordance with their written form, simply start "To the Congress of the United States." In the twentieth century the salutation "Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of Congress," that included the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Vice President (as President of the Senate), has become more frequent. The first president to address himself to his "fellow Americans," was Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Ever since then, a reference to the nation ("fellow citizens," "fellow Americans") has been a part of the opening words of the State of the Union speech. Johnson also made

The constitutional basis of the relationship between the president and Congress is itself not a topic often discussed in presidential speeches. Very few presidents choose to address this issue, and when they do, it is often within the context of conflicting executive and legislative powers. Kennedy, for example, opened his first State of the Union speech acknowledging that “[o]ur Constitution wisely assigns both joint and separate roles to each branch of the government; and a president and a Congress who hold each other in mutual respect will neither permit nor attempt any trespass” (“State of the Union Address 1961” 19).

In continuing, however, and in line with the picture of the strong leader that he projected only a few weeks earlier in his inaugural address, Kennedy reinforced his view of the presidency as an office of individual leadership:

For my part, I shall withhold from neither the Congress nor the people any fact or report, past, present, or future, which is necessary for an informed judgment of our conduct and hazards. I shall neither shift the burden of executive decisions to the Congress, nor avoid responsibility for the outcome of those decisions. (19)

Gerald Ford, faced with the growing powers of a resurgent Congress in the aftermath of the Watergate affair and the withdrawal from Vietnam, also openly claims the powers of the president to lead the nation:³⁵

The American people want strong and effective international and defense policies. In our constitutional system, these policies should reflect consultation and accommodation between the President and the Congress. But in the final analysis, as the framers of our Constitution knew from hard experience, the foreign relations of the United States can be conducted effectively only if there is strong central direction that allows flexibility of action. That responsibility clearly rests with the President. (“State of the Union Address 1976” 41)

Very rarely do presidents openly acknowledge congressional powers as described in the Constitution. An exception is found in Eisenhower’s seventh State of the Union address: “The Constitution entrusts the Executive with many functions, but the Congress – and the Congress alone – has the power of the purse. Ultimately upon Congress rests responsibility for determining the scope and amount of Federal spending” (“State of the Union Address 1959” 13).

the State of the Union address a major television event by moving its delivery to a prime-time evening slot in 1965.

35. In 1980, however, looking back at both his own and Carter’s presidencies, Ford famously stated: “We have not an imperial presidency but an imperiled presidency” (quoted in A. Schlesinger 1973, xvi).

Looking at the context of this quote, however, it becomes clear that Eisenhower's flattery is a strategic choice to get the Congress to support his proposal for a balanced budget. Eisenhower continues: "By working together, the Congress and the Executive can keep a balance between income and outgo. If this is done there is real hope that we can look forward to a time in the foreseeable future when needed tax reforms can be accomplished" (13). The reversed logic of this passage would thus shift the blame on Congress for not lowering taxes in the future. This is a classic example of the scapegoating technique frequently used by the president to put public pressure on the members of Congress.

References to the Constitution are not only indicative of the tug-of-war inherent in the American political system, but are also often closely connected with the need, or better, the president's appeal for cooperation between the executive and the legislative branches of government, as seen in Kennedy's 1962 State of the Union address: "Members of the Congress, the Constitution makes us not rivals for power but partners for progress. We are all trustees for the American people, custodians of the American heritage. It is my task to report the State of the Union – to improve it is the task of us all" (5). A similar line can be found in a speech by Kennedy's predecessor. Eisenhower, facing a Congress controlled by Democrats, states: "In the past three years, responding to what our people want their Government to do, the Congress and the Executive have done much in building a stronger, better America" ("State of the Union Address 1956" 2).

These examples from Kennedy and Eisenhower both show that cooperation between the president and Congress is presented as being guided by a higher goal, i.e., the well-being of the American nation. Calls for action on behalf of the nation are often combined with appeals for bi-partisanship, which, in line with the representation of the president as an honest broker for all Americans, are framed as being independent of the president's political affiliation.

In 1948, Truman addressed the members of the Congress, depicting himself as the people's representative:

On this occasion, above all others, the Congress and the President should concentrate their attention, not upon party but upon the country; not upon things which divide us but upon those which bind us together – the enduring principles of our American system, and our common aspirations for the future welfare and security of the people of the United States. ("State of the Union Address 1948" 1)

One year later, Truman disclosed how exactly the "cooperation" between Congress and president should look like:

It is absolutely essential that your President have the complete cooperation of the Congress to carry out the great work that must be done to keep the peace in this

world, and to keep this country prosperous. The people of this great country have a right to expect that the Congress and the President will work in closest cooperation with one objective – the welfare of the people of this Nation as a whole. In the months ahead I know that I shall be able to cooperate with this Congress.

(“State of the Union Address 1949” 7)

Truman directed these words to the successors of the Republican-dominated 80th United States Congress, which he nicknamed the “Do Nothing Congress.” The label of the “Do Nothing Congress” is another fundamental component in the scapegoating of Congress through presidential discourse and was instrumental in Truman’s come-from-behind win in the 1948 presidential election.

As mentioned above, Rudavelige considers that “presidential power, in a real sense, is the residual left over after subtracting out the power of other actors in the system” (2006, 262). In Auster mühl (2012), I have discussed in detail how exactly public discourse helps the chief executive to gain the upper hand over Congress in this constitutional zero-sum game. Looking in particular at how presidential discourse has contributed to realigning the power relationship between the presidency and Congress through the use of carefully crafted images of the two branches, I showed that

[t]he overall approach of undermining Congress’s leadership status is based on four micro-strategies that depict Congress and its members as (1) acting only when directed by the President to do so; (2) incapable of taking fast and decisive action to get things done; (3) torn between numerous diverging interests and representing fragmented and competing constituencies; and (4) being an institution that is volatile, expensive, and generally removed from the lives of ordinary Americans. (ibid., 172–173)

Presidents present themselves as the decisive nation’s legislators-in-chief, who, for the good of the people, are “always ‘asking,’ ‘urging,’ ‘challenging,’ ‘calling on,’ or ‘advising’ Congress to ‘act,’ ‘enact,’ ‘pass’ or ‘support’ the ‘plan,’ ‘proposal,’ ‘bill,’ or ‘legislation’ ‘presented,’ ‘sent,’ ‘transmitted,’ or ‘recommended’ to it by the President” (ibid., 173). Without the president’s urging, the presidential logic goes, the “Do Nothing Congress” would be incapable of swift action and would succumb to the systemic shortcomings of “a Byzantine institution removed from reality” (ibid., 178). Congress, finally, is being depicted not as a unified national institution but as a highly fragmented, and highly expensive, conglomerate of selfish individuals driven not by the good of the republic but the preferences of unspecified special interests (ibid., 176–177).

These presidential images of the congressional body and its members have helped decide what Theodore Lowi and Benjamin Ginsberg call the “tug of war between formal constitutional provisions favoring a chief clerk president and a

theory of necessity favoring a chief executive president that has persisted for two centuries" (1990, 243–244).

In the end, it is the idea of unilateral presidential leadership in all affairs, domestic and international, that is the ultimate goal of the images of governmental actors created in presidential discourse, and there's no instrument in the presidential toolbox that is more powerful than the "bully pulpit" (but see my caveat on the link between discourse and power in Chapter 1).

2.5 Presidential genres

The rhetorical presidency is implemented through a number of distinct presidential genres, e.g., the inaugural address or the State of the Union message. According to Campbell and Jamieson, the genres are "defined by their pragmatic ends and typified by their substantive, stylistic, and strategic similarities" (2008, 9). Campbell and Jamieson compare genres to "labels [that] suggest an implicit understanding that each type of speech is somehow distinct, with identifiable features and functions" (*ibid.*).

The existence of distinct presidential genres and the resulting generic constraints for all types of presidential discourse form the basis of a second type of presidential intertextuality, which Genette refers to as "architextuality" (1992) and Heinemann as "typological intertextuality" (1997). In generic or typological intertextuality, relations between texts exist as a result of their belonging to the same group of texts, which results in parallel structural and functional characteristics. For de Beaugrande and Dressler, intertextuality itself is responsible for the development and existence of text types, which they see as classes of texts showing standardized patterns and characteristics (1981, 13). Richard Aczel, who asserts that a text's belonging to a specific text type is "unthinkable without accepting the existence of intertextual references," shares this perspective (1998, 287).

Text types represent, according to Klaus Brinker, complex patterns of verbal communication that evolved in a socio-historical process aimed at satisfying specific communicative needs (2001, 118). While the (linguistic) notion of text type is often regarded as being more specific than the (literary) concept of genre, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham's definition of genre shows clear similarities to Brinker's definitions:

A genre is conceived as a set of constitutive conventions and codes, altering from age to age, but shared by a kind of implicit contract between writer and reader. These codes make possible the writing of a particular literary text, although the writer may play against, as well as with, the prevailing generic conventions. In the reader, these conventions generate a set of expectations, which may be

controverted rather than satisfied, but enable the reader to make the work intelligible – that is, to naturalize it, by relating it to the world as defined and ordered by codes in the prevailing culture. (2009, 109–110)

My more detailed description of the generic elements of presidential inaugural addresses in Chapter 3 will show the importance of such a multi-level framework. For now, however, and given the seminal character of their work, I will focus on an overview of the presidential genres described in Campbell and Jamieson's seminal 1990 study *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*, and its updated and enhanced 2008 version that was published under the new title *Presidents Creating the Presidency*.

2.5.1 Campbell and Jamieson's generic theory of presidential discourse

Campbell and Jamieson follow an approach that is guided by the constitutional origins of the American presidency and its subsequent development. These genres reflect both the constitutional definition of the executive office and its duties and responsibilities as envisioned by the founders, as well as the extra-constitutional expectations piled onto the presidency by the America public. As Campbell and Jamieson state:

[W]e examine presidential discourse from our nation's inception to the present, particularly those forms that are grounded in constitutional provisions, entailed in fulfilling the constitutional responsibilities of the executive, or now accepted as customary. (2008, 6)

As their primary interest lies in “explor[ing] the link between rhetoric and the presidency” (6), Campbell and Jamieson focus “on those rhetorical genres that most clearly illustrate the tie between rhetorical action and the maintenance and the development of the presidency” (6), and the genres they identify therefore represent “constitutionally authorized types of discourse and their offspring” (337).

In their original study, Campbell and Jamieson identified nine different genres. Following a chronological structure, they started with a president's first public rhetorical act, the inaugural address, and then discussed State of the Union addresses, veto messages, war rhetoric, rhetoric to forestall impeachment, rhetoric of impeachment, pardoning messages, and farewell addresses. In their updated account, Campbell and Jamieson add two genres to this list, and also establish three macrostructural groups into which they divide the eleven presidential genres. This new structure reflects, as Campbell and Jamieson explain, “the relative control of the president over the deeds called for by the words of the message” (335).

The first of these groups contains "rhetorical acts that are exercised by the president alone and involve investiture." The four genres belonging to this group are (i) the inaugural addresses of an elected or re-elected president, (ii) the inaugural addresses of a vice president ascending to the presidency, (iii) the national eulogy, and (iv) the rhetoric of pardoning (27).

The second group of presidential genres "focuses on rhetoric that involves interaction between the executive and Congress." Here, Campbell and Jamieson list "State of the Union addresses, veto messages, signing statements that constitute *de facto* item vetoes, and war rhetoric." These genres are reflective of the constitutional tug-of-war between the presidency and Congress discussed previously, and Campbell and Jamieson "group[ed] these genres together in order to focus attention on shared powers and on increases in executive power facilitated in part by presidential use of rhetoric" (27).

The third group of genres consists of three instances of what Campbell and Jamieson call "rhetoric of divestiture." These include (i) "presidential rhetoric of self-defense," (ii) the rhetoric of impeachment, and (iii) farewell addresses (255–307).

As mentioned, compared to their 1990 book, the genres discussed in *Presidents Creating the Presidency* include two additional genres, the national eulogy (belonging to the first group mentioned above) and the signing statement, i.e., a statement that the president attached to a legislation when signing it and that "re-interprets or modifies the legislation" (belonging to the second group). Campbell and Jamieson refer to this statement as the "*de facto* item veto" (21).

In the following, I will summarize and, where necessary, complement the constitutive elements of the genres Campbell and Jamieson's typology according to the three main categories established, focusing in particular on functional aspects.

2.5.1.1 *Rhetoric of investiture*

This type of presidential discourse, in which "the president engages in the creation of meaning unconstrained by the requirements, demands, or prerogatives of the other two branches of government" (335), represents instances of presidential discourse unrestrained by institutional and/or constitutional demands. As Campbell and Jamieson state, "[i]n each, the president has wide latitude to define the situation." As I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, the inaugural addresses of an elected or re-elected president are characterized by a stable set of pragmatic functions, starting with the need to "unify the audience by reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony." Fulfilling this function is of special importance after prolonged and hard fought campaigns.

The second inaugural function, the rehearsal of “communal values drawn from the past,” plays an important role in the unification of the people on the basis of defining American national identity, and also serves to support a third function, i.e., “set[ting] forth the political principles that will guide the new administration” The inaugural address, finally, also needs to show that the newly elected or re-elected president “demonstrate[s] through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions” (31).

The inaugural address of a vice president ascending to the presidency (for example Johnson in 1963 or Ford in 1973) represents a challenge that is very different to that of a regular inaugural address. As Campbell and Jamieson write, these special inaugurals are characterized by a situation in which the populace “is threatened because it has lost its leader” and “needs assurance that communal institutions will survive” (57). This situation becomes even more pressing after the violent death of a president. Inaugurals of ascendant vice presidents thus

often differ from other inaugurals in eulogizing the deceased presidents, in affirming that that president’s policies or general principles will shape the actions of the new administration, and in incorporating a level of legislative detail inappropriate to the standard inaugural. (57)

The national eulogy (73), a speech given in response to a national tragedy, such as the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, the Oklahoma City bombing, or September 11, sees the president “assum[ing] a priestly role to make sense of a catastrophe and transform it from evidence of destruction into a symbol of national resilience” (73). Other eulogies include public acts of remembrance of former presidents, such as George W. Bush’s eulogy for Reagan in 2004. More than being mere vehicles of remembrance and unification, presidential eulogies also take on a proactive dimension with the president assuring the public that the events that led to the catastrophe are being dealt with to avoid a repetition of the traumatic event in the future and that the people responsible for the tragedy have been or will be punished. As Campbell and Jamieson also state, a presidential eulogy is the beginning of “a process by which physical death becomes spiritual continuity” (103) and by which the death of individuals become sacrifices for the community (see the analysis of the sacrifice theme in the next chapter).

The rhetoric of pardoning accompanies the president’s use of the “power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment,” given to the office in Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. While pardoning rhetoric shows the chief executive “acting in the presidential role as symbolic head of state,” presidents nevertheless need to “demonstrat[e] that this is an opportune time for action” and to “justif[y] the pardon as for the public good” (1990, 168–169).

2.5.1.2 *Rhetorical acts representing interaction with Congress*

The second group of presidential genres is characterized by the fact that it "involves interaction between the executive and Congress" (2008, 27). The genres contained in this group – "State of the Union addresses, veto messages, signing statements that constitute de facto item vetoes, and war rhetoric" – are symbolic for the constitutional idea of shared powers but also often try, as I have shown above, to tip the power balance in favor of the executive. Thus, speeches belonging to this genre do not only "invite the cooperation of the legislative branch" but also "assert the right of the executive to act in domains in which the Constitution gives another branch specific powers" (335).

The annual State of the Union address represents the most important instance of this genre group. As Campbell and Jamieson point out, "the annual message is a uniquely presidential genre and, as such, helps to maintain the role of the executive" (137). While acknowledging the diversity of the genre, Campbell and Jamieson identify three processes that characterize State of the Union addresses, i.e., "(1) public meditations on values, (2) assessments of information and issues, and (3) policy recommendations" (139). In general, according to Campbell and Jamieson, State of the Union addresses are related closely to "a president's most recent inaugural," as they allow presidents to "revive the principles to which they committed their presidencies and show how those principles will be reflected in their legislative programs" (162). Rhetorically, the State of the Union is a hybrid, combining epideictic and deliberative elements. As Campbell and Jamieson state:

Given the ritualistic character of the annual message and the need to celebrate the values underlying its assessments and recommendations, ceremonial rhetoric is appropriate, but given the constitutional mandate and a need to establish presidential legislative leadership, deliberative rhetoric is needed to justify policy recommendations and to establish legislative priorities. (162–163)

For any president, the State of the Union address is a major legislative tool. It is also a major public event, broadcast live on national television and witnessed by millions of Americans. As I have shown above, the State of the Union address and the roles involved in it play a significant role in affirming both the identity and the supremacy of the presidency within the American system of government. As Campbell and Jamieson explain,

the State of the Union address is central to the maintenance of the presidency in two ways. First, the address is delivered on a formal, ceremonial occasion that recognizes the president as both symbolic and real head of state. ... Second, the address marks the occasion on which the president has the greatest opportunity

to exercise legislative leadership, linking national history to present assessments and recommendations for future policy. (164)

The presidential veto, i.e., the president's refusal to sign a bill passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate into law, is an important instrument for the president-as-legislator, especially given the rarity of congressional overrides of presidential vetoes. Presidential vetoes are reaction to specific pieces of legislation favored by a congressional majority. They are accompanied by veto messages that note the president's objection to the bill, explain the reasons for the president's rejection of the bill, and urge Congress to reconsider the bill in light of the president's response. "As part of the system of checks and balances, the veto message is one means by which presidents act to preserve the system of which they are a part and to sustain the legislative agenda developed in their State of the Union addresses" (165). The veto "and its accompanying message [thus become] an integral part of the legislative process and the function of the veto – to prompt reconsideration – brings the executive and the legislature into potential conflict" (165).

While veto messages show the degree of political activism of individual presidents, they are also "indicator[s] of presidential conceptions of the institution of the presidency" (194), highlighting the legislative role of the chief executive and serving to increase the power of presidency. In that aspect, veto messages are very similar to another genre identified by Campbell and Jamieson, the so-called line item veto. This variety of the presidential veto "occurs when, after signing legislation, a president issues a statement taking exception to one or more of its provisions" (195). These documents are referred to as "signing statements" (195), and like the veto message, they represent reactions to Congressional (discursive) action. The signing statement, or *de facto* item veto, as Campbell and Jamieson call them, is characterized by the fact that

the president circumscribes legislation he has recently signed by taking exception to specific provisions on constitutional grounds. In the process, in the name of exercising the president's constitutional obligations, he deploys lines of argument legitimized by past presidents. (196)

As a type of presidential discourse the signing statement is more reactive than both the veto message and the State of the Union address. Nevertheless, it is "a form of rhetoric that asserts a wider presidential share of interbranch powers in the name of protecting existing presidential powers" (213). Campbell and Jamieson conclude: "The *de facto* item veto is a strong assertion of presidential power in the presence of what the president casts as encroachment or constitutional overreach by the legislative branch" (336).

The final presidential genre resulting from interaction between the presidency and Congress is subsumed by Campbell and Jamieson under the header "war rhetoric." War rhetoric "either invites congressional action in the form of a declaration of war or justifies presidential action in its absence" (335). It is "intimately related to the ongoing struggle between the president and Congress, refereed by the courts, over what the Constitution permits the president to do" (218). As a genre, presidential war rhetoric

manifests five pivotal characteristics: (1) every element in it proclaims that the momentous decision to resort to force is deliberate, the product of thoughtful consideration; (2) forceful intervention is justified through a chronicle or narrative from which argumentative claims are drawn; (3) the audience is exhorted to unanimity of purpose and total commitment; (4) the rhetoric not only justifies the use of force but also seeks to legitimate presidential assumption of the extraordinary powers of the commander in chief; and, as a function of these other characteristics, (5) strategic misrepresentations play an unusually significant role in its appeals. (221)

As I will show in Chapter 4, these generic, or architextual, imperatives of presidential war speeches are closely related to and supported by the persuasive patterns of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext. As we will also see, these patterns are not restricted to war speeches but can be found in other genres as well.

2.5.1.3 *Rhetoric of divestiture*

This final category of presidential genres comprises three sub-genres: (i) "presidential rhetoric of self-defense" (255), (ii) "the rhetoric of impeachment" (277), and (iii) "farewell addresses" (307). Presidential rhetoric of self-defense, which Campbell and Jamieson previously referred to as "rhetoric to forestall impeachment" (1990, 127),

follows three basic lines of arguments: (1) [Presidents] have kept their oath of office to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution; (2) the actions of their accusers undermine the Constitution; and (3) the president is responsible ultimately to the people and to the Constitution, not to the accusers. (ibid., 267)

Presidential rhetoric of self-defense, according to Campbell and Jamieson, "is part of a dialogue about the limits of executive powers" (2008, 342). Here, as with regard to "rhetoric of impeachment" (277), presidential discourse results from a reaction to Congressional discourse. This "reciprocal relationship" (277) unfolds at a "moment when Congress, which can define what is an impeachable offense, has greater control over the rhetorical situation than does the president" (335). This fact, as Campbell and Jamieson explain, changes

the ordinary rhetorical conditions of presidential discourse in four significant ways ...: (1) the president is physically absent from the scene of debate; (2) the president is compelled to respond to specific charges at a particular time and place; (3) in responding to charges that the oath of office has been violated, the president's use of the strategy of apologia is severely limited; and (4) there is an immediate audience that has to reach a formal verdict expressed in a vote. (304)

Farewell addresses, finally, are "produced in response to an institutional need for a ritual of departure" (307). They "emerge at the end of presidencies and symbolize moments of continuity and change" (335–336). As such, they fulfill an important institutional function, underlining the fact that the presidential office is always larger than its individual, temporary occupants. Campbell and Jamieson have identified four main generic components of presidential farewell addresses, which can also include "leave-taking rhetoric" (309) employed as part of a president's final State of the Union address:

(1) [Farewell addresses] occur when the president can assume a persona combining the role of leader and visionary; (2) if the legacy is to be successfully bequeathed, it must be consistent with the character of the president and with the events and rhetoric of that administration; (3) consistent with its character as epideictic rhetoric, the legacy must be offered for contemplation rather than action, but may contain warnings; and (4) enduring legacies are encapsulated in a memorable phrase or sentence that reminds the citizenry of an enduring truth about our system of government. (310)

Campbell and Jamieson follow an approach in which, as they state, "rhetorical form follows institutional function" (10). It thus reflects a constitutional and intra-systemic perspective of presidential discourse. Fields, in his 1996 study *Union of Words: A History of Presidential Eloquence*, follows a more biographical and chorological approach and casts a wider net than Campbell and Jamieson, and also includes pre-presidential and campaign discourse in his typology. Proposing to "examine the different oratorical occasions that define a presidential career" (1996, 24), his categories include the declaration of candidacy as well as the candidate's nomination acceptance speech. A candidate's election victory speech should also be added to these (pre-) presidential genres. While presidential campaign discourse is dominated by minor addresses, above all stump speeches, there can be, on occasions, also speeches that become major national affairs. Examples of these include Kennedy's address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in Houston on September 21 1960, with which he tried to assuage voters' fear about electing a Roman Catholic president, or Barack Obama's address on race, entitled "A More Perfect Union," in Philadelphia on March 18, 2008, in which he distanced himself from his former pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Public

appearances on popular television shows – see for example, Barack and Michelle Obama's appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show in October 2006, or Bill and Hillary Clinton's campaign-saving appearance on 60 Minutes in April 1992 – are also an important part of campaign discourse. Finally, ever since John Eaton's (1824) *Life of Jackson*, presidential campaigns have been accompanied by campaign biographies, a genre that nowadays is often presented in multimedia form.

Like Campbell and Jamieson, Fields (1996) includes the inaugural address, the State of the Union address and the farewell address in his list of presidential genres. Furthermore, he proposes a rather open category that he refers to as the "rhetoric of special occasions," describing them as "executive messages that are not dictated simply by the presidential calendar." Within this category, Fields first identifies special addresses "that respond to 'intrusive' events." These include presidential war addresses, including speeches calling for or reacting to a Congressional declaration of war as well as speeches justifying military actions in the absence of such a declaration. Secondly, Fields identifies special messages "seek[ing] to educate and change the audience." This type of speech is typical for "commemorative events that allow presidents to recast history and the audience according to their own interpretation and ... to make a connection between the past and some aspect of their own time" (ibid.). Fields points to Reagan's address commemorating the 40th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 1984 as prototypical of commemorative, educational discourse.

Change-oriented speeches, finally, represent a presidential attempt at influencing the attitudes of the populace, to set, as Fields puts it, "America on a different course." Fields cites Theodore Roosevelt's Western Swing speaking tour and Johnson's 1965 Right to Vote speech as example of special addresses aiming at changing the nation's attitude (1996, 229–310). With regard to the identity creating potential of presidential discourse, this type of speeches, while outside the scope of this study, would certainly warrant further research.

2.5.2 Additional presidential genres

Both typologies discussed above focus on major presidential addresses, i.e., speeches that are broadcast, often at prime time, via television to a national audience. As Figure 30 shows, major addresses are relatively few, averaging 4.7 per year since the end of World War II. In addition to these major discursive events, there are, however, a myriad of minor addresses and public utterances of America's chief executive. These minor addresses are often to be seen within the context of governing as a permanent campaign and include press conferences, town-hall meetings, radio addresses, and many more.

President	Total per term	Annual average
Truman I	17	3.4
Truman II	15	3.8
Eisenhower I	21	5.3
Eisenhower II	20	5
Kennedy	15	5
Johnson	23	4.6
Nixon I	23	5.8
Nixon II	13	8.1
Ford	12	5.2
Carter	17	4.3
Reagan I	20	5
Reagan II	27	6.8
George H. W. Bush	17	4.3
Clinton I	14	3.5
Clinton II	9	2.3
George W. Bush I	16	4
George W. Bush II	15	3.8
Total	313	4.7

Figure 30. Annual number of major presidential speeches (sources: Ragsdale 1987; Wooley and Peters)

A good way of getting an idea about the large amount of texts produced by the presidency is to look at the so-called document categories included in the Public Papers of the Presidents published by the Office of the Federal Register. The following categories are taken from the public papers of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush:

Addresses to the Nation; Addresses and Remarks; Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings; Bill Vetoes; Communications to Congress; Communications to Federal Agencies; Directives; Fact Sheets; Interviews With the News Media (with the sub-categories Exchanges with reporters; Interviews, Joint news conferences; and News conferences); Joint Statements; Letters and Messages; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials; Notices; Orders; Resignations and Retirements; Statements by the President; Statements Other Than Presidential.

On average, presidents have more than 130 public appearances a year (see Ragsdale 1987, 173–179), a number that shows the essential role that public discourse plays in the conduct of the highest office of the United States.

The consequences of generic intertextuality are far-reaching. The generic nature of presidential discourse represents a coordinated effort by individual presidents to strengthen the office of the presidency, a fact that Campbell and Jamieson refer to as "the constitutive power of presidential rhetorical genres" (2008, 340). They add: "The recurrence of recognizable forms of discourse in and of itself gives the presidency a sense of continuity and stability greater than provided by the rhetoric of a single occupant" (*ibid.*, 341). It is, however, important to note that presidential genres, while acting as facilitators in projecting a stable picture of the institution, also restrict the discursive options of the presidential speaker. As Campbell and Jamieson state, "the structure of some discourses is generically constrained" (*ibid.*, 10).

The generic approaches to presidential discourse discussed above are dominated by functional as well as situational concerns. As Campbell and Jamieson explain, "what gives coherence to the elements we identify in each genre is the sustaining function that they perform jointly" (*ibid.*, 12). They add, "the functions of each genre remain constant, but the rhetorical means through which they can be performed are variable" (*ibid.*, 342), and "the connective tissue is performance of the role of president in a situationally appropriate fashion" (*ibid.*, 12).

Consequently, "a generic perspective points out those symbolic similarities among presidencies that contribute to the institution's continuity and identity" (*ibid.*, 343). Yet, what a generic perspective alone does not do – as opposed to an intertextual approach – is to see those discursive linkages that transcend the generic boundaries of presidential genres and to fully account for the critical potential that this cross-generic relations offer.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the most prominent of presidential genres, the inaugural address, and its main generic features. Going beyond these primarily functional architextual elements, however, I will focus primarily on what I refer to as thematic intertextuality.

CHAPTER 3

“To declare to the world”

Inaugural addresses, eternal topoi, and American civil religion

Of all presidential genres, the inaugural address is undoubtedly the most prestigious and, at least from the point of view of individual presidents, historically the most important one. Inaugural addresses are meticulously prepared documents, and work on the first draft of the speech often starts on the day after Election Day.³⁶ Inaugural addresses are written with an eye to the history books, yet, as critics point out, more often than not they fail to be historic.³⁷ The memorable ones, however, or at least parts thereof, enter the nation's echo chamber. Kennedy's "Ask not" has become as much part of America's rhetorical thesaurus as has Franklin D. Roosevelt's "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Presidential inaugural discourse represents an essential part of America's memorial culture and architecture. Like many memorable phrases from his twelve-year tenure, the Fear quote from Roosevelt's first inaugural address is engraved on one of the walls of the first of four rooms of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington D.C. (the four rooms representing Roosevelt's four presidential terms). Similar engravings, including excerpts from two inaugural addresses and the Declaration of Independence, can be found inside the Jefferson Memorial, only a few steps away from the Roosevelt Memorial. The most significant monumental recognition of presidential discourse can be found on the inside of the North and South walls of the Lincoln Memorial. Visitors to this American temple will find the text of Lincoln's Gettysburg address on their left hand as they enter the memorial, and the text of Lincoln's Second Inaugural on the wall to their right. In between the two speeches, and directly facing the memorial's entrance and, beyond that, the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol, is an oversized

36. Given that successful lines from campaign speeches often make it into the inaugural address, their drafting process has often already started by the time of the presidential election.

37. As the USA Today reported on the day of George W. Bush's second inaugural address: "In an interview last week, Bush said his inaugural address isn't the kind of speech that will prompt cheers, but he hopes future historians will pronounce it memorable. 'This is aimed for history,' Bush said. 'People, I think, will applaud, but it is not geared for an audience'" (Keen 2005, A4).

marble statue of Lincoln. The pedestal that he is sitting on represents both an altar and a throne.

The iconicity of the Lincoln Memorial thus symbolizes the close connection between the discourse of American presidents and their most important symbolic role as what is often referred to as the high priest of American civil religion. Nowhere is this unity more visible and more dominant than in presidential inaugural addresses. An inaugural address does not only represent a political rite of passage or the transition or confirmation of executive power. It is, first and foremost, a cultural event, marking the induction of the high priest and establishing the president as the interpreter-in-chief of the nation's past, present, and future.

From an intertextual perspective, inaugural addresses offer at least three avenues of analysis. First, as a particular presidential text type, i.e., a genre guided by clearly established textual, functional, and situational norms, they represent what Genette calls an architextual phenomenon. I have discussed this notion of architextuality or generic intertextuality in general in the previous chapter, and will analyze the specific generic features of the inaugural address below (see Section 3.1). Second, inaugural addresses are a major source of material intertextuality, or allusions, as discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition to these two more traditional types of intertextual relations, inaugural addresses also show evidence of another, generally less-acknowledged type of intertextuality, a type that I refer to as thematic intertextuality. By this I understand to mean that presidential speeches, especially the mostly celebratory discourse displayed during a presidential inauguration, are interconnected through the constant presence of a standardized set of American topoi.³⁸ In particular, and as outlined during the discussion of our hypotheses in Chapter 1, I expect to find a fixed set of themes that occur in the vast majority of speeches and whose presence has been decidedly stable over the course of inaugural history. These themes represent a discursive corridor within which a newly elected or re-elected president has to maneuver. In addition, I also expect to find a set of fixed semantic and dramatic relationships between at least some of the themes identified. Finally, I expect to find a correlation between individual themes and theme clusters on the one hand and their pragmatic functions within presidential inaugural address on the other hand. I expect these functions to go beyond both individual discursive contexts and generic conventions, and to pursue a political agenda of justifying presidential actions and a cultural agenda of identity creation and affirmation.

38. Winfried Herget uses the term “ideologische Intertextualität” (2005, 763) to refer to these topical links as intratextual phenomena, an expression that stresses both the recurrence of specific thematic patterns and their pragmatic purpose. Pfister points to the related notion of myths as representing intertextual nodes (1985b, 56).

In the following, I will first provide a more general introduction to inaugural addresses and their generic elements, paying special attention to contextual and pragmatic dimensions of this primary presidential genre. While it will become abundantly clear that inaugurals are significantly influenced by architextual, i.e., generic, constraints, we will see that the functions of an inaugural address go beyond those identified in Campbell and Jamieson's seminal study. This additional pragmatic dimension is closely related to the above-mentioned role of the American president as the high priest of the nation's civil religion. As a set of quasi-religious national "beliefs, symbols, and rituals" (Bellah 1967, 3–4), civil religion "nurture[s] social solidarity [and] can be seen as a secular functional alternative to ... church-oriented religions" (Woolley 2008, 4). Finally, I will present the analysis of a corpus-based content analysis of selected themes in American presidential inaugural addresses.

3.1 The inaugural address as a presidential genre

Unlike the State of the Union messages, the inaugural address is not a constitutionally mandated presidential genre. The tradition of the inaugural address, like that of many public presidential acts, is one established by the nation's first president. In addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress immediately after he had sworn the oath of office on April 30, 1789,³⁹ George Washington went beyond the procedural requirements for the inauguration of a new president described in Article II, Section 1 of the American Constitution. In doing so, Washington established precedence for what Robert E. Denton refers to as "unique rhetorical events in American history" (quoted in Ryan 1993b, xi).

The choreography of an inauguration, e.g., with regard to the seating of the audience, the taking of the oath of office – including the presence of the first family and a bible (usually a family bible) – and the delivery of the inaugural address have been remarkably stable over the course of the nation's history. As stable as these images and the situational context of a presidential inaugural address, are the functions and themes typically found in the speeches. The generic norms of inaugural addresses thus lead to a standardization of this primary presidential speech act.

39. Washington's inaugural address was originally scheduled for March 4, 1789, but had to be moved to April 30 because of delays in the ballot count. Until 1933, all inaugurations were celebrated on March 4 (or March 5, if the 4th was a Sunday), leaving a rather lengthy Congressional lame-duck period. Since 1937, after the ratification of the 20th Amendment, the inauguration has been held on January 20 (or January 21, in case January 20 falls on a Sunday).

The generic and situational constraints also have an impact on the lengths of the inaugural speech. As I have shown in Chapter 2, inaugural addresses have developed along the lines of relatively stable trends, with the average length decreasing from about 3,000 words per speech in the nineteenth century to slightly fewer than 2,000 words in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with the average lengths of post-World War II speeches closely resembling those of speeches in the early Republic.

For modern presidents, this leaves a 15-to-20-minute window for a “cultural performance” (Ericson 1997, 728) whose multiple objectives include, in the words of Kennedy’s speechwriter Theodore Sorensen, a summary of “the principles and goals that the President hopes will characterize his next four years in office” (PBS 1997). In addition, and as mentioned above, an inaugural address needs to “set a tone,” as Raymond Price, a speechwriter for Richard Nixon, states. According to Price, an inaugural address is aimed at

introducing [the President] (a) to the people of the nation for the first time actually as their president, not as a candidate, and (b) to other world leaders, watching to see what directions he charts for America’s role in the world and its relations with friends and adversaries. To the world audience, he needs to demonstrate understanding but also firmness, resolve and leadership. (ibid.)

These statements by two prominent former White House speechwriters about the pragmatic aspects of the inaugural address allude to the speech’s important deliberative and personal dimensions, a focus that is underrepresented in Campbell and Jamieson’s generic approach, which I will discuss in the following. I will come back to the criticism after having introduced their generic model.

3.1.1 Generic elements of inaugural addresses

As “a highly-ritualized type of speech” (Goetsch 2000, 340), the inaugural address represents the key component of a presidential inauguration ceremony. As Campbell and Jamieson point out, “inauguration is a rite of passage, a ritual of transition in which a newly elected president is invested with the office of the presidency” (1990, 15). In the inaugural address, presidents routinely acknowledge and celebrate the change, or confirmation, of executive power brought about by popular vote – Kennedy’s “passing of the torch” (“Inaugural Address” 1).

The inaugural address is a unique presidential genre and pursues a number of stable objectives while at the same time being restricted through specific generic demands. In their seminal 1990 study *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall

Jamieson identified "four interrelated elements that define the essential presidential inaugural address and differentiate it from other types of epideictic rhetoric" (ibid., 5). In particular,

[t]he presidential inaugural (1) unifies the audience by reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony; (2) rehearses communal values drawn from the past; (3) sets forth the political principles that will govern the new administration; and (4) demonstrates through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions. (ibid.)

Eighteen years later, in an updated edition of their 1990 book, Campbell and Jamieson stress the fact that these core inaugural functions

must be achieved through means appropriate to epideictic address; that is, while urging contemplation rather than action, focusing on the present while incorporating the past and future, and praising the institution of the presidency and the values and form of the government of which it is a part, all processes through which the covenant between the president and the people is renewed. (2000, 31)

Beasley, in her analysis of the identity creating power of presidential discourse, supports this view, stating that inaugural addresses are "both ritualistic and epideictic, a combination that invites chief executives to promote certain basic understandings of American political community that transcend their own personal agendas and partisan views" (2004, 10). Like State of the Union addresses, according to Beasley, inaugural addresses "can be expected to teach American culture to its listeners, giving chief executives the chance to remind the American people what they *ought* to know or believe" (ibid.; emphasis in the original).

As Lee Sigelman points out, in the ritual of the "inaugural address, some elements are obligatory and others are proscribed" (Sigelman 1996, 81). In the following, I will take a closer look at the four "genre imperatives" (ibid.) of inaugural addresses as described by Campbell and Jamieson.

The most pressing political function of the inaugural address is to "unif[y] the audience by reconstituting its members as the people, who can witness and ratify the ceremony" (2000, 31). The need to reconstitute the American people is of particular importance after hard-fought presidential election campaigns that leave the populace divided into two or more bitterly opposed political camps. In his second inaugural, Ronald Reagan, for example, uses an allusion to the rivalry of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (see also Chapter 5) to call for national unity, saying that "A bond was reestablished between those two who had helped create this government of ours" ("First Inaugural Address" 56). Friedrich Gester, like

Campbell and Jamieson, also sees the solidarity creating, integrative function of the inaugural address as the genre's most important characteristic (see 1993, 39).

The presidential oath of office and the inaugural address merge together to form a joint pledge with which the elected president and the American people celebrate and renew the historic bond – "this great national covenant" (J. Q. Adams, "Inaugural Address") – between the body politic and the nation's highest office holder. As Campbell and Jamieson state, inaugural addresses "are an essential element in a ritual of transition in which the covenant between the citizenry and their leaders is renewed" (1990, 14). The legitimacy of the presidential office and the individual occupying it is based on this mutual pledge – "Our covenant with ourselves" (Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Second Inaugural" 1) – a fact that is explicitly acknowledged repeatedly in presidential inaugural addresses. Benjamin Harrison, for example, states, "[t]he oath taken in the presence of the people becomes a mutual covenant" ("Inaugural Address"), and Lyndon B. Johnson proclaims: "Under this covenant of justice, liberty, and union we have become a nation – prosperous, great, and mighty" ("Inaugural Address" 73).

The idea that this covenant is a divinely favored one is also continuously present in presidential inaugurals. One of the most impressive variations of the *annuit coeptis* theme can be found in the 1889 address of Benjamin Harrison, in which the integrative function of the inaugural that Gester underlines is also very prominent:

Surely I do not misinterpret the spirit of the occasion when I assume that the whole body of the people covenant with me and with each other to-day to support and defend the Constitution and the Union of the States, to yield willing obedience to all the laws and each to every other citizen his equal civil and political rights. Entering thus solemnly into covenant with each other, we may reverently invoke and confidently expect the favor and help of Almighty God....

("Inaugural Address")

This passage contains a cluster of civil religious terms, such as Constitution, rule of law, or civil liberties, that show the nature and importance of the values underlying the American covenant.

The role of the people is of essential importance for the inaugural ritual. "Without the presence of the people," write Campbell and Jamieson, "the rite of presidential investiture cannot be completed" (1990, 17). The testimonial function of the audience finds its expression in a number of linguistic choices such as "to witness," "testimony," or "presence" (of the people), and in the composition of the opening formulae of inaugural addresses, e.g., "Fellow Citizens" or "Fellow Americans" (see Chapter 2 for historical trends and changes in the salutations of presidential inaugural and State of the Union addresses).

The inaugural's ceremonial character also stresses the timelessness of the event – "the fusion of the past and future of the nation in an eternal present" (ibid., 36) – that Theodore Sorensen, who was closely involved in writing Kennedy's inaugural address, points out: "[Kennedy's] speech [was] designed to address the American people of our time but have meaning for all people for all time. For they embody the best of our heritage from the past and the best of our hopes for the future" (1965, 245). Dörner supports this view, referring to inaugural addresses as a rhetorical institution that ritualistically expresses American identity and confirms the nation's belief in its political and cultural tradition (see 1993, 285).

The ritualistic nature of the presidential inauguration is closely related to the second defining element of inaugural address, the rehearsal of "communal values drawn from the past" (Campbell and Jamieson 2008, 31). The president's ability to talk about the nation's common past and to interpret it on behalf of the nation has an immediate effect on the inauguration. "In modern politics," writes Fields in his historical analysis of major presidential speech types, "inaugurals mark the transition from candidates talking about themselves to presidents – who are presidential precisely to the extent that they can talk about something other than themselves – who give shape to national aspiration" (1996, 115).

In this context, the president's use of the nation's past and his ability to link past, present, and future into a narrative about the nation's self-understanding are of great significance. With a view to the primary, unifying function of inaugural addresses, they stress that "the traditional values rehearsed by the president need to be selected and framed in ways that unify the audience" (2008, 36). As Fields writes, presidential inaugurations are acts of both "disruption and continuation" (1996, 115), and "in order to be invested, presidents must demonstrate their qualifications for office by venerating the past and showing that the traditions of the presidency will continue unbroken with them" (Campbell and Jamieson 2008, 37). In this endeavor, "the language of conservation, preservation, maintenance, and renewal pervades the speeches" (ibid.). In inaugural addresses, history is thus "defined by great events in the nation's life – together with the individuals who played a part in them – that tower over succeeding generations as standards of both accomplishment and faithfulness" (Fields 1996, 115). The most prominent examples of these American sites of memory are the Revolution, the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the Second World War. Furthermore, as Campbell and Jamieson state, "in inaugural addresses the past is conserved by honoring past presidents" (37).

The third main task of a presidential inaugural address is to set "forth the political principles that will govern the new administration" (Campbell and Jamieson

1990, 21). Going beyond this interpretation, Fields stresses that this task does not only have a political but also a strong personal dimension, stating:

An inaugural address, particularly one that marks a change in administration, is the most carefully written and elaborately rehearsed speech of any president's career, and it provides a remarkably reliable indication of what matters to a new president and how he wants to be perceived. (1996, 114–115)

William Taft acknowledges this function explicitly, stating that “[t]he office of an inaugural address is to give a summary outline of the main policies of the new administration, so far as they can be anticipated” (“Inaugural Address”).

As Campbell and Jamieson stress, “all inaugurals not only lay down political principles but also present and develop such principles in predictable ways” (1990, 21). In the inauguration ritual it is the people's task to “ratify the president's formal ascent to power by acknowledging the oath taking, witnessing the enactment of the presidential role, and by accepting the principles laid down to guide an administration” (*ibid.*, 17).

For Campbell and Jamieson, the declaration of principles is of a general, non-committal nature and is not followed by concrete political actions. “[S]pecific policies are proposed for contemplation, not action. Proposals are not an end in themselves but illustrations of the political philosophy of the speaker” (*ibid.*, 22). For them, this aspect differentiates the epideictic rhetoric of the inaugural address from the deliberative style of State of the Union addresses. “This contemplative, expository function differentiates policy proposals embedded in inaugurals from those in State of the Union addresses, where such proposals are presented for congressional action” (*ibid.*). This relatively strict categorization of inaugural addresses as non-deliberative discourse is one of the main points of critique of Campbell and Jamieson's generic approach (see below).

A fourth and final feature of presidential inaugurals, according to Campbell and Jamieson, is the new chief executive's public enactment of the role of president and a demonstration of “an appreciation of the requirements and limitations of the executive in our system of government” (*ibid.*, 42). The inaugural address thus calls on the election winner to demonstrate humility and to leave his campaign persona behind. “To complete and ratify the president's ascent to power, the inaugural address demonstrates rhetorically that this person can function as a leader within the constitutionally established limits of executive power and can perform the public, symbolic role of president of all the people” (*ibid.*, 23).

Campbell and Jamieson stress that the inaugural address needs to focus on the institution of the presidency, so as to allow the speaker move from candidate-centered campaign rhetoric to the bi-partisan discourse of a national leader: “If an inaugural address is to function as part of a rite of investiture, presidents must

speak in the public role of president. An inaugural would not fulfill this function if the address pressed forward the personality or personal history of the incoming president" (ibid., 42). While it is true, at least in a general sense, that "the functions of personal material in an inaugural are clearly different from the functions of like material in campaign oratory" (ibid., 23), there is nevertheless a significant and strategically employed amount of personal presidential self-reference in inaugural addresses, be it within the discursive pattern of the modern jeremiad (see Austermühl 2014) or through the use of allusions to individual role models discussed in Chapter 5.

The public display of presidential humility in inaugural addresses includes the acceptance of the constitutional limitations of the presidential office. As Campbell and Jamieson explain, "[i]n recognizing the limits of presidential power, inaugurals not only affirm the balance of power and locate executive initiatives in the mandate of the people, they also offer evidence of humility" (1990, 25). As discussed in Chapter 2, however, and despite the fact that "the president humbly acknowledges deficiencies, humbly accepts the burdens of office, and humbly invokes God's blessing" (ibid., 26), modern presidential discourse, including inaugural discourse, clearly aims at establishing the primacy of unilateral executive action, a fact that raises doubt about the amount of presidential humility identified by Campbell and Jamieson. Campbell and Jamieson are quite right, though, that the public display of individual humility is always connected with an acknowledgement of the guiding role of a higher power.

One of the criticism of Campbell and Jamieson's generic approach is that it is seen as analytically limiting, a fact that, for example, can be seen in their restrictive interpretation of the role of personal references mentioned above. As Ryan writes in his introduction to *The Inaugural Addresses of Twentieth-Century American Presidents*: "At least in the case of the inaugural address, genre theory hinders more than it helps. It invites the critic to confirm, which is usually the case, or to confute, which is rarely the case, certain generic tenets at the expense of examining the inaugural speech *in situ*" (1993c, xvii). Ryan himself proposes a "tabula rasa" approach based on individual case studies (ibid.), warning that the analysis of presidential speeches in general should not be reduced to a simple process of ticking off the generic elements identified by Campbell and Jamieson and in doing so ignoring other, more idiosyncratic or circumstantial factors.

In addition to the restrictiveness of the generic model, Ryan criticizes the fact that Campbell and Jamieson see presidential inaugural addresses as exclusively epideictic in character, "urging contemplation not action" (1990, 15). For Ryan, the focus on the celebratory nature of the inaugural address can lead to a neglect of the persuasive and action-oriented dimensions of presidential discourse in general, including inaugural addresses. As Ryan puts it, "to quibble over the

mix of contemplation and deliberation is to miss an inaugural's persuasive function" (1993c, xviii). Bernard Duffy and Ryan also point to the incompatibility of the three Aristotelian genres of rhetoric – deliberative, forensic, epideictic – with modern forms of political and presidential communication: "Aristotle did not account for pulpit persuasions ... or such distinctive forms of oratory as the presidential inaugural address, which uses the occasion of ceremonial speaking but seeks the purposes of deliberative oratory" (1987, xix). Continuing this thought, Ryan argues that "[i]f one must use the Aristotelian system, and I would rather not, then the argument is that inaugurals are instances of deliberative rhetoric wherein action, not contemplation, is the persuasive goal" (1993c, xviii–xix). Nevertheless, and while I share Ryan's point of view regarding the potentially limiting effects of genre analysis, it is worth pointing out that Campbell and Jamieson's interpretation of the presidential inaugural address as a primarily epideictic genre is shared by a number of other scholars (see Section 3.1.3), which seems to indicate that the discussion about the epideictic-deliberative divide warrants further development.

3.1.2 Presidential inaugural addresses and American civil religion

Inauguration and inaugural addresses, as is often stated, invest the chief executive with the role of high priest of America's civil religion. As such, presidents publicly display the nation's religiosity as well as the nation's general acceptance of God as the ultimate sovereign and its own status as a chosen people. In addition, as "a spiritual guide to the principles and ideals uniting Americans" (Goetsch 2000, 334), the presidential inaugural address becomes a quasi-religious celebration of the American nation itself and the values that it represents.

The four main tasks of inaugural addresses identified by Campbell and Jamieson must be implemented within a civil religious framework, in which the president is responsible not only for interpreting the nation's sacred documents, above all the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, but also for publicly declaring, on behalf of the entire populace, America's national faith.⁴⁰

40. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, the interpretation of the national founding documents is carried out through a complex system of allusions that aims at constructing and controlling the nation's collective memory.

The term "civil religion," while dating back to Rousseau's writings about the social contract, is mostly associated with the work of American sociologist Robert E. Bellah and his 1967 article "Civil Religion in America."⁴¹

For Bellah, civil religion represents both a kind of meta-religion, one that does not celebrate a specific god and that encompasses other religions, and a religious interpretation of America's national past and present. As Bellah writes, "[i]n the beginning, and to some extent ever since, Americans have interpreted their history as having religious meaning" (Bellah 1975, 2). Civil religion then "refer[s] to that religious dimension, found I think in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality" (ibid., 3). Based on "common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share," civil religion "ha[s] played a crucial role in the development of American institutions" and "provide[d] a religious dimension for the whole fabric of American life, including the political sphere" (1967, 2). "This public religious dimension," argues Bellah, "is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals that I am calling American civil religion" (ibid., 3).

Defining the notion of American civil religion, or even naming it aptly, is not an easy task, as Pierard and Linder explain:

[Civil religion] sometimes goes by other names – public, political, or societal religion; public piety; civic faith; the common faith; theistic humanism; or in the case of the United States, secularized Puritanism, the religion of the republic, the American Way, American Shinto, and often "the American Democratic Faith."
(1988, 22)

While these numerous labels point to the complexity of the civil religion concept, we can identify two main, closely interconnected interpretations. On the one hand, civil religion "is a general faith, one that stands in contrast to the particular faith of denominational groups which claim the allegiance of only a segment of the population" (ibid., 23). On the other hand, "[t]he practice of civil religion involves the mixing of traditional religion with national life until it is impossible to distinguish between the two" (ibid.). These two versions usually appear together with "[s]ome forms of civil religion emphasiz[ing] the Deity while others see the nation itself as the reference point of highest loyalty and final judgment" (ibid., 24).

Donald Jones and Russell Richey also differentiate broadly between a general and a particular type of civil religion:

41. As Pierard and Lindner point out "all organized societies, including the United States, have a religious base which might be called civil or public religion" (1988, xii).

The particular religion has usually been identified with churches, synagogues, missionary movements, denominations, revivals, and the like. General religion has been discussed under such categories as democratic faith, societal religion, the American way, generalized religion, common faith, American Shinto, and now “civil religion.” (1974, 3)

Pierard and Lindner stress the important role that the American presidency plays in connecting these two types of civil religion:

Civil religion served as the overarching faith of the American nation in such a manner that evangelicals and non-evangelicals alike could accept presidential leadership under the Almighty in accomplishing the nation’s sacred mission to spread freedom throughout the world while at the same time maintaining the “nation under God” at home. (1988, xii–xiii)

Inauguration Day, “a political day with heavy religious overtones” (Toolin 1983, 40), and above all the inaugural address represent civil religious rituals of greatest importance. As Bellah states, “the inauguration of a president is an important ceremonial event in this religion. It reaffirms, among other things, the religious legitimation of the highest political authority” (1974, 24). Cynthia Toolin also focuses on the use of civil religious discourse as a basis of presidential legitimacy, saying that “[i]n these addresses, presidents give an official statement of how they view the national situation, frequently citing a culture core or civil religion for legitimation” (1983, 40). Like Bellah and Toolin, Paul Goetsch sees the presidential inaugural address as a “highly institutionalized type of speech in which many civil-religion themes can be expected” (2000, 340). Similarly, Friedenberg considers inaugurals “time to use well-tested and frequently spoken themes” (1993, 2).

3.1.3 Civil religious themes in presidential inaugural addresses

Given the pervasiveness of America’s civil religion and the central role attributed to American presidents in interpreting and disseminating the numerous facets of the religion of the American way of life, a prominent position of civil religious themes in presidential inaugural addresses is to be expected. Bellah himself identified four main themes, all of them easily localizable in presidential discourse.

The first theme, or *topos*, in Bellah’s analysis is the notion of America’s exceptional status as a chosen people. As Bellah states:

The God of the civil religion is not only rather “unitarian,” he is also on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love. Even though he is somewhat deist in cast, he is by no means simply a watchmaker

God. He is actively interested and involved in history, with a special concern for America. (1967, 7)

The discourse of America's early presidents underlines this thinking in particular. Bellah refers to an often quoted statement by John Adams to support his point of view: "I always consider the settlement of America as the opening of a grand scheme and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the world" (quoted in Bellah 1975, 33). In his farewell address, George Washington links America's exceptional status with the nation's moral disposition, asking, "Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue?" (quoted in Bellah 1975, 32).

A second civil religion theme is the idea of an American Israel and the narrative of the nation's exodus. As Bellah explains, "the Revolution ... was seen as the final act of the Exodus from the old lands across the waters. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were the sacred scriptures and Washington the divinely appointed Moses who led his people out of the hands of tyranny" (ibid., 30). In this view, "Europe is Egypt; America, the promised land. God has led his people to establish a new sort of social order that shall be a light unto all the nations" (ibid.). Thomas Jefferson's second inaugural address exemplifies this theme and also exhibits the type of presidential humility typical for an inaugural address: "I shall need, too," says Jefferson, "the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life" ("Second Inaugural").

A third theme in Bellah's interpretation of American civil religion is that of sacrifice. "With the Civil War," writes Bellah, "a new theme of death, sacrifice, and rebirth enters the civil religion. It is symbolized in the life and death of Lincoln. Nowhere is it stated more vividly than in the Gettysburg Address" (1975, 31). Jürgen Gebhardt also sees the Civil War as an important catalyst in the development of America's civil religion, stating that "civil religion became the spiritual and emotional core of the symbolic universe of Americanism after the Civil War, and Abraham Lincoln acted as its high priest" (2000, 276).

Jürgen Heidekind explains the civil religious importance of the Gettysburg address, stating that "the 'new birth of freedom' which Lincoln had proclaimed at Gettysburg bound the Declaration and the Constitution closely together again as elements of the new 'political religion' of the United States" (2000, 249). He also stresses the fact that the Civil War introduced a new set of civil religious sites, like Gettysburg itself or Arlington National Cemetery, and national rituals into America's public life, writing: "This political or 'civil religion' took on a more concrete,

popular form with the celebration of Memorial Day for the victims of the Civil War, with the elevation of Lincoln to the position of 'savior of the nation,' and with the 'flag worship' begun by Northern war veterans in the 1880s" (ibid.).

The fourth and final theme identified by Bellah reflects the influence of the political events of the 1960s – "America's third time of trial" (1975, 1) after the American Revolution and the Civil War – and stresses America's position as an international role model. As Jones and Richey state, "[i]n the late 1960s, as activism turned to conflict, civil religion gained further appeal and opprobrium. Both the antiwar movement and the black movement were hostile to the civil religion insofar as it seemed to legitimize the 'imperialism' and 'racism' of American society" (1974, 5). Bellah himself hoped that the Vietnam War could result in "attain[ing] some kind of viable and coherent world order," which in turn "would precipitate a major new set of symbolic forms" (ibid., 40). Bellah was hoping for a more internationalized version of civil religion – which he thought would transform into a secular world religion – but found no evidence of "incorporation of international symbolism into our civil religion" (ibid.). Bellah summarizes his view of American civil religion and its recurrent themes as follows:

Behind the civil religion at every point lie Biblical archetypes: Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land, New Jerusalem, Sacrificial Death and Rebirth. But it is also genuinely American and genuinely new. It has its own prophets and its own martyrs, its own sacred events and sacred places, its own solemn rituals and symbols. It is concerned that America be a society as perfectly in accord with the will of God as men can make it, and a light to all nations. (ibid., 40–41)

Toolin starts her analysis of civil religious themes in presidential inaugural addresses with Bellah's four main themes of "exodus, sacrifice, destiny under God, and international example" (1983, 39) and, not surprisingly, finds evidence for all four themes. Toolin claims, however, that some themes are more pronounced than others. Based on a content analysis of all inaugural addresses from 1789 to 1981, Toolin aims not only at showing the prevalence of each of Bellah's themes but also at identifying the functions that civil religion performs. In particular, she is looking for "specific references to a deity (e.g., God, the Hand which guides the Universe), for the enumeration of republican virtues (e.g., freedom, duty), and for particular religious content of either the Judeo-Christian tradition ... or a national nature" (ibid., 40).

With regard to "specific references to a Deity," which were present in almost all speeches, Toolin notes that "the form of these references changed in time from an earlier deistic view that was prevalent in the minds of public figures in the time of George Washington to a more personal view in later times" (ibid., 41). With regard to the presence of republican values in the address analyzed, Toolin found

a number of recurrent Christian values such as "brotherhood, justice, and freedom" but also noted "a striking lack of the more emotional virtues of the Judeo-Christian tradition, for example, the terms "love and forgiveness" (ibid., 42). Toolin adds, "the two virtues most frequently mentioned," duty and freedom, were seen as a "god-given right" and were more national in nature (ibid.).

Toolin differentiates between more general references to a "Judeo-Christian tradition" and more particular references to a tradition of "American Religion" (ibid.), and while she finds evidence of references to "Christians and Christianity, angels, Heaven, Israel, the Cross and the Star of David, and prayer and the soul" (ibid.), she considers "references to particular people and events in American history" (such as the U.S. Constitution, the revolutionary war, or past presidents) as being "of more importance to the concept of civil religion" (ibid.).

Comparing her findings with Bellah's original four themes, Toolin concludes that there were only two references to the exodus theme, that the sacrifice theme, while present, is not a strong one, and that "the last two themes of Destiny ... and International Example ... do not appear separately in the inaugural addresses, but together" (ibid.). Based on these findings, Toolin deduces three main functions of references to American civil religion themes in inaugural addresses, i.e., "culture building, culture affirmation, and, most importantly, legitimization of international and domestic actions" (ibid.).

Another attempt at identifying inaugural themes is Sigelman's (1996) study. Merging Tulis' notion of the rhetorical presidency and the idea of the changing nature of public presidential discourse with Campbell and Jamieson's generic approach, Sigelman proposes to focus on "the evolution of the use of the inaugural address to perform ... its most fundamental generic functions", i.e., "the unification of the audience and the veneration of traditional values" (1996, 82). To do so, he carried out a content analysis of "unification and veneration themes in the fifty-two inaugural addresses [from] 1789–1993" (ibid., 81).

Starting from the assumption that "if the inaugural address is to serve as an instrument of national reunification, the president must communicate, in terms the average citizen can grasp, a sense of common destiny or oneness" (ibid., 83), Sigelman identifies three main strategies that allow presidents to fulfill this objective. Sigelman alludes to presidents' "speaking in a common tongue" (ibid., 84) and the strategic use of collective pronouns and "traditional value terms" (ibid., 88) such as duty, honor, freedom etc., as the two main strategies (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of these two general aspects of presidential discourse). A third strategy that Sigelman points to is the recurrent use of "symbols of unification," i.e., highly positive terms such as America, nation, country, or union, aimed at "foster[ing] a sense of oneness" (ibid., 86).

Another study on the dominant themes of presidential inaugural addresses is that of Joseph Valenzano. Valenzano “re-casts” Campbell and Jamieson’s model and translates their generic typology of inaugural tasks into three main themes, (i) “constitutional investment of authority,” where “the speech should firmly entrench their impending presidency in the long line of Chief Executives that came before them;” (ii) “humility, whereby presidents accept their office in a way as not to appear arrogant,” and (iii) “the need for a president to appear as the nation’s moral compass” (2002, 88).

Valenzano proposes to expand the identification of these inaugural themes to encompass “the various strategies for enactment at the disposal of presidents” (*ibid.*, 89). Based on a qualitative analysis of a sample of seven pre-Kennedy inaugurals (Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eisenhower) and all inaugurals from Kennedy’s to George W. Bush’s first, he identifies four themes in addition to the ones mentioned above and, in comparison to Campbell and Jamieson discusses “the various strategies for enactment at the disposal of presidents” (*ibid.*) in greater detail.

In addition to the themes of constitutional investment, humility, and morality, Valenzano argues that presidential inaugural addresses typically display four new themes, namely America’s status as a global role model, the confrontation between good and evil, individual civic responsibility, and the nation’s prosperity. As Valenzano states,

[t]he first of these new themes ... has roots in the inaugurals of Wilson, Roosevelt, and Eisenhower, but truly became a necessary and repeated theme within the address with Kennedy. The increasing ability of members of the international community to see or hear the inaugural address made it necessary for presidents to address their role and the role of the United States in the global community. (*ibid.*, 135)

As I will show in Chapter 4, this international dimension to America’s self-image is not a new theme at all, as Valenzano claims, but has been a staple of U.S. foreign policy and crisis discourse long before the Cold War. The same goes for Valenzano’s second new theme, the depiction of global politics as a Manichean struggle between good and evil. While Valenzano is correct in that “this theme is one where the president seeks to rhetorically cast the United States and her allies as forces of good, and those who would oppose them and the values they represent as evil” (*ibid.*), [t]his theme, or rather strategy, has been a fixed component of the American Us-vs.-Them hypotext since the beginning of the republic.

The third new theme identified by Valenzano refers to the fact that, helped by advances in communications technology, “presidents have increasingly sought to speak about what an individual can do to help the nation” (*ibid.*, 136). As

Valenzano explains, "[t]his theme had its beginnings with Roosevelt and the Depression, and is characterized best by Kennedy's 'ask not' statement in his 1961 inaugural" (ibid.). A final, more recent development in inaugural themes "is that of hope for the future. Presidents traditionally like to portray the next four years of their administration as a time when the country would either regain, or continue, its prosperity" (ibid.). Given that the Declaration of Independence prominently refers to "the pursuit of happiness," it is surprising to see that, at least according to Valenzano, this theme has only arisen lately in U.S. presidential inaugural discourse (see Section 3.5 below for a more detailed analysis of the "happiness" theme).

A more thorough attempt at identifying dominant inaugural themes can be found in David F. Ericson's study "Presidential Inaugural Addresses and American Political Culture." Considering "the more prominent, recurrent themes ... as definitive of the more permanent, cultural features of American politics" (1997, 727), Ericson carries out a content analysis of 52 inaugural addresses from 1789 to 1997 (excluding George Washington's very short second inaugural), without, however, providing a more detailed description of his methodological approach.

Ericson identifies a total of eleven "cultural themes" (ibid.). The three most frequent themes – references to "a providential supreme being" (occurring in 100 percent of the speeches), civic virtue, including a willingness to "make sacrifices for a greater good" (88 percent), and the concept of an American mission (77 percent) – are all well-established civil religious themes. The next group of themes, ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth in terms of their frequency, are general policy principles (73 percent), the plea for popular support for the president's agenda (73 percent), and the promise of political continuity (71 percent). All these themes are part of Campbell and Jamieson's generic model discussed above.

Less frequent themes are national unity (56 percent), nonpartisanship (50 percent), cooperation with Congress (50 percent), federalism (46 percent), and the presidential role as defender of the constitution and union (44 percent).

3.2 Analyzing presidential inaugural themes

Ericson's study, despite its not very transparent methodology, points to a number of themes that I consider to represent intertextual phenomena. In addition, these inaugural themes are, as Ericson identifies, indeed cultural themes, allowing a glimpse into American culture and the nation's understanding of itself. They form part of the dominant national narrative and support the manifold tasks of inaugural addresses and presidential discourse in general. To fully understand the

intertextual nature of recurrent inaugural themes, however, a more thorough, and more rigorous, analysis of their occurrence seems to be called for.

In the following, I will therefore carry out both a quantitative and a qualitative content analysis of all 55 inaugural addresses from 1789 to 2006. Both strands of analysis focus on a total of 13 thematic categories that were created *a priori*. The establishment of these categories was in turn based on a frequency analysis of the entire inaugural corpus and informed by the relevant literature, including the studies mentioned above. Both types of analyses were particularly interested in the stability and pervasiveness of the selected themes. The quantitative analysis focused primarily on the number of occurrences, i.e., the frequency of the 13 themes, while the qualitative analysis tried to identify the prominence of the themes, i.e., the intensity with which they were discussed.

The aim of identifying not only the frequency of inaugural themes but also their intensity, called for a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. While the former was computer-assisted and both corpus-driven and corpus-based (see Chapter 1), the latter was carried out by two independent coders in combination with a close reading of selected speeches and/or speech passages.⁴²

The quantitative analysis focused mainly on carrying out frequency analyses of clusters of terms belonging to 13 different thematic categories (see below) with the aim of identifying general patterns and trends in the occurrence of these themes.

The 13 word clusters were derived from, first, a frequency analysis of the most common content words in the corpus. These words were categorized in terms of a number of major groups or themes, which were decided upon based partly on prior work in the area, and partly on exploratory analysis of the word list, which involved categorizing the words into a primary and secondary category.⁴³ The themes which emerged during this analysis were: *government* (including references to form of government, the three branches of the U.S. government, and other important references to the process of governing); *war and military* (including combative vocabulary applied to non-military areas); *change* (including

42. The corpus consisted of the inaugural addresses of all American presidents from the beginning of the republic in 1789 up until George W. Bush's second inaugural in 2005 (55 speeches in total). To compare the inaugural results with those of other types of presidential discourse, I also created a sub-corpus containing four randomly selected State of the Union addresses and four randomly selected foreign policy speeches.

43. I decided against using pre-existing word categories as classified in a number of content analysis dictionaries, as these categories proved to be far too broad for the purpose of my analysis.

indicators of change such as increasing, decreasing, establishing or abolishing); *continuity* (of government, the Union, the American way of life, etc.); *economic success* (prosperity and national abundance, or lack of it); *union* (including references to the Union, calls for unity, the common bonds of being an American); *mission* (to advance peace, democracy, or the American way internationally); *burden* (the necessity of bearing the responsibility of maintaining peace and freedom in the world); *prevail* (winning against the odds, overcoming great trials, etc.); *belief and faith* (references to God, Providence, or a higher power); *sites* (references to people, events and places of importance); *values* (the values held important by Americans); and finally *anti-values* (those values held by enemies of America and the American way of life). The following is an example of the word lists used, here for the theme *union* (the complete word lists can be found in the appendix).

Union: accord, accordance, agree, agreement, alliance, alliances, allies, altogether, america, american, americans, america's, belong, belongs, bind, bonds, brotherhood, citizen, citizenship, civil, common, communities, community, confederated, confederation, countrymen, families, fellow, fellow-citizens, forefathers, fraternal, freemen, friend, friends, friendship, group, harmony, home, inseparable, jefferson, join, joint, member, members, nation, national, our, ours, ourselves, patriot, patriotic, patriotism, patriots, share, shared, states, ties, union, unite, united, unity, universal, us, we.

In the preliminary analysis, each word was applied to what was considered its primary category of meaning. This is of course not a completely foolproof method. Depending on context, a word like "wage," for example, being both a verb and a noun, can have a military or an economic meaning. Nevertheless, given that each cluster was quite large, individual errors were not considered to be critically significant. In other words, the behavior of the whole cluster – the big picture, so to speak – was what counted. In addition, one by-product of using MonoConc Pro was that when keywords from the clusters were found in the speeches, the software was able to extract them with the keyword highlighted in the context of the whole sentence. This enabled me to check for meaning within context.

When the word lists representing each theme had been created, the next stage was to analyze them in terms of both the actual frequency of their occurrence in each presidential speech, and in terms of their percentage in relation to the total word count of each speech.

The other main method of analysis of the inaugural address corpus was a qualitative one, designed to complement the quantitative methods and to provide greater analytic depth. This involved the close reading of all inaugural addresses by two independent coders. The coders were first asked to identify occurrences of the themes discussed above, i.e., they needed to decide whether the theme was

at all present in a given speech. To do so, the two coders read through the entire corpus, highlighting and describing (using Microsoft Word's comment feature) phrases or paragraphs indicating the presence of the themes. These comments were in different colors, so that each of the coders' work could be differentiated. The purpose of having two coders was to lessen the possibility of a single coder's bias affecting the results, while at the same time ensuring that there was sufficient similarity in the coding procedure. This was done by reviewing the degree to which the two coders' work highlighted the same passages of text as referring to the same concepts. This was, however, a rather complex task, as there were at times multiple themes within one passage.

In a second step, the coders then determined the strength of every theme in each speech, and defined this as a numerical value, which could then be represented graphically. The method aimed at determining the strength, presence, or absence of each theme, based on the indications of the theme-coding work done previously. If a theme was not present, it was given a numeric value of 0. If it was present, it was given a numeric value of 0.5, and if strongly present, given a value of 1. The challenge here lay in giving appropriate values for each of the themes. This was based partly on the number of references found in each speech, partly on their subjective semantic density – i.e., how strongly or deeply the section of text discussed the theme – and partly on the proportion of text that they occupied compared to the length of the whole text. This meant, for example, that references to God, often found in the salutation and the conclusion, were not necessarily coded to indicate the presence of the *belief and faith* theme, as they are verbal formulas which appear in almost every inaugural address, making their absence more notable than their presence. In other words, the subjective semantic density of these references is very low. On the other hand, to take an example such as Lincoln's 1865 address (which is only 698 words long), the *belief and faith* theme was marked as strongly present, because of its relative importance in the speech (strength and emotional depth, as well as proportion of the total word count), even though the word count of sections dealing with the theme is not high. Additionally, references to the *belief and faith* theme were considered to be strongly present in this speech because they were presented in a manner different from the usual formulaic style visible in other speeches. In summary, the fact that the two coders thoroughly discussed the methodology beforehand, as well as comparing cases during the coding itself, should have helped to minimize errors and inconsistencies.

3.3 Thematic intertextuality in presidential inaugural addresses

In the following, I will discuss the findings of both content analyses, the quantitative and the qualitative one with a view to my initial claim that the selected themes form an intertextual topical network that is permanently present in American presidential inaugural addresses and that plays a significant cultural role, especially with regard to shaping American self-images. I will first show the results from the quantitative analysis, using it to identify frequencies of and trends in the occurrences of the 13 thematic clusters. Here, I will only provide a few speech samples to show, for example, the density of certain cluster terms in selected speeches. My main focus will then be on the qualitative analysis and the identification of the intensity or strength of the inaugural themes. To do so, I will arrange the inaugural themes into larger, connected pairs and groups of themes and will provide a number of textual examples to illustrate the way in which the themes are integrated into the inaugural narrative and how they connect to particular and general objectives of presidential discourse. Finally, I will compare the findings of recurrent themes in inaugural addresses with their presence in selected State of the Union and foreign policy speeches in order to identify any possible genre-specific bias or, on the contrary, to show the transgeneric nature of this particular type of presidential intertextuality.

3.3.1 A quantitative theme analysis

An overview of the average percentages with which the words pertaining to the 13 thematic clusters appear in the inaugural corpus shows the dominance of three themes that already featured prominently in the studies mentioned above, particularly in that of Campbell and Jamieson.

As Figure 31 shows, the themes *sites* (in hindsight a rather too large category that includes references to geographical locations, including *sites of memory* in the United States and abroad), *union* (containing terms such as brotherhood, citizenship, unity but also collective pronouns), and *values* (including references to American god terms such as freedom or liberty or nation, and personal traits such as heroic, vigorous, or wise) account for slightly over 16 percent of the corpus' more than 129,000 words. The words belonging to the other ten thematic clusters clearly occur less frequently than the top three, with only *government* and *economic success* showing an average frequency of more than one percent of the corpus.

The three most frequently occurring clusters of terms – *union*, *sites*, and *values* – reflect the two main tasks of inaugural addresses identified by Campbell and

Theme	Frequency (%)
Sites	6.27
Union	5.16
Values	4.77
Government	2.56
Economic success	1.18
Belief and faith	0.94
Change	0.87
Prevail	0.83
Continuity	0.67
Mission	0.67
War and military	0.56
Burden	0.55
Anti-values	0.32

Figure 31. Frequencies of 13 inaugural themes

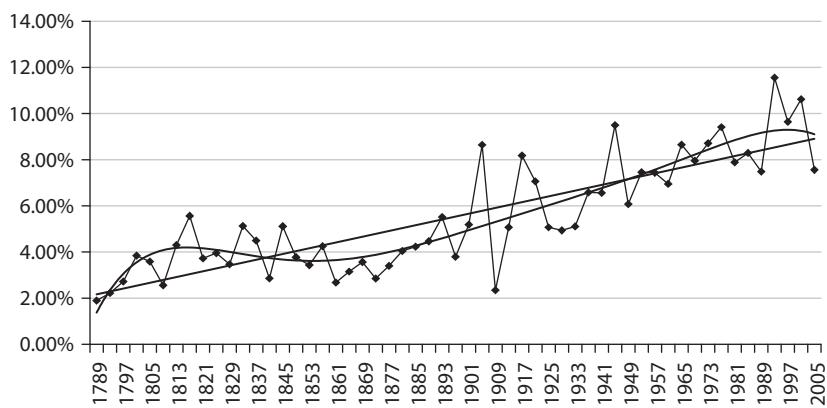


Figure 32. The union theme

Jamieson, the unification of the American people and the rehearsal of national values drawn from America’s history.

The *union* theme shows not only a continuous upward trend but also exhibits the greatest growth of all themes, from two percent in 1789 to almost 11.56 and 10.62 percent in the first inaugural addresses of Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively, a fact that again supports Campbell and Jamieson’s claim that a discourse of unity is especially important after particularly divisive campaigns. As George W. Bush states in his first inaugural: “Our unity, our union, is the serious work of leaders and citizens in every generation. And this is my solemn pledge: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity” (1).

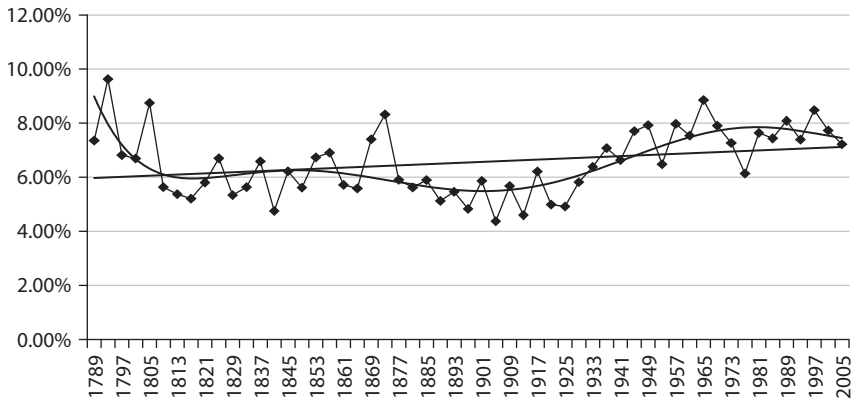


Figure 33. The sites theme

The overall most frequent cluster of terms represent the *sites* theme, a group of terms referring to names of places, events, and public personae, many of them forming part of America's collective memory. While the inclusion of some more general terms into this category (such as man, night, or space) might have inflated the frequency count, the majority of the terms such as "farmer" or "Indian," or toponyms, such as "Mississippi," "Pacific," "West," or "Texas," clearly refer to America's history and its national and international actions, and the consistency of their occurrence shows that inaugural addresses are important tools in the interpretation of the nation's history and the definition of the nation's sites of memory (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of presidential allusions to these sites).

The cluster of terms belonging to the *values* theme shows the third highest number of occurrences. These terms constitute on average 4.77 percent of the total word count of a speech. With an average speech length of about 2,352 words that means an average of 112 value words per presidential inaugural address. The highest count of value terms can be found in Theodore Roosevelt 1905 address, James Madison's first inaugural (1809), and George W. Bush's second inaugural (2005). The following passage from Theodore Roosevelt's speech illustrates both the presentation and utilization of the *values* theme.

We wish peace, but we wish the peace of justice, the peace of righteousness. We wish it because we think it is right and not because we are afraid. No weak nation that acts manfully and justly should ever have cause to fear us, and no strong power should ever be able to single us out as a subject for insolent aggression.

("Inaugural Address")

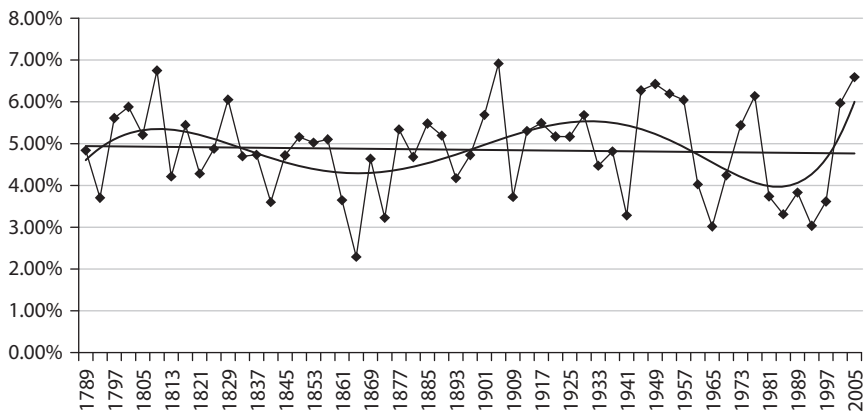


Figure 34. The values theme

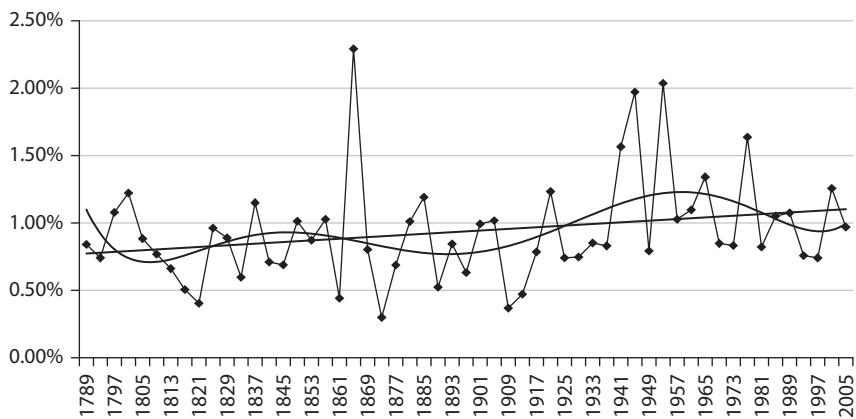


Figure 35. The belief and faith theme

The usage and the frequency of value terms is rather stable over the course of more than two centuries, with only Lincoln’s second inaugural clearly falling below the three-percent line.

As mentioned above, Lincoln’s second inaugural, only 685 words long, does however show a high intensity of the *belief and faith* theme. The frequency analysis of this cluster further supports this view.

On average, inaugural addresses use terms belonging to the *belief and faith* cluster 20 times per speech, with an average speech length of 2,352 words. Lincoln mentions these terms 16 times in a 685-word long speech, i.e., on average more than 2.5 times as much as his fellow presidents.

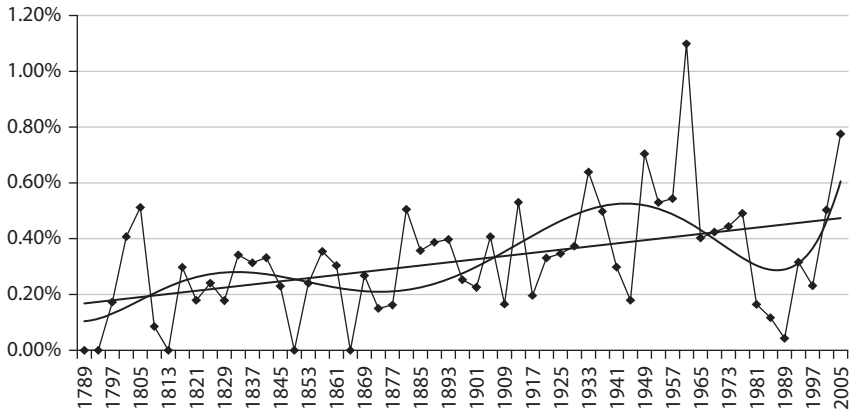


Figure 36. The anti-values theme

The speech's second-to-last paragraph shows both the frequency and the intensity of this theme in Lincoln's memorable inaugural.

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." ("Second Inaugural")

Dwight D. Eisenhower's first inaugural address, which he opened with a prayer, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's fourth and final inaugural address in 1945 show the second and third highest occurrences of terms belonging to the *belief and faith* cluster, while Grant, Taft and Monroe (1821) show the lowest frequencies.

References to *anti-values*, i.e., traits and behaviors such as aggression, evil, or viciousness that stand in direct opposition to the American value system are significantly less frequent than the positively connotated terms described above. Given the celebratory nature of the inaugural address this is not surprising, but a closer look at the use of anti-values, shows that they can play a rather dramatic role, as the following passage from Truman's 1949 speech, in which he refers to the Soviet Union, shows:

That regime adheres to a false philosophy which purports to offer freedom, security, and greater opportunity to mankind. Misled by this philosophy, many peoples have sacrificed their liberties only to learn to their sorrow that deceit and mockery, poverty and tyranny, are their reward. That false philosophy is communism.

("Inaugural Address" 112)

The use of negatively charged adjectives seems to be a slightly more modern theme. The data also indicates the parallels in the use of devil terms in the inaugural addresses of John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush discussed in Chapter 2 (their 1961 and 2005 speeches show the highest frequencies of the *anti-values* theme).

The two next most frequent clusters – *government* and *economic success* – refer to themes that are not usually listed among inaugural themes, despite the fact that they can be traced back to the very beginnings of public American discourse. In the Declaration of Independence, for example, the definition of government is of central importance:

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

In this context, as in the better-known phrase “pursuit of happiness,” the term “happiness” very much includes the pursuit of economic success. Indeed, the earlier Virginia Declaration of Rights, crafted by George Mason, contains a very similar, more explicit passage – “the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.” The Virginia Declaration stresses the economic dimension of happiness clearly more than Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence.

As Figure 37 shows, the *government* theme attracted more presidential attention in the early years of the republic and the eighteenth century, but then seemingly lost in importance during the course of the twentieth century. The exceptions here are the inaugural addresses of William Taft (1909) and Herbert Hoover (1929), who both discuss to a great extent the role of the federal government and its relationship to the rights of the individual states. Hoover, for example, says:

Such regulation should be extended by the Federal Government within the limitations of the Constitution and only when the individual States are without power to protect their citizens through their own authority. On the other hand, we should be fearless when the authority rests only in the Federal Government.

(“Inaugural Address”)

As this quote indicates, twentieth-century discussions of the *government* theme focus on the role that government, above all the federal government, should play or not play in the United States. In comparison, earlier inaugurals were more

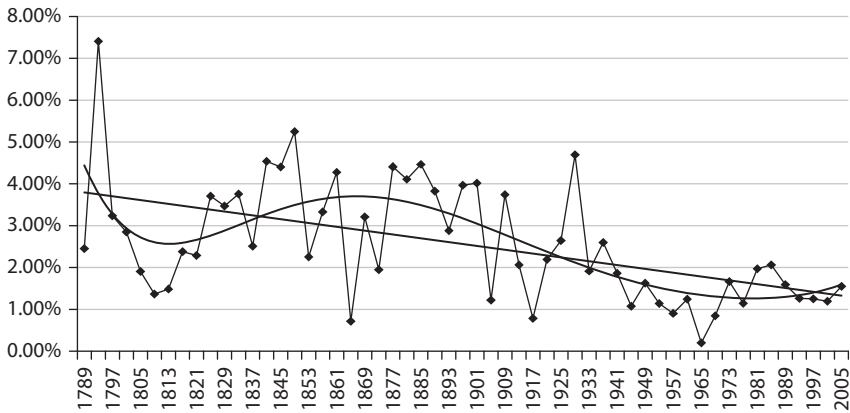


Figure 37. The government theme

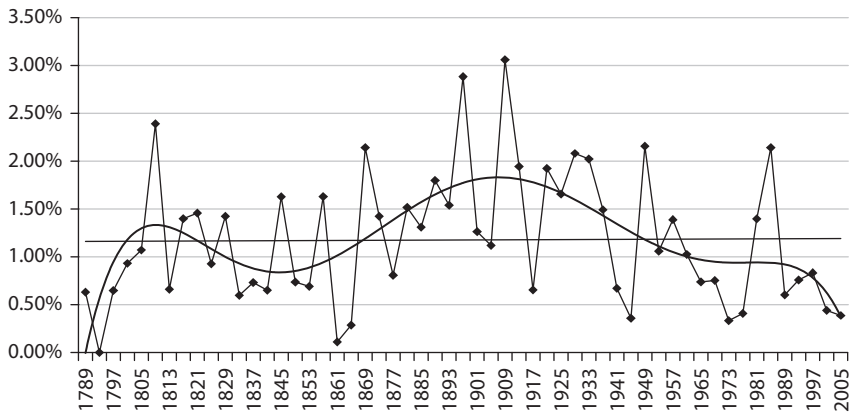


Figure 38. The economic success theme

focused on identifying the republican values that would form the basis of good government.

The theme *economic success*, while continuously present in the speeches analyzed (with the exception of George Washington's very short second inaugural), is not one that seems to get a lot of attention in the individual speeches. The few exceptions, above all McKinley in 1897 and Taft in 1909, take on the form of State of the Union messages, in which the president discusses or defends his economic policy agenda. As such, discussions of the *economic success* theme, very much like the treatment of the *government* theme in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, take on a more deliberative tone.

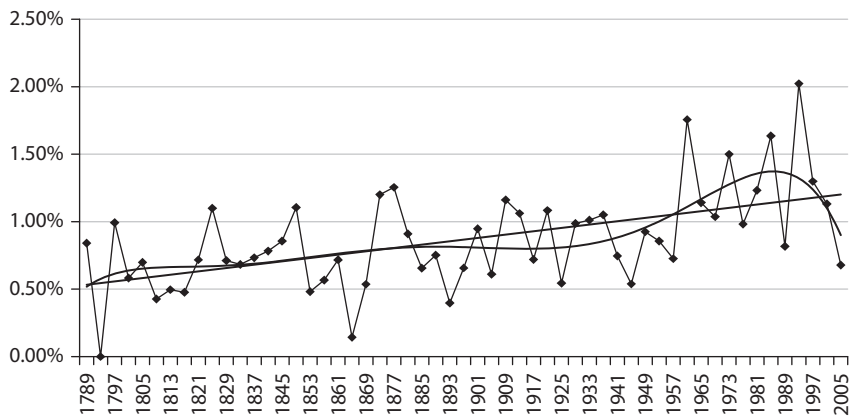


Figure 39. The change theme

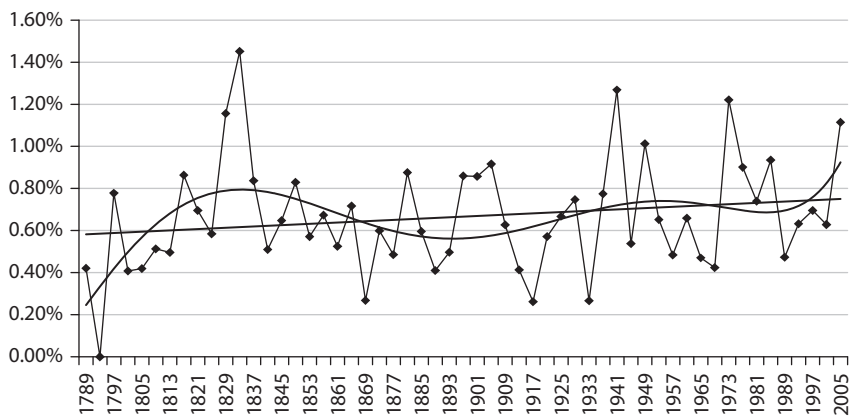


Figure 40. The continuity theme

Given that presidential inaugurations either represent a confirmation of the current president or the arrival of a new chief executive, it is not surprising that the themes *change* and *continuity* are ever-present in inaugural discourse – again with the exception of George Washington’s 135-word long second inaugural address.

In line with the main themes of their respective campaigns, the inaugural addresses of Bill Clinton (2.02 percent) and John F. Kennedy (1.76 percent) show percentages in the use of change terms that are far beyond the average for this theme (0.87 percent).⁴⁴

44. In comparison, in Barack Obama’s 2009 inaugural address, terms belonging to the *change* cluster accounted for 1.33 percent of the speech.

The *continuity* theme, usually seen as the flip-side of the concept of change in inaugural discourse and aimed at projecting an image of American unity at home and abroad, is less frequent than but as recurrent as the concept of change. A higher frequency of continuity terms is more typical for second inaugural addresses (see the examples of Jackson 1833, Nixon in 1973, or George W. Bush in 2005).

As the following passage from Andrew Jackson's second inaugural shows, the *continuity* theme is also usually applied to celebrate a presidential re-election and to make political opponents aware of the strong popular mandate that such a re-election entails, particularly during or after a politically chaotic period, such as the 1820s, that Jackson himself explicitly refers to:

The will of the American people, expressed through their unsolicited suffrages, calls me before you to pass through the solemnities preparatory to taking upon myself the duties of President of the United States for another term. For their approbation of my public conduct through a period which has not been without its difficulties, and for this renewed expression of their confidence in my good intentions, I am at a loss for terms adequate to the expression of my gratitude.

("Second Inaugural")

The *continuity* theme is also often closely related to the notions of *perseverance* and *prevail* (see below), as the following passage from Franklin D. Roosevelt's first war inaugural shows: "A nation, like a person, has something deeper, something more permanent, something larger than the sum of all its parts. It is that something which matters most to its future – which calls forth the most sacred guarding of its present" (F. D. Roosevelt, "Third Inaugural" 4).

The idea of an American *mission* that is so central to the notion of American civil religion does not seem to be a theme frequently addressed in inaugural addresses, at least as reflected in the occurrences of terms belonging to the *mission* cluster. With an average percentage of 0.63, we find notable exceptions only in the speeches of Grover Cleveland in 1893 and in Eisenhower's second inaugural (1957):

And, we – though fortunate be our lot – know that we can never turn our backs to them. We look upon this shaken earth, and we declare our firm and fixed purpose – the building of a peace with justice in a world where moral law prevails. The building of such a peace is a bold and solemn purpose. To proclaim it is easy. To serve it will be hard. And to attain it, we must be aware of its full meaning – and ready to pay its full price. (62)

As this passage indicates, the *mission* theme is closely related to the theme of *burden*, or *sacrifice*, exemplified in Kennedy's well-known words: "We shall pay any

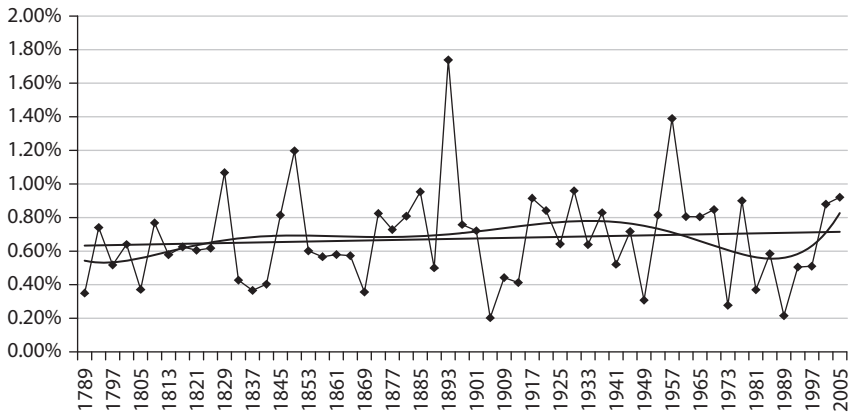


Figure 41. The mission theme

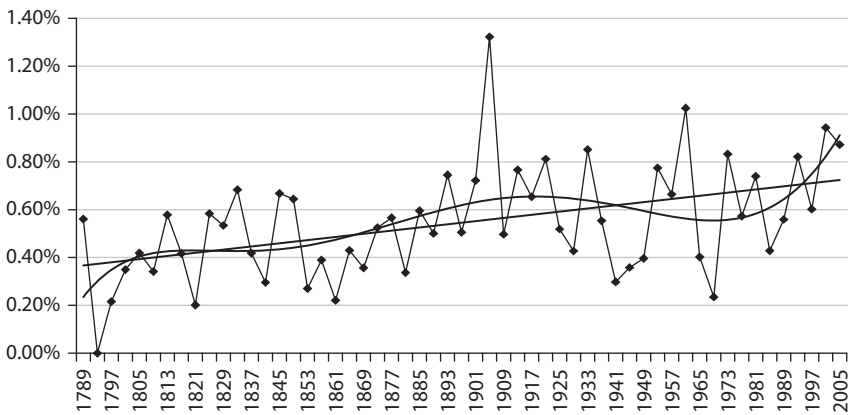


Figure 42. The burden theme

price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty” (“Inaugural Address” 1).

As Figures 41 and 42 show, the *mission* and *burden* themes develop very much along parallel lines, with both topics gaining slightly more prominence in the inaugural addresses of George W. Bush.

Like the *burden* theme, terms belonging to the *prevail* cluster, indicating the call for American perseverance and the promise of eventual victory, is a theme that gains slightly more importance in the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War. Truman’s inaugural of 1949 points to the role that the *prevail* theme plays in the Cold War (in this regard see also the logic of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext discussed in Chapter 4): “Events have brought our American democracy

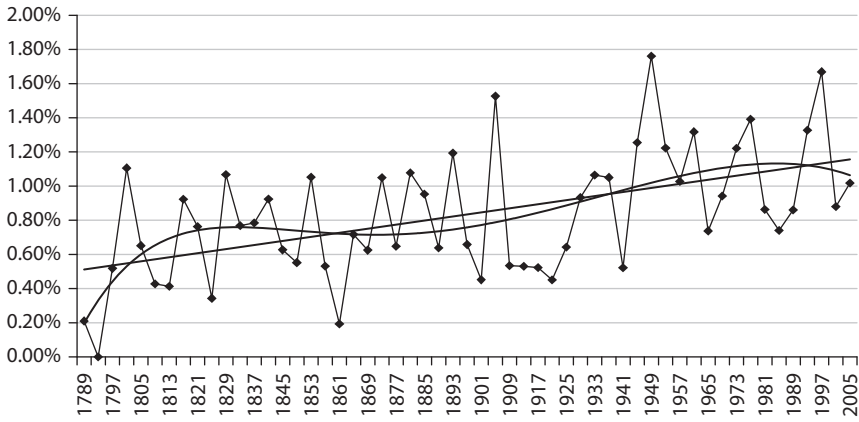


Figure 43. The prevail theme

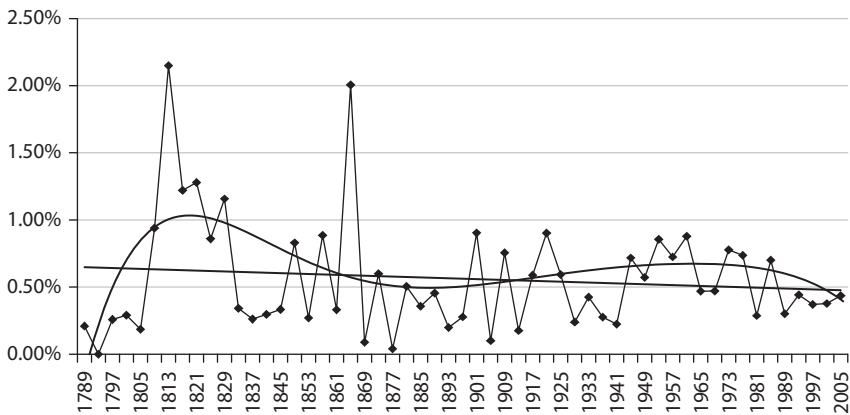


Figure 44. The war and military theme

to new influence and new responsibilities. They will test our courage, our devotion to duty, and our concept of liberty. But I say to all men, what we have achieved in liberty, we will surpass in greater liberty" ("Inaugural Address" 116).

Contrary to the development of the *prevail* theme, the occurrence of terms related to the theme of *war and military* actually diminish over time (the average percentage is 0.56).

While the two major wars of the nineteenth century, the War of 1812 and the Civil War, have clearly had an impact on the second inaugural addresses of Madison and Lincoln (2.15 percent each), this is not the case in the war inaugurals of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The above overview of the quantitative analysis of inaugural themes enables us to see the continued presence and longevity of the themes – as expressed through the presence of selected word clusters – as well as to identify long-term trends in their occurrence in presidential inaugural addresses. For most themes, these trends are characterized by a remarkable stability, with only the *union* theme and, to lesser extents, the *burden* and *prevail* themes showing an increase in frequency, and the *government* and *economic success* themes showing signs of decreasing importance over time. It is also obvious that the more traditional, civil religion themes of *union*, *sites*, and *values* appear with much higher frequencies than the other ten themes.

3.3.2 A qualitative theme analysis

While a quantitative analysis that focuses on the frequencies of occurrences of a-priori established word clusters provides a first indication of the nature of thematic intertextuality in presidential discourse, and clearly shows the existence of said phenomenon, it is too rough an instrument to tell us much about the individual roles that the themes play and the importance that they have in the respective speeches.

As explained above, I therefore added a second, qualitative step to the analysis of inaugural themes. Based on a close reading of all inaugural addresses, two coders independently identified not only the presence of the themes mentioned above but also assessed the importance that the theme had within its more immediate context in the speech itself. Based on three different numerical values – 0 for the lack of presence of a theme; 0.5 for theme that is present but not central to the speech; and 1 for a theme that is clearly one of the speech's focal points – I calculated an overall strength or intensity score for each theme per speech.

As Figure 45 shows, the ranking of the inaugural themes changes quite significantly when comparing their frequency and intensity scores. The most apparent shifts are the greater importance attributed by the two coders to the related themes of *mission* and *burden*, and the low intensity rank for the *sites* theme. While, as in the case of the latter, the ranking changes might indicate that the word clusters applied during the quantitative analysis might have been too large and possibly ill-defined, it is also apparent that the themes' occurrences need to be seen in their respective discursive and narrative contexts in order to assess their specific roles and importance. In the following, I will therefore take a closer look at the results of the qualitative analysis as well as the nature of the individual themes, their interconnectedness, and their overall role in presidential inaugural discourse.

Theme	Intensity score	Intensity rank	Frequency rank
Values	0.91	1	3
Mission	0.68	2	10
Government	0.65	3	4
Burden	0.64	4	12
Anti-values	0.63	5	13
Union	0.61	6	2
Sites	0.56	7	1
Continuity	0.54	8	9
War and military	0.51	9	11
Change	0.49	10	7
Economic success	0.46	11	5
Belief and faith	0.46	11	6
Prevail	0.43	13	11

Figure 45. Themes intensity vs. theme frequency rankings

On average, each of the themes appears in at least 76 percent of the 55 inaugural addresses. The *mission* theme shows 100 percent coverage, appearing in all 55 speeches and usually doing so with strong emphasis (see below). The *values* theme appears in all but one speech (Washington’s second inaugural), and the *union* theme appears in all but two speeches (Hoover and Truman). The themes with the lowest percentages were *economic success* as well as *belief and faith*, both appearing in 76 percent of the speeches. The theme with the highest intensity is *values*, which received an overall score of 0.91 (out of 1) from the two coders. The *prevail* theme received the lowest values with 0.43. The average intensity score for all themes was 0.58, which might indicate that most themes are mentioned rather in passing and as a nod to the epideictic nature of the inaugural genre. A comparison of intensity averages before and after the presidency of Woodrow Wilson does not show much difference in theme selection and intensity between the rhetorical presidency of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (0.55) and the time before (0.61). Above-average intensity scores can be found for the themes *mission*, *government*, *burden*, and *union*.

Nineteen of the 55 speeches manage to cover all 13 inaugural themes. Among those, of the 17 presidents who can be clearly attributed to a political party, i.e., starting from the so-called second party system of 1828 to 1832, only three were Democrats (Jackson, van Buren, and Cleveland). All of the seven twentieth-century presidents who refer to all of the themes are Republicans. The average speech covers, at least to some extent, 88 percent of the topics. All but six speeches cover at least 75 percent of the themes, and only one, Washington’s second inaugural, covers less than half of the themes.

Looking at the development of the intensity scores in the presidential discussion of inaugural themes, we can see that the speeches with the highest intensity can be found, starting with Monroe, in the early nineteenth century in the time before the Civil War. James Polk's 1845 speech shows the highest intensity score (0.81 compared to an average of 0.58). With a total of 4,790 words, Polk's speech is, however, almost exactly twice as long as the average inaugural word count of 2,352. Nevertheless, the shorter speeches of Pierce in 1853 (3,325 words) and Buchanan in 1857 (2,823 words) also have rather high intensity scores (0.73).

Post-World War II inaugurals (with an average length of 1,940 words) do exhibit a lower intensity, with scores of between 0.46 and 0.62. While still being as comprehensive as earlier speeches (covering on average 88 percent of all themes), the speeches from Truman to George W. Bush seem to be content to merely acknowledge the major cultural themes rather than to discuss them in detail. The most striking exception here is the value theme with an overall post-1945 intensity score of 0.97 (compared to an average of 0.91 for all speeches). In general, though, and starting with Wilson, we can see a trend towards standardization in the treatment of the 13 inaugural themes characterized by high coverage and lower intensity.

In the following, I will present the results of the qualitative analysis for the individual themes, using a timeline and the numerical values 0, 0.5, and 1 to show the stability of themes, their intensity in the 55 speeches, and changes or variations in said intensity over the course of time. I will illustrate the nature of the individual themes with selective quotes from the inaugural corpus. Finally, I will complement the analysis of inaugural themes with a comparative analysis of themes in selected State of the Union addresses and foreign policy speeches.

Given the interconnectedness of some of the themes, I propose to present the results in the form of the following thematic pairs and groups: (i) *values*, *anti-values*, as well as *belief and faith*, which express the core of American self-images; (ii) *union* and *sites*, themes aimed at the creation of unity through a veneration of the nation's past and the political and social system of the United States; (iii) *mission*, *burden*, *prevail*, as well as *war and military*, which indicate the nation's international role and the decisions and actions that this entails; (iv) *change* and *continuity*, a more domestically oriented theme pair that balances the potentially disruptive election of a new president with the need for a continuation of the American experiment, calling for unity and stability in times of change; and (v) *government* and *economic success*, themes that over time have become less important, possibly so because they are too tainted by campaign rhetoric and too partisan, and are therefore often shifted to the more deliberative State of the Union genre.

3.3.2.1 Values, anti-values, and belief and faith

The *values* theme is, by far, the theme with the highest score, i.e., it plays the most prominent role in inaugural addresses, a fact that is in line with the findings of Campbell and Jamieson’s work and the other studies discussed above. Reflecting the self-understanding of the American nation, the theme has been very prominent over the course of more than two hundred years and has even grown stronger during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

To come to a more detailed understanding of what values exactly American presidents focus on in their inaugural addresses, I carried out a collocational analysis of the umbrella terms “value(s),” “virtue(s),” and “principle(s).” Figure 47 shows the main collocates for these three hyperonyms.

Looking at the immediate context of the base terms values, virtues, and principles, we can identify three main groups of sub-themes: *American values*, *principles of good government*, and the *virtue of unity*.

The first sub-theme is represented by a group of high value, civil religious terms such as “freedom,” “justice,” “rights,” or “law,” and serves as a discursive strategy to self-describe the American nation. “Our pledge to these principles is constant,” states Eisenhower, “because we believe in their rightness” (“Second Inaugural” 64). This self-image is intensified by the frequent use of collective pronouns and adjectives such as democratic, national, public, or republican. Furthermore, the presence of adjectives such as essential, inestimable, or vital underline the crucial importance that these values have in constituting the American nation and its political system. Finally, adjectives such as great, just, or moral point to the essential goodness of that system and of America in general.

Among the main collocates for the value group *justice, freedom, rights, and law*, there is, again, a high prevalence of collective pronouns and, in addition,

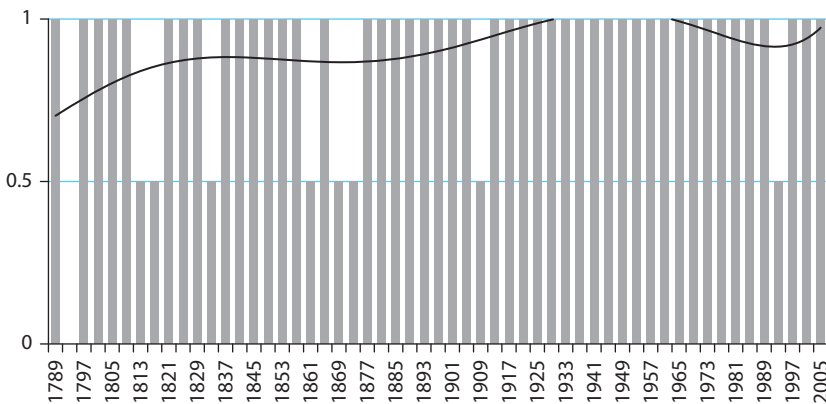


Figure 46. Intensity scores for the values theme

3L	2L	1L	1R	2R	3R
2 justice	2 promoted	5 general	5 we	12 our	6 our
2 progress	2 intelligence	5 great	2 justice	3 policy	4 government
2 adhere	2 constitution	5 just	V 2 connected	3 measures	3 national
2 speak	2 difference	4 democratic		2 faith	3 we
2 hold	2 our	4 moral	A	2 justice	3 govern
2 we	2 talents	4 essential		2 privileges	2 my
2 government		3 public	L	2 international	2 union
2 acted		3 republican		2 we	2 patriotism
2 support		3 our	U	2 freedom	2 law
2 generally		3 their		2 nation	2 rights
2 adherence		3 vital	E		2 guide
		2 inestimable			2 improvements
		2 education	S		2 party
		2 fixed			
		2 relative			
		2 leading			

Figure 47. Most frequent collocators for value terms

a significant number of references to the terms “world” and “human,” as seen, for example, in Reagan’s 1985 address: “Freedom is one of the deepest and noblest aspirations of the human spirit. People, worldwide, hunger for the right of self-determination, for those inalienable rights that make for human dignity and progress. America must remain freedom’s staunchest friend, for freedom is our best ally” (“Second Inaugural Address” 58).

As this quote shows, the international dimension of the value theme is closely linked to America’s global mission to export these American values, a fact that Clinton stresses in his first presidential act: “Across the world, we see them embraced, and we rejoice. Our hopes, our hearts, our hands, are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom. Their cause is America’s cause” (“First Inaugural” 2). As Wilson states in his 1917 address, America’s foundational values are natural to Americans, but not to the rest of the world (see also Chapter 4 for a discussion of this aspect):

I need not argue these principles to you, my fellow countrymen; they are your own part and parcel of your own thinking and your own motives in affairs. They spring up native amongst us. Upon this as a platform of purpose and of action we can stand together. And it is imperative that we should stand together. We are being forged into a new unity amidst the fires that now blaze throughout the world.
 (“Second Inaugural”)

Domestically, the list of values shown above plays a different role. First, the enumeration of “our values” serves as a moral basis for the newly elected or re-elected

administration and its future political actions and thus fulfills one of the main tasks of inaugural addresses. This is particularly prominent in inaugurals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which the explicit enumeration of the new nation's political value system played an important educational and persuasive role. A rather complete list of the values underlying America's political system can be found in John Adams' 1797 address:

Such is the amiable and interesting system of government (and such are some of the abuses to which it may be exposed) which the people of America have exhibited to the admiration and anxiety of the wise and virtuous of all nations for eight years under the administration of a citizen who, by a long course of great actions, regulated by prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, conducting a people inspired with the same virtues and animated with the same ardent patriotism and love of liberty to independence and peace, to increasing wealth and unexampled prosperity, has merited the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, commanded the highest praises of foreign nations, and secured immortal glory with posterity.
(“Inaugural Address”)

The terms “wealth” and “prosperity” that Adams explicitly identifies become values in their own right and have, as I will show below, a constant presence in inaugural discourse. In his inaugural address, delivered one hundred years after Adams, McKinley illustrates this point by stating: “The great essential to our happiness and prosperity is that we adhere to the principles upon which the Government was established and insist upon their faithful observance. Equality of rights must prevail, and our laws be always and everywhere respected and obeyed” (“First Inaugural”).

A third group of American values pursue a second domestic function, i.e., the call for national unity and the public display of patriotism. A passage from Monroe's 1817 inaugural underlines this function:

Equally gratifying is it to witness the increased harmony of opinion which pervades our Union. Discord does not belong to our system. Union is recommended as well by the free and benign principles of our Government, extending its blessings to every individual, as by the other eminent advantages attending it. The American people have encountered together great dangers and sustained severe trials with success. They constitute one great family with a common interest.
(“First Inaugural”)

The *patriotism* theme, as well as the terms “unity” and “union” are clearly more frequent in pre-twentieth-century inaugural discourse. During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, explicit references to the term “patriotism” can only be found in the inaugural addresses of Republican presidents Eisenhower (1953), Reagan (1981), and George H. W. Bush (1989).

Looking at the term “union,” we see that it collocates often with the phrase “a more perfect,” an allusion to the preamble of the U.S. Constitution (see Chapter 5 for an in-depth discussion of the role of the Constitution as an American pre-text). With regard to references to the value of patriotism, it becomes clear that they are not only closely linked to the union of the American nation but also entail frequent allusions to the *sacrifice* theme. Nowhere is this dual link more dramatically expressed than in Lincoln’s second inaugural address:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

The enumeration of American values is often accompanied by explicit references to anti-values, i.e., terms representing ideologies or acts that are in direct opposition to the nation’s values. Although not as frequent and dominant as the positive components of the American value system, anti-values often form binary pairs with the former.

As early as 1797, anti-values appear in inaugural discourse as a strategic instrument in creating a positive picture of America and its political system through a process of negative contradistinction:

If that solitary suffrage can be obtained by foreign nations by flattery or menaces, by fraud or violence, by terror, intrigue, or venality, the Government may not be the choice of the American people, but of foreign nations. It may be foreign nations who govern us, and not we, the people, who govern ourselves....
(Adams, “Inaugural Address”)

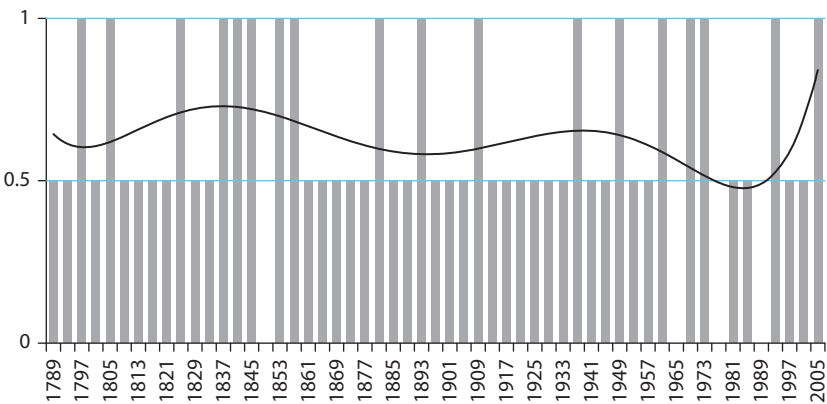


Figure 48. Intensity scores for the anti-value theme

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, the strategic use of negative images of an opposing other is a central element of American foreign policy discourse and a dichotomous depiction of American in-groups and un-American out-groups, of us and them. One of the strongest examples of this can be found in Truman's 1949 address (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed analysis of what I refer to as "the Truman Story"): "Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial, and forced labor as the chattel of the state. It decrees what information he shall receive, what art he shall produce, what leaders he shall follow, and what thoughts he shall think" ("Inaugural Address" 113).

As I will further discuss in Chapter 4, anti-values are also highly prevalent in the discourse of the war on terror, aiming at legitimizing military action against an enemy that cannot be reasoned with and at preparing the nation to expect sacrifices to be made in the fight against such an immoral enemy: "For as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny - prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder - violence will gather, and multiply in destructive power, and cross the most defended borders, and raise a mortal threat" (G.W. Bush, "Second Inaugural" 66).

In the logic of us vs. them, America's belief in the existence of a higher being becomes an important element of national self-definition. As Figure 49 shows, references to the *belief and faith* theme were more frequent and prominent in the eighteenth century and nineteenth-century inaugurals.

Occurrences of the term "God," however, have increased during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. References to God aid in the fulfillment of one of the main tasks of inaugural addresses identified by Campbell and Jamieson, i.e., the public display of presidential humility and the limitations of the office. The following passage from Grover Cleveland's 1893 address illustrates this function: "Above

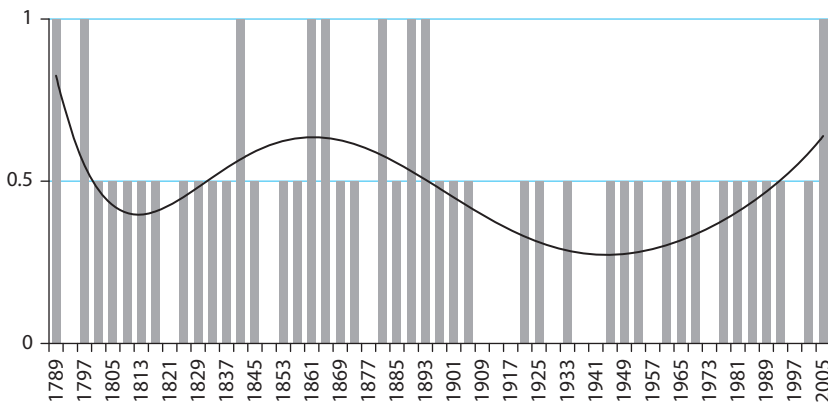


Figure 49. Intensity scores for the belief and faith theme

all, I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people, and I know He will not turn from us now if we humbly and reverently seek His powerful aid" ("Second Inaugural").

It is interesting, though, to see that most of the references to the *belief and faith* theme actually relate back to the American values mentioned above. A look at the print copy of Lyndon B. Johnson's inaugural address as published in the *Presidential Papers* illustrates this. In this version, the inaugural address contains sub-headings, e.g., "The American Covenant," that point to the dominant aspect of the respective section of the speech. Here, under the sub-heading "the American Belief," Johnson states: "Under this covenant of justice, liberty, and union we have become a nation - prosperous, great, and mighty. And we have kept our freedom. But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure" ("Inaugural Address" 73).

Very often the textual examples found for terms belonging to the *belief and faith* cluster combine expressions of belief in a higher being with affirmations of belief in America's values; faith in God and faith in America become one. The following excerpt from Eisenhower's first inaugural address, delivered at the height of the Cold War, is arguably the most ardent public display of the American creed in presidential inaugural history. Eisenhower creates an inseparable communion between faith in God and faith in America:

At such a time in history, we who are free must proclaim anew our faith. This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws.

This faith defines our full view of life. It establishes, beyond debate, those gifts of the Creator that are man's inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in His sight....

This faith rules our whole way of life. It decrees that we, the people, elect leaders not to rule but to serve. It asserts that we have the right to choice of our own work and to the reward of our own toil. It inspires the initiative that makes our productivity the wonder of the world. And it warns that any man who seeks to deny equality among all his brothers betrays the spirit of the free and invites the mockery of the tyrant. ("First Inaugural" 2-4)

3.3.2.2 *Union and American sites of memory*

The *union* theme shows a continuous, strong presence until and including 1917. After that, the theme loses its intensity, showing a trend contrary to the one identified in the quantitative analysis above. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, only the inaugurals of Wilson (1917), Carter (1977) and Clinton (1997) have a thematic intensity score of 1 (see below). The importance of presidential appeals

for national unity is especially prominent in the speeches of the early nineteenth century, for example, in Jefferson’s first inaugural: “Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things” (“First Inaugural”). The fact that these early calls for unity are primarily directed at the political opposition is apparent in John Quincy Adams’ 1825 speech:

The harmony of the nation is promoted and the whole Union is knit together by the sentiments of mutual respect, the habits of social intercourse, and the ties of personal friendship formed between the representatives of its several parts in the performance of their service at this metropolis. (“Inaugural Address”)

References to the *union* theme are, not surprisingly, particularly strong around the time of the American Civil War. Lincoln, for example, states that the “Union is perpetual, confirmed by the history of the Union itself,” stressing that “[t]he Union is much older than the Constitution” (“First Inaugural”).

Four years earlier, James Buchanan had warned of “the terrific evils which would result from disunion to every portion of the Confederacy” (“Inaugural Address”). His speech shows the direct discursive link between the degree of national unity and the chances for success of the American experiment:

These I shall not attempt to portray, because I feel an humble confidence that the kind Providence which inspired our fathers with wisdom to frame the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man will not suffer it to perish until it shall have been peacefully instrumental by its example in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

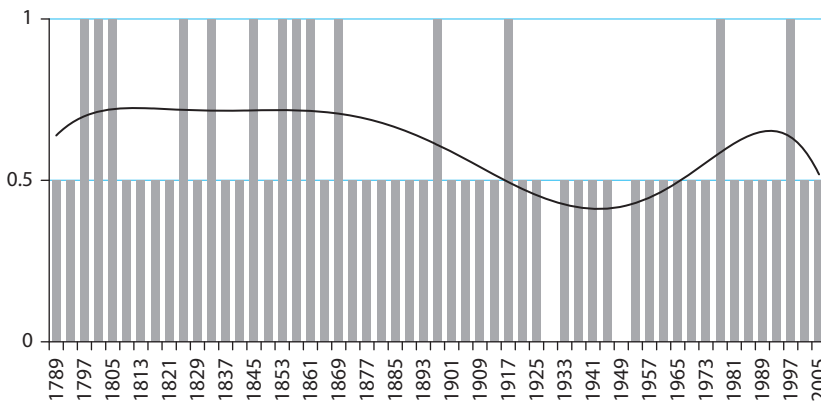


Figure 50. Intensity scores for the union theme

This quote, filled with civil religious references, also relates strongly to the idea of America's mission and underlines the fact that not only the United States but the whole world would suffer from a lack of American unity.

In addition to serving as the basis for a successful American system, the *union* theme is often used to justify selected presidential policies. This strategic political dimension of the theme is quite apparent in all three inaugural addresses of the twentieth century that show a thematic score of 1. In all three instances, the nation's chief executive was facing a rather divided audience and electorate.

In Wilson's case, the division of public opinion was about America's entry into World War I. Wilson describes America's entry into the Great War as a test for the nation's character and refers to unity as the basis for passing the test successfully:

We are being forged into a new unity amidst the fires that now blaze throughout the world. In their ardent heat we shall, in God's Providence, let us hope, be purged of faction and division, purified of the errant humors of party and of private interest, and shall stand forth in the days to come with a new dignity of national pride and spirit. ("Second Inaugural")

For Carter, the *union* theme became the inevitable focus of an inaugural address that desperately needed to restore a sense of national unity after a decade of bitter division brought about by the Vietnam War and the Watergate affair:

Let our recent mistakes bring a resurgent commitment to the basic principles of our Nation, for we know that if we despise our own government we have no future. We recall in special times when we have stood briefly, but magnificently, united. In those times no prize was beyond our grasp. ("Inaugural Address" 2)

In 1997, Clinton was facing a divisive situation of a different, more partisan kind. Despite his clear victory in the presidential elections, the congressional elections confirmed the Republican majority in the House and in the Senate, leaving Congress comfortably in the hands of the opposition. And despite having celebrated a landslide victory in the electoral vote in 1996, Clinton still did not manage to gain more than half of the popular vote (Clinton got 49.2 percent, the incumbent George H. W. Bush 40.7 percent, and Reform-party candidate Ross Perot 8.4 percent). Nevertheless, Clinton does not explicitly refer back to the election results, merely reminding Americans of their shared past, when "[we] saved the union, and abolished the awful scourge of slavery" ("Second Inaugural" 43).⁴⁵ The focus on unity in his speech is related to his decision to make racial inequalities a major

45. Clinton did, however, use his 1997 State of the Union speech to address the realities of a divided government, calling for congressional support for his political agenda (see also Section 5.2).

topic of his address (see Chapter 6 for a more detailed discussion of this aspect). In Clinton's speech, unity becomes the cure for "[t]he divide of race [that] has been America's constant curse" (44). Clinton combines the discussion of inequality and racial division with an appeal to greater individual responsibility, making clear at the same time that the success of his policies depends on the support of the American people:

Beyond that, my fellow citizens, the future is up to us. Our founders taught us that the preservation of our liberty and our union depends upon responsible citizenship. And we need a new sense of responsibility for a new century. There is work to do, work that government alone cannot do.... (44)

Given their important role in fulfilling the inaugural task of celebrating the nation's past, it is not surprising to see that references to American *sites* of memory, i.e., national and international places and/or significant events of America's history, have a strong and growing presence in presidential inaugural addresses.

Prototypical examples of the veneration of the nation's past can be found in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 speech – "[America's] vitality was written into our own Mayflower Compact, into the Declaration of Independence, into the Constitution of the United States, into the Gettysburg Address" ("Third Inaugural" 5) – or Reagan's first inaugural address: "Directly in front of me, the monument to a monumental man: George Washington, Father of our country.... Off to one side, the stately memorial to Thomas Jefferson.... And then beyond the Reflecting Pool the dignified columns of the Lincoln Memorial" (3).

A second set of toponymic references consist of theatres of war, as, for example, in Eisenhower's 1953 inaugural: "Seeking to secure peace in the world, we have had to fight through the forests of the Argonne, to the shores of Iwo Jima,

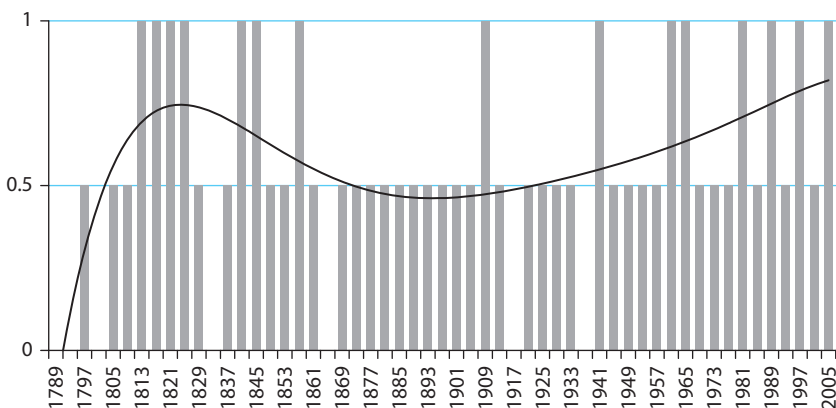


Figure 51. Intensity scores for the sites theme

and to the cold mountains of Korea” (“First Inaugural” 2). Reagan also refers to American battlegrounds abroad, and, at the same time, introduces the notion of sacrifice into his narrative, declaring: “Their lives ended in places called Belleau Wood, The Argonne, Omaha Beach, Salerno and halfway around the world on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Pork Chop Hill, the Chosin Reservoir, and in a hundred rice paddies and jungles of a place called Vietnam” (“First Inaugural” 4).

Passages like these open the inaugural discourse to a cluster of four permanent themes – *mission, burden, prevail*, as well as *war and military*.

3.3.2.3 *Mission, burden, prevail, and war and military*

This set of themes is closely related to America’s self-image and its national mission, a theme that is present in every single inaugural address, and that is one of the central topics in 20 out of 55 speeches.

“We recognize,” states Eisenhower on behalf of the nation, “and accept our own deep involvement in the destiny of men everywhere” (“Second Inaugural” 63). Referring later to “the wide world of our duty and our destiny” (65), he stresses both America’s chosenness and the international dimension of its mission. The exact nature of this mission is described by George W. Bush in his 2005 inaugural, an address often referred to as the Freedom speech due to the high number of occurrences of that term:

All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you. Democratic reformers facing repression, prison, or exile can know: America sees you for who you are: the future leaders of your free country.
 (“Second Inaugural” 67)

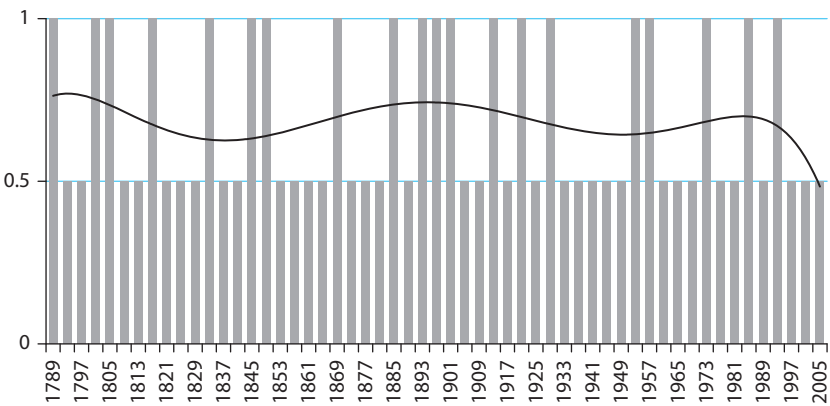


Figure 52. Intensity scores for the mission theme

The presidential mission statement is often combined with a direct appeal to undemocratic leaders to change their ways – "The leaders of governments with long habits of control need to know: To serve your people you must learn to trust them. Start on this journey of progress and justice, and America will walk at your side" (67). Like John F. Kennedy in his 1961 speech, presidents often address the oppressed citizens of said regimes personally:

To those new States whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom – and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside. ("Inaugural Address" 1)

With America's international role and its duty to share its foundational values with the rest of the world – "Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation" (Bush, "Second Inaugural" 66) – comes great responsibility, as Theodore Roosevelt expresses in 1905:

Upon the success of our experiment much depends, not only as regards our own welfare, but as regards the welfare of mankind. If we fail, the cause of free self-government throughout the world will rock to its foundations, and therefore our responsibility is heavy, to ourselves, to the world as it is to-day, and to the generations yet unborn. ("Inaugural Address")

With such high stakes, failure is not an option: "I know that it is America's purpose that we shall not fail" (Roosevelt, "Fourth Inaugural" 523). America must, and will prevail.

A rare moment of self-doubt about the viability of the American mission, brought about by the defeat in Vietnam and a major economic crisis, can be found in Nixon's 1973 speech, where he concedes that "[t]he time has passed when America will make every other nation's conflict our own, or make every other nation's future our responsibility, or presume to tell the people of other nations how to manage their own affairs" ("Second Inaugural" 13). Yet, only a few lines later Nixon assures his audience that "America's role is indispensable in preserving the world's peace" (13). America's status as "the world's indispensable nation" (Clinton, "Second Inaugural" 44) hails from the exceptional nature of its core values, a fact that Carter underlines in his inaugural address:

Ours was the first society openly to define itself in terms of both spirituality and of human liberty. It is that unique self-definition which has given us an exceptional appeal, but it also imposes on us a special obligation, to take on those

moral duties which, when assumed, seem invariably to be in our own best interests. (“Inaugural Address” 1)

America, “that spot where happiness springs from a perfect equality of political rights” (van Buren, “Inaugural Address”), is, in the words of Jefferson, “a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation” (“First Inaugural”). America’s missionary role does, however, come at a price, one that, so the general tenor of presidential inaugurations, the nation is willing to pay. As Kennedy states: “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty” (“Inaugural Address” 1).

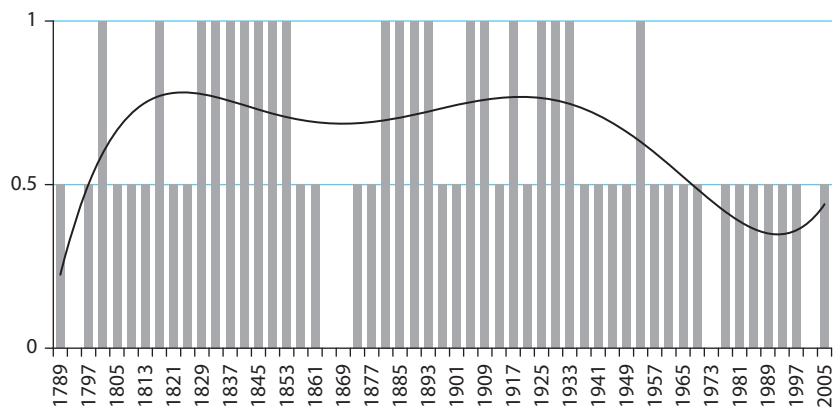


Figure 53. Intensity scores for the burden theme

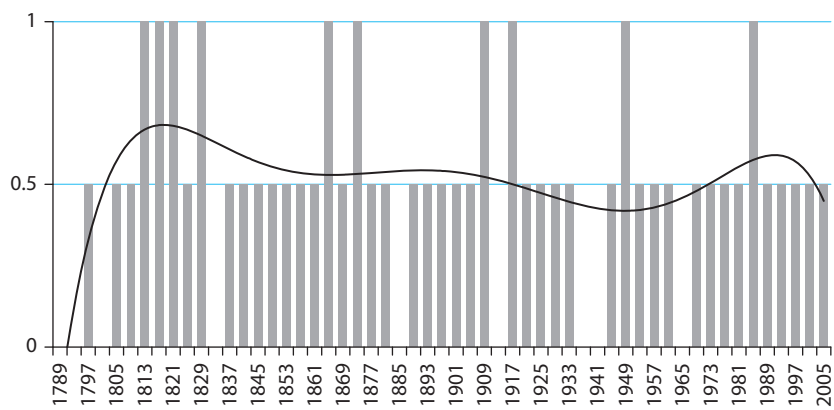


Figure 54. Intensity scores for the war and military theme

The *burden* theme is closely connected with the public acceptance of the necessity that to advance America's cause in the world, sacrifices have to be made, a fact of which Harding reminds the nation two years after the end of the First World War:

When the Governments of the earth shall have established a freedom like our own and shall have sanctioned the pursuit of peace as we have practiced it, I believe the last sorrow and the final sacrifice of international warfare will have been written. Let me speak to the maimed and wounded soldiers who are present today, and through them convey to their comrades the gratitude of the Republic for their sacrifices in its defense. A generous country will never forget the services you rendered, and you may hope for a policy under Government that will relieve any maimed successors from taking your places on another such occasion as this.
(“Inaugural Address”)

The role of the armed forces and the inevitability of armed conflict is also present in Clinton's first inaugural – “And I thank the millions of men and women whose steadfastness and sacrifice triumphed over Depression, fascism and Communism” (1) – and in George W. Bush's 2005 reference to the Civil War, “when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty” (“Second Inaugural” 69).

The *burden* theme also appears in a second, more personal variety in presidential inaugurals. Here, presidents display their humility and the limits of their office by stating, like Taft, that “anyone who has taken the oath I have just taken must feel a heavy weight of responsibility.” Taft adds, “[i]f not, he has no conception of the powers and duties of the office upon which he is about to enter, or he is lacking in a proper sense of the obligation which the oath imposes” (“Inaugural Address”).

The thematic cluster that has the American mission at its center is completed by presidential assurances that despite constant threats to America's founding values the country will eventually succeed. Nevertheless, as Figure 55 shows, the *prevail* theme, while being a relatively constant presence in inaugural addresses, is not one of great intensity. With an average of 0.43 it does indeed show the lowest thematic score of all 13 themes.

Many references to terms belonging to the *prevail* theme refer to the robustness of the nation's political system and its success in the face of adversity. Examples can be found in the inaugurals of the early republic, e.g., in John Quincy Adams' 1825 speech – “It is a source of gratification and of encouragement to me to observe that the great result of this experiment upon the theory of human rights has ... been crowned with success equal to the most sanguine expectations of its founders” (“Inaugural Address”).

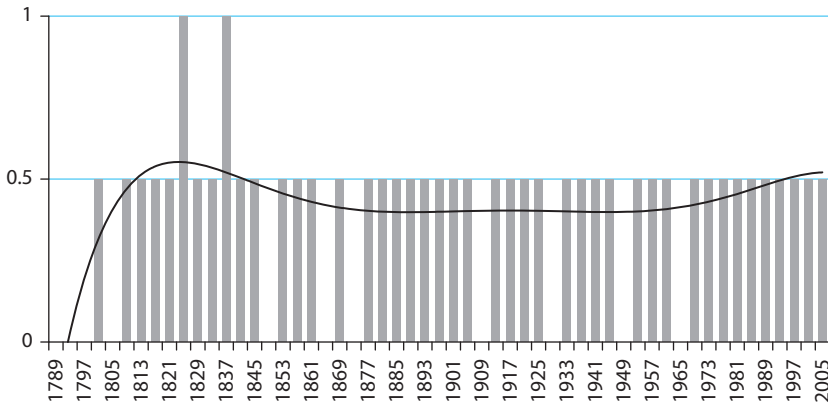


Figure 55. Intensity scores for the prevail theme

The *prevail* theme is also of importance in presidential inaugurals overshadowed by economic crises or armed conflicts. Referring to the Depression and the success of his own New Deal policies, Franklin D. Roosevelt states: “Eight years ago, when the life of this Republic seemed frozen by a fatalistic terror, we proved that this is not true. We were in the midst of shock - but we acted. We acted quickly, boldly, decisively” (Third Inaugural” 3). In this 1941 speech, he employs the memories of the nation’s victory over the Great Depression to prepare the nation for America’s foreseeable involvement in the Second World War. Four years later, Roosevelt repeats his call for steadfastness in the face of adversity, declaring, “[as] I stand here today, having taken the solemn oath of office in the presence of my fellow countrymen – in the presence of our God – I know that it is America’s purpose that we shall not fail” (“Fourth Inaugural” 523).

3.3.2.4 *Continuity and change*

As a rite of passage, a presidential inauguration will always be seen as a symbol of *change* or *continuity*, often of both. The *change* theme has been part of inaugural addresses since long before the election of Barack Obama (see Figure 56). Its most memorable expression is arguably John F. Kennedy’s “Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans ...” (“Inaugural Address” 1).

As mentioned above, presidential inaugurations are acts of both “disruption and continuation” (Fields 1996, 115). In this context, and as Figure 57 shows, “the language of conservation, preservation, maintenance, and renewal pervades the speeches” (Campbell and Jamieson 2008, 37).

One focus of the *continuity* theme is the “perpetuity of our institutions,” as Martin van Buren states, institutions that “if we maintain the principles on which

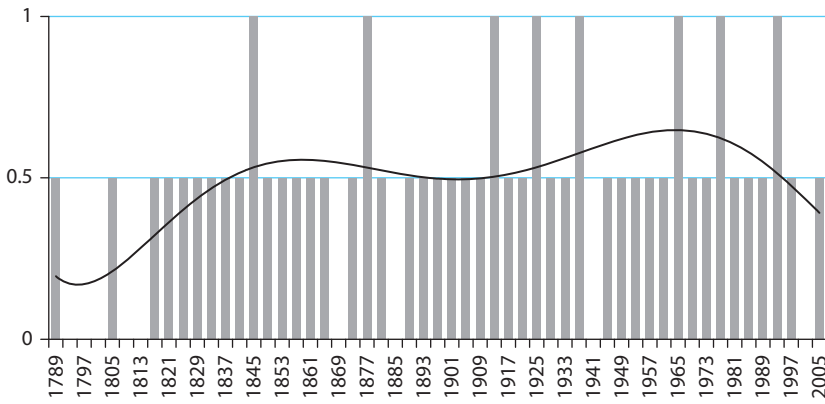


Figure 56. Intensity scores for the change theme

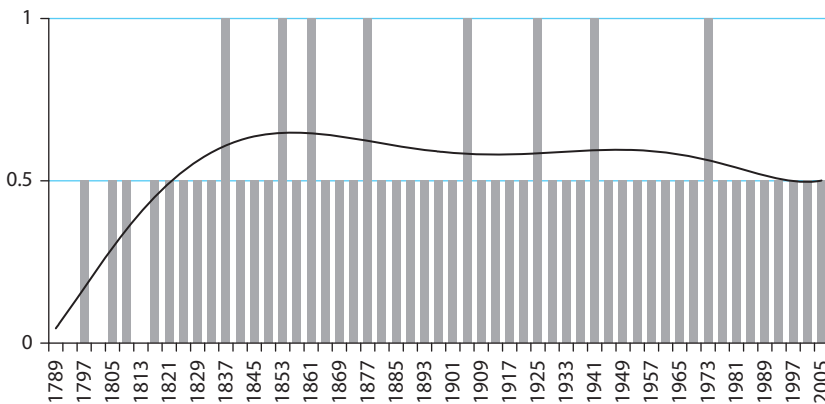


Figure 57. Intensity scores for the continuity theme

they were established ... are destined to confer their benefits on countless generations yet to come" ("Inaugural Address"). The same goes for America's mission, a fact that Clinton underlines in 1997 by stating: "Fellow citizens, we must not waste the precious gift of this time. For all of us are on that same journey of our lives, and our journey, too, will come to an end. But the journey of our America must go on" ("Second Inaugural" 46).⁴⁶

As mentioned above, in an effort to demonstrate political stability in times of political change and, by doing so, demonstrate the nation's unity, the *continuity*

46. For a discussion of the "journey" metaphor in political discourse, see Charteris-Black (2005).

and *change* themes often coincide in the same speech, a fact exemplified by the following passage from Jimmy Carter's address: "As my high school teacher ... used to say: 'We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles'" ("Inaugural Address" 1).

3.3.2.5 Government and economic success

The *government* theme, which I have already mentioned in the context of the *value* theme, has the third-highest overall intensity score of all themes. As Figure 58 shows, however, its importance has been greatly diminished since, and probably because of the advent of the modern presidency.

The lack of references to the term "government" between 1949 and 1969 can perhaps be explained by the advent and rapid escalation of the Cold War, whereby external events and challenges to America's mission overshadowed issues of domestic governance, at least as expressed in major presidential addresses.⁴⁷ During the early days of the republic, however, the role of the government and its immediate link to the survival of the new nation was much more important and much less taken for granted than in modern times. "What other form of government indeed," asks John Adams, "can so well deserve our esteem and love?" ("Inaugural

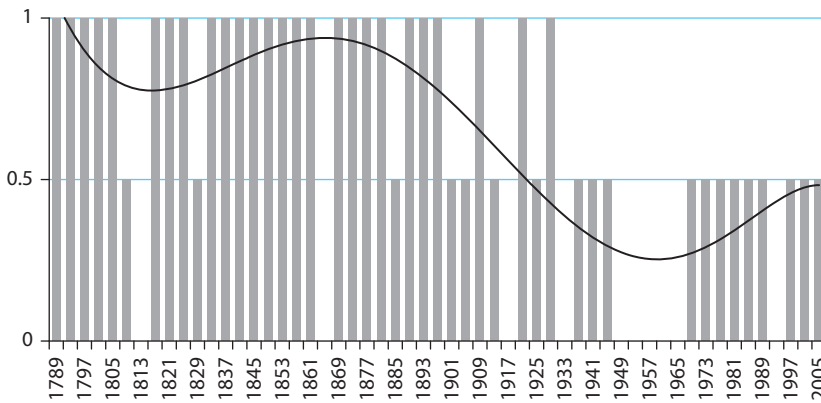


Figure 58. Intensity scores for the government theme

47. There were, however, a number of significant domestic policy speeches that specifically addressed the problematic issues of the day, above all with regards to civil rights or social policies. For a more detailed discussion of these speeches see, for example, Goldzwig and Diokisopoulos' (1994), "Crisis at Little Rock; Eisenhower, History, and Mediated Political Realities;" Bostdorff and O'Rourke's (1997) "The Presidency and the Promotion of Domestic Crisis: John F. Kennedy's Management of the 1962 Steele Crisis;" and Pauley's (1997) "Presidential Rhetoric and Interest Group Politics: Lyndon B. Johnson and the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Address"). Monroe's description, and celebration, of the American form of government is prototypical of this view:

Such, then, is the happy Government under which we live – a Government adequate to every purpose for which the social compact is formed; a Government elective in all its branches, under which every citizen may by his merit obtain the highest trust recognized by the Constitution; which contains within it no cause of discord, none to put at variance one portion of the community with another; a Government which protects every citizen in the full enjoyment of his rights, and is able to protect the nation against injustice from foreign powers. Other considerations of the highest importance admonish us to cherish our Union and to cling to the Government which supports it. ("First Inaugural")

In more recent times, the *government* theme is dominated by a more ideological and clearly partisan discussion about the role and size of the federal government, a discussion illustrated by the time-delayed exchange between Reagan – "In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem" ("First Inaugural" 1) – and Clinton – "Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution" ("Second Inaugural" 44).

Like the *government* theme, the *economic success* theme shows a decline in importance over time.

Just like the term "prosperity" is often referred to under the values themes, economic success itself is also closely related to values. Reagan, for example, states that his "administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy that provides equal opportunity for all Americans, with no barriers born of bigotry or discrimination" ("First Inaugural" 2). References to the lack of economic success are used to criticize previous administrations and can therefore be seen

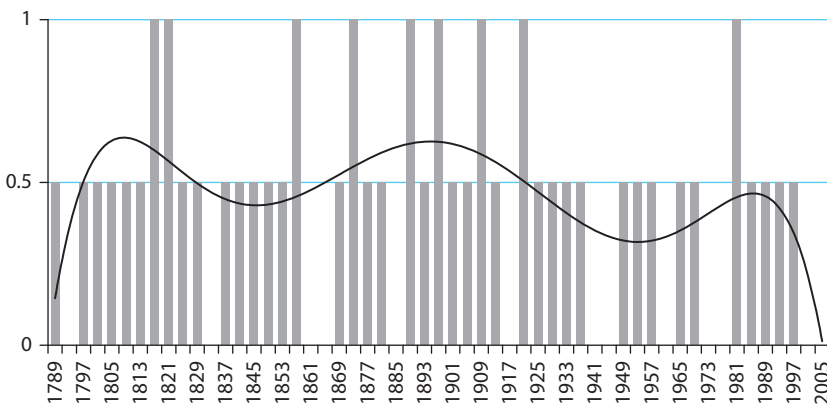


Figure 59. Intensity scores for the economic success theme

as an extension of campaign discourse, a strategy also seen in Reagan's address: "Ending inflation means freeing all Americans from the terror of runaway living costs. All must share in the productive work of this "new beginning" and all must share in the bounty of a revived economy" (2).

In general, inaugural addresses tend to describe economic success as an almost natural consequence of the political values discussed above, a correlation made explicit by George H. W. Bush:

Great nations of the world are moving toward democracy through the door to freedom. Men and women of the world move toward free markets through the door to prosperity. The people of the world agitate for free expression and free thought through the door to the moral and intellectual satisfactions that only liberty allows. ("Inaugural Address" 1)

America's core value of freedom thus becomes the key instrument in seeking prosperity, making its global dissemination even more important.

3.4 Inaugural themes in other presidential genres

As a primarily, but not exclusively epideictic genre, inaugural addresses can be partially expected to show the type of multi-dimensional thematic intertextuality and thematic stability described above, especially as far as these themes help to fulfill the speeches' major functions. To see whether similar themes appear in other speeches and whether the phenomenon of thematic intertextuality is also present in other presidential genres, i.e., whether it is a transgeneric device, I carried out a comparative qualitative analysis using a small parallel corpus consisting of four State of the Union addresses and four foreign policy speeches. The speeches were randomly selected, the only criteria being that they had represented the four main eras of American history used in the analysis of discursive intertextuality in Chapter 2. All eight speeches were again analyzed by two independent coders.

3.4.1 State of the Union addresses

The small corpus of State of the Union addresses is composed of the annual messages of John Q. Adams (1826), Ulysses S. Grant (1873), Franklin D. Roosevelt (1935), and Lyndon B. Johnson (1967). On average, the speeches are 7,109 words long. According to tradition, the messages of Adams (7,706 words) and Grant (10,022 words) were delivered to Congress only in written form, while those of Franklin D. Roosevelt (3,525 words), and Johnson (7,184 words) were delivered orally to a joint session of Congress.

On average, State of the Union addresses are significantly longer than inaugural addresses. Overall, the 220 State of the Union addresses in our corpus have an average word count of about 8,000. The inaugurals in my corpus, by comparison, average only 2,352 words. Even after Wilson reintroduced the oral delivery of the State of the Union address to Congress, these speeches are still rather long affairs, with modern speeches lasting often for more than one hour (compared to the average 20-minute delivery of an inaugural address). Naturally, this major generic difference means that State of the Union addresses allow for much more detailed discussion of various policies and aims, and the State of the Union is indeed a very political, often decidedly partisan speech. Nevertheless, certain themes identified as being a fixed component of inaugural speeches failed to be addressed at all in State of the Union messages. Ulysses S. Grant’s speech, for example, the longest of the comparative group, has a matrix value of 0 for *unity*.

As a policy speech that needs to report on past political decisions as much as to prepare the audience for future ones, the State of the Union is primarily an act of deliberative rhetoric. However, as the second most important presidential speech, it is always also an exercise in celebratory discourse, especially after the re-institution of its oral delivery mentioned above and, even more so, in light of the fact that a State of the Union address is a major television event.

Having coded the themes occurring in the four State of the Union addresses selected and having evaluated their intensity, we can see that eight of the 13 themes have a stronger presence in State of the Union speeches than in inaugural

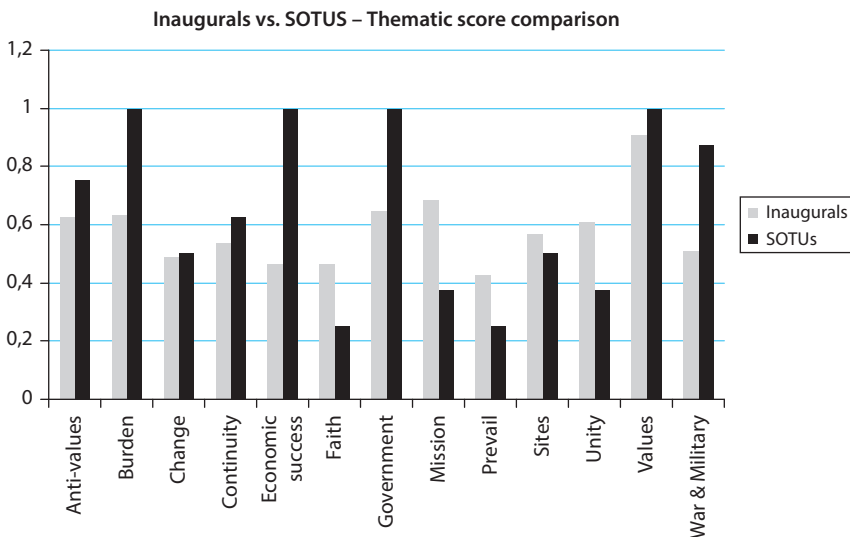


Figure 60. Comparison of intensity scores in inaugural and State of the Union addresses

Theme	State of the Unions		Inaugurals	
	Intensity score	Rank	Intensity score	Rank
Burden	1	1	0.64	4
Economic success	1	1	0.46	11
Government	1	1	0.65	3
Values	1	1	0.91	1
War and military	0.875	5	0.51	9
Anti-values	0.75	6	0.63	5
Continuity	0.625	7	0.54	8
Sites	0.5	8	0.56	7
Change	0.5	8	0.49	10
Mission	0.375	10	0.68	2
Union	0.375	10	0.61	6
Belief and faith	0.25	12	0.46	12
Prevail	0.25	12	0.43	13

Figure 61. Comparison of intensity scores and theme rankings in inaugural and State of the Union addresses

addresses. This can probably be attributed to the above-mentioned fact that the State of the Union is a much longer speech and might also have to do with the small sample size of the comparative corpus.

We can nevertheless identify a number of trends, illustrated in Figure 61, which compares the thematic score for and the ranking of each theme by genre.

As we can see, the values, *burden*, *government*, and *economic success* themes all score a value of 1 across all four speech samples. In the following, I will focus on the major parallels and differences between inaugural addresses and State of the Union speeches.

Values are a significant part of any presidential address, independent of the genre. A way of celebrating America’s history, they also allow the president to speak from a more historical, less partisan position and to present himself as speaking to Congress on behalf of the American people. References to the value theme in State of the Union addresses are virtually indistinguishable from those in inaugural addresses, as the following example shows:

We must be strong, above all, in the spiritual resources upon which all else depends. We must be devoted with all our heart to the values we defend. We must know that each of these values and virtues applies with equal force at the ends of the earth and in our relations with our neighbor next door. We must know that freedom expresses itself with equal eloquence in the right of workers to strike in the nearby factory, and in the yearnings and sufferings of the peoples of Eastern Europe.

(Eisenhower, “State of the Union Address 1953” 34)

A significant difference with regard to the term "value" itself is that in State of the Unions it occurs much more frequently in an economic context, such as the "values of imported goods" (T. Roosevelt, "Seventh Annual Message 1907"), "stability in international exchange and monetary values" (Hoover, "State of the Union Address 1932"), or "real estate values" (Truman, "State of the Union Address 1946" 62). These latter examples also already point to a more significant presence of economic themes in State of the Unions (see below).

The heavy prevalence of *burden* as a common theme throughout the four State of the Union speeches is perhaps one of the most surprising findings. However, the context of the times in which the addresses were made helps with our understanding here. Adams speaks of costs of building a strong Navy, saying that while "the burden of its expenses and charges was weighing heaviest upon the country," the result of this investment "may present a line of floating fortifications along the whole range of our coast ready to meet any invader who might attempt to set foot upon our shores" (J. Q. Adams, "Second Annual Message 1826"). Grant is also speaking in a time of economic hardship, stating at the beginning of his message that "[i]n the midst of great national prosperity a financial crisis has occurred that has brought low fortunes of gigantic proportions" and later referring to "the great actual contraction that has taken place in the currency" and "the general panic now prevailing" ("State of the Union Address 1873"). In this 1873 speech, Grant also refers to the burdensome legacy of the Civil War (unlike in his first inaugural in 1869 where, just four years after the end of the Civil War, the *burden* theme has a score of 0).

Speaking in 1935, Roosevelt is also facing a time of relative economic uncertainty following the Great Depression, while Johnson (1967) is confronted with an escalating conflict and growing opposition to the war in Vietnam. For presidents having to politically justify these various situations it is natural that the notion of burden plays a central role. Additionally, it may be more appropriate to speak more of burdens in a State of the Union address that is much longer and multi-faceted, and generally less defining of a presidency than an inaugural is. This is not to say, however, that the *burden* theme does not feature prominently in some inaugurals (from 1829 to 1853, for example, all inaugural addresses show a thematic score of 1 for this theme).

References to the various forms and elements of government (predominantly Congress) are the most prolific of the thematic references and perhaps the most unsurprising trend given that it is an address specifically designed for and required by Congress itself. An insightful example of the contrast between the discursive styles and needs of inaugural addresses and State of the Union speeches is illustrated by both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Johnson, who, in their respective first inaugurals (1933 and 1965) scored a 0 on the thematic matrix for the

government theme and a 1 in the same category for their respective State of the Unions two years later (1935 and 1967).

Economic issues were the other major area to be discussed at length in all of the selected State of the Unions. The intensity score of the *economic success* theme is significantly higher than for inaugural address. This is, however, not surprising as the norms of the State of the Union genre typically expect the president to address not only questions of foreign and domestic policy, but also specifically economic issues. In addition, the State of the Union is a typical platform for announcing economic plans and policies. In this context, the length of the speech also allows the president to discuss his agenda in greater detail. Economic policy proposals, most notably presidential trade initiatives, are generally closely linked to promises of great financial returns and an increase in the prosperity of the nation.

Belief and faith and *prevail* were the two lowest scoring themes for the State of the Unions analyzed, a result consistent with the inaugural theme results, where they are both also two of the lowest averages. Inaugurals that did not receive a thematic score of 1 for *belief and faith* often had this theme appear as a rhetorical device at certain times during the speech. It perhaps follows then that it might be even less present in an often intensely policy and economy-oriented State of the Union address. What is interesting to note, however, is the relative lack of *prevail* as a counterweight to the *burden* theme. The will to prevail despite heavy burdens would seem like a natural progression; this contrast between the *burden* and *prevail* pair (or lack thereof) is, however, not entirely inconsistent with similar trends in the inaugurals.

The thematic pair of *continuity* and *change* shows a continuous, but never dominating presence in State of the Union addresses, a similar pattern that the themes exhibit in inaugural discourse. Given that the speeches analyzed were delivered during the middle of the respective presidential terms it is surprising to see that the need for political and policy continuity is not stressed more.

The *war and military* theme is more frequent in State of the Union messages than in inaugural addresses – a fact that does not come as a surprise given the historical contexts of the speeches selected and the general international focus of State of the Unions. However, the theme does not appear to be linked to the idea of an American mission, which is significantly less frequent in State of the Union addresses than in inaugural addresses.

3.4.2 Foreign policy addresses

In addition to comparing inaugural addresses with State of the Union addresses, I carried out a theme analysis in four major foreign policy speeches after World War II. With a particular interest in studying contemporary themes in American presidential discourse, I compared the prevalence and thematic scores of the 13 inaugural themes identified in the 15 inaugural addresses from 1949 to 2005 with a corpus comprising the following four foreign policy speeches: Eisenhower's address on the Middle East in 1957; a foreign policy address by Kennedy at American University; Carter's 1978 address on the Camp David peace agreement between Egypt and Israel; and George W. Bush's address on the occasion of the elections in Iraq in December 2005. On average, the four speeches are 3,382 words long, ranging from 2,753 (Carter) to 3,935 (Bush) words.

Major foreign policy speeches are longer affairs than inaugural addresses, but still much shorter than State of the Union speeches. Unlike in the cases of inaugural addresses and State of the Unions, the setting, time, and location of these and other major speeches is not constant. Kennedy's speech was held at a university, Bush talked at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and Carter and Eisenhower both addressed a joint session of Congress in the U.S. Capitol. Major presidential addresses like these are usually one-issue speeches and provide less detail than State of the Unions do.

As Figure 62 shows, the *anti-values*, *sites*, and *war and military* themes top the list of thematic intensity score, with all three themes showing noticeable differences with their intensity scores in inaugural addresses.

A graphical comparison (see Figure 63) between the thematic scores of post-World War II inaugurals and the sample corpus of foreign policy speeches shows some noteworthy trends.

The trend that stands out the most in this group of speeches is the matrix value of 1 for both the *sites* and *war and military* themes. Being foreign policy speeches about specific places, events, or people it is of course to be expected that there will be numerous references to these various sites throughout the speech – over and above what might be expected in an inaugural. Among the post-World War II inaugurals, only Kennedy's address and Bush's second inaugural scored a 1 for *sites* references, with all others showing a lower thematic score of only 0.5.

The score for the thematic references to *war and military* differ from the results found in the State of the Union speeches and inaugural addresses, a fact that can be explained by speeches' occasions. George W. Bush, for example, in addition to talking about Iraqi elections, also refers to the wider context of the War

Theme	FP speeches		Inaugurals	
	Intensity score	Rank	Intensity score	Rank
Anti-values	1	1	0.63	5
Sites	1	1	0.56	7
War and military	1	1	0.51	9
Mission	0.75	4	0.68	2
Burden	0.75	4	0.64	4
Change	0.75	4	0.49	10
Values	0.625	7	0.91	1
Government	0.625	7	0.65	3
Union	0.625	7	0.61	6
Continuity	0.5	10	0.54	8
Prevail	0.5	10	0.43	13
Economic success	0.35	12	0.46	11
Belief and faith	0.25	13	0.46	12

Figure 62. Comparison of intensity scores and theme rankings in inaugural and foreign policy addresses

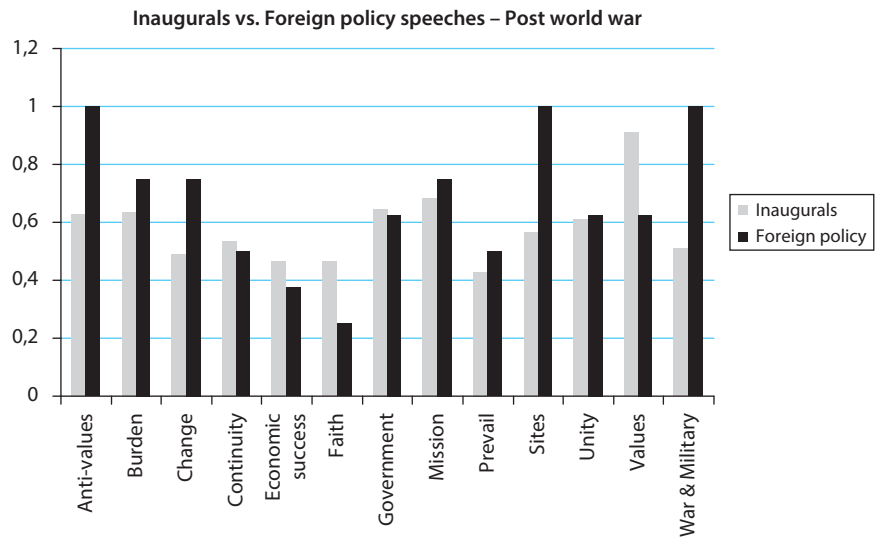


Figure 63. Comparison of intensity scores in inaugural and foreign policy addresses

on Terror and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Jimmy Carter is speaking about the Camp David accords, positioning it inside the wider, long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a number of Middle Eastern wars in previous decades. Kennedy is speaking primarily about the threat of a nuclear war, the

dangers of nuclear proliferation, and the need for disarmament. His dichotomous language of war and peace is framed in a discourse of values (with a 1 score for the *values* theme). Eisenhower, finally, is addressing the tensions in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Suez Canal crisis that took place three months earlier.

While terms belonging to the *war and military* cluster form are large parts of all of the foreign policy speeches in the comparative corpus, the same cannot be said for the inaugural addresses of the respective presidents. All post-World War II inaugurals scored 0.5, except for Johnson (0) and Truman and Reagan (1). The potential reason for this contrast is the much more specific context and purpose of the varying foreign policy speeches and the fact that they all belong to the realm of crisis and conflict discourse.

The *change* theme also plays a prominent role with three of the four speeches scoring a 1 (Eisenhower's speech scores a 0). The *change* theme is also likely to be linked to the speeches' immediate political context. The Camp David accords, for example, promise a change in relations between Israel and the Arab world, progress of peace, and a new beginning. The elections in Iraq celebrate a new country, comparing old and new, totalitarianism and democracy. Kennedy's speech calls for a change of nuclear arms policies towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

The other major thematic pattern in the foreign policy corpus is the strong presence of *anti-values*, with all speeches being coded with the highest score. This serves as another contrast to inaugurals and State of the Unions where the *values* theme usually has a score of 1 and *anti-values* usually one of 0.5 (with only a few scoring a 1). The strong position of anti-values ties in with the similar high score of the *war and military* and the importance of the *mission* and *burden* themes (with all three themes showing a higher intensity score in foreign policy speeches when compared to inaugural addresses). In this context, as shown in Chapter 2, a language of fear is often employed to justify presidential actions and/or to stress the urgency of the situation addressed by the president (see also Chapter 4 for the use of anti-values as part of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext).

The remaining six themes – *government*, *union*, *continuity*, *prevail*, *economic success*, and *belief and faith* – all show very similar intensity scores in foreign policy speeches and inaugural speeches, with the *belief and faith* theme being the weakest of the themes in the foreign policy corpus.

3.5 American themes

The basic assumption underlying the content analysis carried out in this chapter was that the continued reference to a stable set of themes or topoi and the permanence of said themes represent an intertextual phenomenon in its own right in

American presidential discourse. As already apparent in the quantitative analysis of the occurrences of terms belonging to the 13 individual theme clusters indicated, the themes do indeed occur with predictable regularity in the inaugural addresses analyzed. However, the frequencies of the theme-related terms only point to high significance of three themes, namely *sites of memory*, *union*, and *values*. As pointed out above, these three civil religious themes are directly linked to the fulfillment of the two main tasks of inaugural addresses identified by Campbell and Jamieson, the unification of the American people and the rehearsal of national values drawn from America's history. The other ten themes, however, while continuously present, do not show particularly elevated levels of occurrence. This also goes for the idea of an American *mission*, a theme central to the notion of American civil religion.

The second, qualitative analysis carried out provides a more nuanced picture of the permanence, or transience, of the presidential themes. As shown, each theme appears in at least three out of four inaugural addresses. The theme with the most complete coverage is the *mission* theme, which is present, often strongly, in all 55 speeches. The *values* theme (appearing in all but one speech) and the *union* theme (appearing in all but two speeches) complete the top three of the most permanent inaugural themes. The themes with the lowest percentages were *economic success* as well as *belief and faith*, both appearing in 76 percent of the speeches.

When looking at the intensity of the themes, i.e., the importance that they play within the speeches or sections thereof, the *values* theme established itself as the theme with the highest intensity (with an overall score of 0.91 out of 1). On average, themes received an intensity score of 0.58, a number that seems to indicate that many of the themes are referred to rather in passing, as a mere acknowledgement of the traditional, ritualistic importance of this form of intertextuality. In addition to *values*, the *mission*, *burden*, *unity*, and *government* themes all receive above-average intensity scores.

References to inaugural themes in general and to the high-intensity themes identified above in particular are closely related to the fulfillment of the cultural functions of the inaugural address. As discussed above, "the most fundamental generic functions" of inaugural addresses are, as Sigelman, following Campbell and Jamieson, states, "the unification of the audience and the veneration of traditional values" (1996, 82). Within this context, references to American civil religion themes in inaugural addresses fulfill the functions of "culture building [and] culture affirmation" (Toolin 1983, 45). Thematic intertextuality allows the president to pay respect the eternal American cultural topoi of *values*, *union*, *sites*, and *mission*, facilitating his assumption of the role of high priest of America's civil religion on the back of time-tested discursive modules.

In addition, references to the other high-intensity themes, *government* and *economic success*, support a third function of presidential inaugural addresses, i.e., the presentation of "the political principles that will govern the new administration" (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 5). The theme group *belief and faith*, *values*, and *anti-values*, finally, are an integral part of the president's public expression of the American creed and support the function of showing the president's understanding of "the requirements and limitations of executive functions" (5) and highlighting his humility in accepting the highest office of the land (see Valenzano 2002, 88).

As I have discussed above, inaugural addresses are not only epideictic in nature but also have a deliberative dimension. Indeed, Toolin considers the "legitimation of international and domestic actions" (1983, 45) as the most important aspect of civil religion references in inaugural addresses. To support the president's agenda, the cultural themes discussed often form narrative units that take on a dramatic function within presidential discourse, a phenomenon that is also visible in the comparative analysis of the State of the Union and foreign policy addresses carried out above. As such, for example, the *mission* theme, itself arising from the opposition of the values and *anti-values* theme, is closely linked to the themes of *war and military*, *burden*, and *sacrifice* (see the analysis of American foreign policy discourse in the next chapter for a more in-depth discussion of the narrative application of presidential themes).

Thematic intertextuality is as much part of presidential discourse as references and allusions to the nation's sacred documents (e.g., the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution) or the speeches of the nation's great president (e.g., Lincoln's second inaugural). Yet, the themes identified go beyond representing only an isolated intertextual phenomenon. Instead, they become an important part of other intertextual networks. First and foremost, the themes become modular components of the two dominating hypotexts, or templates, in American presidential discourse, the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext (see Chapter 4) and the political jeremiad (see Austerlühl 2014). Within the pre-established structures of these hypotexts, the themes become exchangeable content elements, allowing presidents, for example, to create dichotomous descriptions of American values and un-American anti-values or to connect the praise of the nation's founding principles and the call for a renewal of the notion of government with the promise of future economic success.

In addition to featuring as content modules in American hypotexts, the themes reappear in the context of presidential allusions (see Chapter 5) where material elements of America's civil religion (e.g., the Declaration of Independence), its sites of collective memory (e.g., the Civil War or the Depression, and the nation's mythic heroes Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln) become the predominant sources

of presidential pre-texts. The themes discussed guide the selection of presidential allusions to such pre-texts that are particularly suited for expressing the cultural message contained in said themes (see, for example, allusions to Franklin D. Roosevelt as a reminder of the nation's steadfastness and prevailing in times of crisis, or the use of quotes from Lincoln's Gettysburg address or second inaugural to stress the importance of national unity and the dangers of internal division).

CHAPTER 4

“Freedom and fear are at war”

The making of an American hypotext

Another prominent intertextual phenomenon in American presidential discourse is that of hypertextuality. According to Genette’s classification, and as described in detail in Section 1.4, a hypotext refers to a pre-text or a group of pre-texts that become role models which subsequent texts, the hypertexts, aim to imitate or replicate. In a discursive context, a hypotext thus represents a type of speech template whose predefined argumentative and narrative structures a speaker re-uses, often by employing the recurrent thematic elements discussed in the previous chapter.

In the following, and in line with the international perspective of this study, I will focus on the international dimension of presidential speeches and analyze the discursive patterns of selected foreign policy and security policy speeches. I will argue that presidential crisis and conflict discourse is dominated by a speech template that I refer to as the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext. A second, equally prominent and powerful hypotextual construct, the politicized American jeremiad, which is more frequent in domestically oriented presidential speeches and pre-presidential, i.e., campaign, discourse is discussed in a separate publication (see Austermühl 2014).

As we will see, the notions of “evil” and the “evil other” play a central role in the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext. The following analysis will therefore put particular emphasis on the strategic use of the term “evil” as a core instrument in the overall, dual pragmatic purpose of the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext, i.e., the contradistinctive creation of American identity on the one hand and attempts at justifying and legitimizing unilateral American military actions and unilateral presidential decision making on the other hand. I will open my analysis of the functionalization of the evil other with a close reading of George W. Bush’s 2002 State of the Union address, a speech that has become known as the Axis of Evil speech (Section 4.1).

The discussion of the Axis of Evil speech will serve as a basis for an in-depth description and analysis of the composition and logic of the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext (Section 4.2). In Section 4.3, I will then demonstrate that the simplified discourse of good and evil has always been a part of presidential speeches, and many presidents prior to George W. Bush have strategically used the term and its connotations to pursue their political goals. Finally, in Section 4.4, I will discuss

the complex set of pragmatic functions associated with this specific variety of presidential hypertextuality.

4.1 George W. Bush's "Axis of Evil" – Rhetoric or reality?

The "axis of evil" is an expression used by George W. Bush in his 2002 State of the Union address, which he delivered on January 29 in the U.S. Capitol. Widely seen as an *ex-ante* justification of expanding the War on Terror in general and preparing the nation for the Second Iraq War in particular, the speech did not only become a clarion call for many Americans still suffering from the shock of 9/11 but also initiated the replacement of global public solidarity with the United States with a new kind of anti-Americanism that would continue to increase during the remainder of the Bush presidency.⁴⁸

The speech's most memorable segment, in which Bush refers to Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an "axis of evil" intent on attacking the United States, drew significant criticism for its simplicity, mostly from abroad, and helped cement a stereotypical, similarly simplistic image of George W. Bush. Domestically, however, as Robert Ivie points out, the reception of Bush's theological language⁴⁹ was different: "The image of evildoers evoked by President Bush ... resonated not only with right-wing Christian fundamentalism but also with mainstream political culture rooted in the secular religion of national mission and American exceptionalism" (Ivie 2007, 223).

The Axis of Evil speech is thus important in three ways. First, it serves as a legitimization of widening the War on Terror not only against the three countries explicitly singled out in the 2002 State of the Union address but also against other rogue nations that are seen as potential threats to the security of the United States.⁵⁰ Second, the speech and the reactions to it opened a rift in America's

48. For a comparison of Bush's pre and post-9/11 discourse, see Crockett (2003).

49. As David Frum, the former White House speechwriter credited with coining the phrase "axis of evil" writes, his original draft of the segment referred to an "axis of hatred," but as "Gerson [Bush's chief speechwriter] wanted to use the theological language that Bush had made his won since September 11 ... the 'axis of hatred' became 'axis of evil'" (2003, 238).

50. In May 2002, John Bolton, America's ambassador to the United Nations, gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, entitled "Beyond the Axis of Evil," in which he added three more states – Cuba, Libya, and Syria – to the Axis of Evil. Bolton called these nations "state sponsors of terrorism that are pursuing or who have the potential to pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or have the capability to do so in violation of their treaty obligations" (2002).

international relations, particularly with regard to its traditional transatlantic allies, whom then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld later ridiculed as representing "old Europe." Third, the speech provided critics of the Bush administration and, as the Second Iraq war became imminent, critics of America with "evidence" of the simplistic and deliberately unilateral politics and policies of Bush's America.

In addition to the far-reaching political effects the speech had, the Axis of Evil speech also warrants closer analysis in terms of its argumentative structure and the topoi it employs. Here, we will not only see that the speech resembles other instances of American presidential crisis discourse, especially in terms of the Us-vs.-Them dichotomy that it establishes, but that, from a pragmatic point of view, it is actually rather well suited to achieve its main goals.⁵¹ Finally, we will also see that Bush's use of a vocabulary of *angst* is much more developed than in comparable speeches.

A closer look at the Axis of Evil will also show that the main objectives of the speech go beyond a foreign policy dimension, beyond the preparation of the nation for long-term military operation in the War on Terror and the legitimization of the invasion of Iraq that was to follow in 2003.⁵² The speech's second, domestically focused objective – often neglected by foreign observers – was to call for a moral and cultural renewal of the nation. The two main objectives, external security and internal renewal, were still very visible during the 2004 presidential election and were crucial to Bush's re-election. As exit polls from the 2004 election show, Bush's image as the vengeful commander-in-chief of a nation engaged in a permanent and escalating multi-front war, for whom the fight against terror has become a personal mission, played a crucial role in his victory. The atmosphere of fear that existed in the United States after the terror attacks on September 11 – and that the nation's political elite contributed to by consequently raising the rhetorical threat level in the public discourse on terror and Iraq – helped in the creation of a fearful nation dependent on the leadership of a heroic presidential leader.⁵³

The Axis of Evil's second message, i.e., the need for a renewal of American culture, also had a lasting impact. This important element of the Axis of Evil, often

51. Murphy, in his excellent analysis of George W. Bush's immediate post-9/11 discourse, believes that the president, through his public appearances, and in particular in his memorial address on September 20, "has done a remarkable job of defining the attacks of Septembers 11 to his advantage and that his rhetoric is a key factor in his success" (2003, 608).

52. As Frum explains, making the case for the Iraq invasion was the starting point of his assignment. According to Frum, Gerson had asked him in late December 2001: "Can you sum up in a sentence or two our best case for going after Iraq?" (2003, 224).

53. See Section 2.3 for a discussion of the discursive strategies employed in the creation of the presidential hero. For an analysis of George W. Bush's heroic rhetoric, see Roper (2004a).

overlooked by scholars and journalists alike distracted by the attractive simplicity of the axis of evil, is the focus of the final segment of Bush's speech, in which the president equates the fight for the re-establishment of traditional American values at home with the dissemination of these values in the Middle East through the War on Terror. As such, this struggle for America's soul, reminiscent of the conservative discourse of Ronald Reagan, needs to be seen as a continuation of Bush's attack on the Democratic Party and especially Bill Clinton during the 2000 presidential campaign and in his 2001 inaugural address. In this fetching-good-out-of-evil scenario, the external threat to America's security becomes a chance for a return to the nation's cultural and moral values, for a renewal of the national covenant.⁵⁴ The discourse of the threatened nation also allows Bush to rally a country still divided over the contested 2000 elections and deeply shaken by the attacks of September 11.

4.1.1 Reading the "Axis of Evil"

In the following, I will first look at the speech's macro structure, i.e., its main argumentative and thematic elements. In doing so, we will see that the Axis of Evil contains elements of both of America's major hypertexts, i.e., the Us-vs.-Them template (see Section 4.2) as well as the modern jeremiad. We will also see that the term "security" serves as the speech's major rational argument, while the term "freedom" represents the speech's dramatic, emotional element.⁵⁵

4.1.1.1 *The speech's macrostructures*

According to Brinker's concept of the "Ableitbarkeitsprinzip" [principle of derivation] (2001, 52), a text's main theme is that from which the text's other themes and sub-themes are derived. From this perspective, it becomes clear that "security" is the dominant theme of Bush's speech. It is under the umbrella of security, divided in external, internal, and economic security, that Bush presents his 2002 budget. Another procedure for identifying a text's theme is the "Kompatibilitätsprinzip" [principle of compatibility] (ibid., 87). From this point of view, the main theme is the one that best supports the text's main communicative function. Here

54. See, for example, Bostdorff's (2003), "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal."

55. For a longitudinal, multi-genre analysis of the use of the term "freedom" in George W. Bush's discourse leading up to the Second Iraq War, see Valenzano (2006). Mral (2006) also discusses the rhetorical prelude to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Murphy's (2003) analysis of Bush's speeches on September 14 and September 20 also points to a number of strategies and topoi that re-appear in the Axis of Evil speech.

again, the concept "security" is crucial to preparing Americans for a drawn-out war against a barely defined enemy under the more or less unilateral leadership of the president.

Yet, in a speech designed to bring the period of national mourning to an end by providing it with both external and internal challenges, the notion of security is rhetorically overshadowed by the presence of the god term "freedom." In line with the American master myth of the chosen people, the defense of freedom becomes the speech's higher mission. Bush thus continues a century-old discourse of American exceptionalism and mirrors the national self-images projected since the beginning of the United States. As Ronald Reid explains in his introduction to selected speeches of the early republic: "Armed with a secularized version of the old Puritan millenarianism, Americans knew that God was using them to carry out His historical plan. The Chosen People were to safeguard Liberty and Democracy until, at some future time, they would spread over the entire world" (1995, 185).

The speech's macrostructure and the speech's main parts show the prominent role of "freedom." In the opening passage of the speech, "freedom," while not explicitly mentioned is nevertheless alluded to by Bush's reference to the "civilized world [which] faces unprecedented dangers" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 130). Towards the middle of the speech, immediately following after the climatic formula "axis of evil," Bush evokes the memories of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Kennedy, when he tells the American people, "[h]istory has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight" (132). This call to arms is repeated in the speech's final passage, where Bush also promises America's ultimate success, saying: "We have known freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory" (135).

The strategic position of the god term "freedom" within the speech's argumentative structure, i.e., its superstructure (see van Dijk 1980), points to its dominant role in justifying the political and military action proposed in the president's speech. Freedom's dramatic potential is increased further by negative connotations inherent in the terms that are employed as oppositional *agons*, e.g., the term "slavery," in the speech.

In Bush's speech, the story of freedom develops in three stages. Firstly, Bush stresses the urgency of their current situation by stating, "freedom is at risk" (131). Secondly, he calls on Americans "to fight freedom's fight" (132), and thirdly he promises the eventual triumph of that fight, saying that "we will see freedom's victory" (135). Embedded in all of these three stages are the two main functions of the speech, i.e., protecting the nation's security against external threats and reinvigorating the nation's cultural values from within.

Three months after his well-received address to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush returns to the U.S. Capitol for his first State of the Union address.⁵⁶ The speech's opening formula is delivered in a sober, humble tone and does not reflect the triumphant welcoming the president receives from the attending senators, members of the House of Representatives, and invited guests. Bush simply states: "Thank you very much. Mister Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished guests, fellow citizens" (129), and, following the generic norms of the State of the Union address, continues to sum up the current political and economic situation, saying, "[a]s we gather tonight, our nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers" (129–130).

Right at the beginning of his speech, Bush thus projects a somber picture of immediate threat, reminding his audience both of his father's 1991 State of the Union address, delivered on the eve of the first Iraq war – "We stand at a defining hour" (George H. W. Bush "State of the Union Address 1991" 74) and Kennedy's 1961 State of the Union Address ("I speak today in an hour of national peril" [19]). The formulaic assessment of the state of the nation that follows – "Yet the state of our Union has never been stronger" (130) – seems to be in direct contradiction to the dangerous situation described by Bush just a sentence earlier. With this pugnacious, defiant statement, however, Bush concludes the period of national mourning and converts the retrospective passivity of the post-9/11 era into a future and action-oriented new challenge: the War on Terror. And, as Bush assures Americans, this war's first battle, the invasion of Afghanistan, is going well:

We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our nation has comforted the victims, begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon, rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression. (130)

The high degree of action verbs in this crescendo-like passage serves to demonstrate that in the aftermath of the attacks America is now taking serious actions against those responsible for 9/11 and is vigorously hunting down the terrorists. The intensity of this early passage of the speech is evidenced by the fact that the Axis of Evil speech has an even lower percentage of passive clauses (seven percent) than Kennedy's inaugural address (nine percent), a speech universally lauded for its projection of vigorous leadership.

56. Murphy posits that Bush already presented his speech on September 20 as a State of the Union address, which gave him "the authority to speak on behalf of the people" (2003, 613).

In the following, Bush describes in detail the "new world" (Murphy 2003, 614) that he started to build through his epideictic discourse in the days immediately after 9/11. First, Bush presents an initial list of successes in the War on Terror. In this early passage, America assumes its iconic role as a universal symbol of freedom and justice: "The American flag flies again over our embassy in Kabul. Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running for their own" (130). America's victory over the Taliban and the momentous political change it brought about are symbolized by the presence of the designated Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the first woman in the new Afghan cabinet, whom Bush acknowledges explicitly:

The last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan's new government. And we welcome the new Minister of Women's Affairs, Doctor Sima Samar. (130)

The reference to the women of Afghanistan and their dual liberation increases the symbolic power of the freedom concept – already one filled with feminine connotations – and serves at the same time to heroize the predominantly male American armed forces whom Bush salutes in the speech's subsequent section:

Our progress is a tribute to the spirit of the Afghan people, to the resolve of our coalition, and to the might of the United States military. When I called our troops into action, I did so with complete confidence in their courage and skill. And tonight, thanks to them, we are winning the war on terror. The men and women of our Armed Forces have delivered a message now clear to every enemy of the United States: Even 7000 miles away, across oceans and continents, on mountaintops and in caves, you will not escape the justice of this nation. (130)

After this first, triumphant assessment of the war on terror, Bush drastically changes the tone of his speech. Mutating from commander-in-chief to America's chief comforter, Bush remembers the victims of September 11:

For many Americans, these four months have brought sorrow, and pain that will never completely go away. Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero, to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I do not want to play football until I can play with you again some day. (130)

This tribute to the victims of 9/11 enters into a cause-and-effect relationship with the War on Terror in general the Afghanistan war in particular. Yet, the image of

the football in the second part of the quote signals that there is a threat even greater than the hijacked planes and therefore a more long-term reason for America's military actions. The football, placed on Ground Zero by a little boy as a parting gift to his father, becomes a symbol for the shattered sense of invulnerability of a nation that sees its most fundamental values permanently threatened. Here, Bush provides a variation of the central theme of his September 20 address, in which he had described the American way of life as being the true target of the terrorist attacks: "These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way" ("Joint Session" 1142).

To overcome such a fundamental assault on the basic principles of the American system, the nation will have to be ready for a long struggle. The Axis of Evil speech thus not only serves to prepare Americans for future military action but also for future sacrifices that this struggle will demand of the American people. This need for sacrifice is personalized by the presence in the U.S. Capitol of the wife of a CIA employee killed in Afghanistan in December 2001. "Last month, at the grave of her husband, Michael, a CIA officer and Marine who died in Mazur-e-Sharif, Shannon Spann said these words of farewell: 'Semper Fi, my love'" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 130).⁵⁷

Here, Bush introduces the American myth of the ordinary hero and, like in his previous description of the victims of 9/11, connects the fate of individual Americans with the collective fate of the entire nation. Directly addressing the widow by her first name, Bush makes the war on terror a personal commitment, promising her and the families of past and future victims, "Shannon, I assure you and all who have lost a loved one that our cause is just, and our country will never forget the debt we owe Michael and all who gave their lives for freedom" (130). Later on, Bush repeats this idea of the just war, saying, "Our cause is just, and it continues" (130). The protection of the values in danger and the righteousness of America's actions make sacrifices such as Michael Spann's necessary.⁵⁸

57. Spann, a CIA agent who had interviewed the "American Taliban" interviewed John Philip Walker Lindh, was killed in a prison uprising near the northern Afghan city of Mazur-e Sharif, in November 2001.

58. On September 20, 2001, in his first speech to a joint session of Congress, Bush referred to Lisa Beamer, the pregnant widow of Flight 93 passenger Todd Beamer, to highlight the "heroism of ordinary Americans" and to preview "the action that the nation should take." As Murphy puts it: "A western sheriff, in the tradition of Ronald Reagan, knew what justice meant for men who made pregnant wives widows (2003, 619–620).

In the following, Bush continues both with preparing the nation for war and sacrifice, describing both as unavoidable because of the determined savagery of America's new entity.

Our discoveries in Afghanistan confirmed our worst fears, and showed us the true scope of the task ahead. We have seen the depth of our enemies' hatred in videos, where they laugh about the loss of innocent life. And the depth of their hatred is equaled by the madness of the destruction they design. We have found diagrams of American nuclear power plants and public water facilities, detailed instructions for making chemical weapons, surveillance maps of American cities, and thorough descriptions of landmarks in America and throughout the world. (130)

The brutality and inhumanity of terrorists expressed in this paragraph indicates that a nonviolent solution, for example, in the form of negotiations, is basically impossible given the obvious irrationality of the opponent.

What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terror is only beginning. Most of the 19 men who hijacked planes on September the 11th were trained in Afghanistan's camps, and so were tens of thousands of others. Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs, set to go off without warning. (130)

The negative attributes, i.e., the bad and evil terms that Bush uses to describe the enemy, such as "hatred," "terror," "killers," "bombs," "or murder," stand in stark opposition to the god terms employed in the previous sections of the speech. The devil terms become the core of language of fear that Bush uses as both an emotional and a rational basis to justify to the audience his plans for the future actions.⁵⁹

Thanks to the work of our law enforcement officials and coalition partners, hundreds of terrorists have been arrested. Yet, tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are. So long as training camps operate, so long as nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk. And America and our allies must not, and will not, allow it. (130–131)

These plans call for an escalation of the war on terror, for the globalization of the struggle against an equally globalized enemy. Bush opens this new section of his

59. For journalistic reactions to Bush's fear discourse, see Brooks (2003), "A Nation of Victims," Beatty (2003), "A Country of Fear," or Allen (2003) "Bush Cites 9/11 on all Manners of Questions."

speech by asking Americans, if only implicitly, to show the same resolve that the country has shown in previous wars:

Our nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And, second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world. (131)

By referring to weapons of mass destruction and linking them to an international network of terrorists, Bush raises the rhetorical threat by yet another level.⁶⁰ At the same time, he intensifies references to the savage nature of the enemy:

Our military has put the terror training camps of Afghanistan out of business, yet camps still exist in at least a dozen countries. A terrorist underworld, including groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Jaish-i-Mohammed, operates in remote jungles and deserts, and hides in the centers of large cities. (131)

The demonic and devious nature of the opponent, states Bush, knows neither moral nor geographic boundaries:

While the most visible military action is in Afghanistan, America is acting elsewhere. We now have troops in the Philippines, helping to train that country's armed forces to go after terrorist cells that have executed an American, and still hold hostages. Our soldiers, working with the Bosnian government, seized terrorists who were plotting to bomb our embassy. Our Navy is patrolling the coast of Africa to block the shipment of weapons and the establishment of terrorist camps in Somalia. (131)

Faced with such inhumane enemies, no other solution but strong, violent action is thinkable:

My hope is that all nations will heed our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own. Many nations are acting forcefully. Pakistan is now cracking down on terror, and I admire the strong leadership of President Musharraf. (131)

The discourse of the "parasite" that needs to be eradicated is typical of our crisis speeches, as Jim Kuypers points out in his study of the rhetoric of the post-Cold War era: "The nation's adversary is characterized as a mortal threat to freedom,

60. For an early, critical discussion of the legitimacy of the WMD claims, see Pfiffner (2004), "Did President Bush Mislead the Country?"

a germ infecting the body politic, a plague upon the liberty of humankind, and a barbarian intent upon destroying civilization" (1997, 12).⁶¹

Bush clearly signals America's willingness to act unilaterally in the defense of Western civilization: "But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 131).

This line is not only directed at the future "coalition of the willing" but also at those "states of concern" (formally known as rogue nations) that are seen as potential terrorist allies. For them, Bush suggests, a voluntary regime change is the only way to avoid America's wrath.

In the lead-up to the Axis of Evil quote, Bush combines the devil terms "terror" and "weapons of mass destruction" with the memories of 9/11: "Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature" (131).

Just as America is naturally good, so its enemies are naturally evil, a fact that, according to Bush, can be seen in how these regimes treat their own people: "North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom" (131).

Given the fact that this section of the State of the Union speech is designed to make the "case for going after Iraq" (Frum 2003, 224), it is not surprising that Bush's description of the evil other focuses particularly on Iraq.

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world. ("State of the Union Address 2002" 131)

By combining these three politically rather unconnected states under the umbrella term "axis of evil," Bush reduces the complexity of the reality of international relations and focuses his audience's attention on a simpler, cognitively more manageable unit.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these

61. See also Kiewe (1998), "The Crisis Tool in American Political Discourse."

regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic. (131)

The feeling of fear, undefined, yet powerfully present in the first part of the speech is given a concrete point of origin, as source that becomes identifiable and attackable. In doing so, Bush presents Americans with concrete goals and objectives for future actions and, by singling out real political actors, provides the nation with an identifiable substitute for the mostly faceless terrorist opponent.

The significant negative potential of the expression “axis of evil” derives from the strategic combination of two culturally well-established components. On the one hand, this refers to the devil term “evil” that Bush had used before, most visibly in his address to Congress and to the nation on September 20. As mentioned above, it was the theological dimension of the word evil that led to its insertion into the speech instead of the previously proposed axis of hatred. Bush had used expressions such as “evil-doer” and “evil one(s)” on many occasions in press conferences and shorter remarks after 9/11.

The expression’s second reference point, the fascist axis powers of World War Two, increase the negative aggregation of this passage and connects the war on terror with the war fought by America’s “greatest generation” (Brokaw 1998). Connecting the two elements is of course Ronald Reagan’s notion of the evil empire, with which the Great Communicator referred to the Soviet Union in an address to the National Association of Evangelicals. Like Bush’s Axis speech, the Evil Empire speech had a significant domestic trajectory, calling for a renewal of the American value system at home, a fact that was lost in the public reactions to the speech (another parallel to the Axis speech).

Speechwriter David Frum describes how in preparing the section assigned to him for the State of the Union address, he re-read Franklin D. Roosevelt’s speech from Dec. 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Frum writes: “Roosevelt had to explain to the country why it could not afford to fight only a one-ocean war.... For FDR, the Pearl Harbor was not only an attack – it was warning of future and worse attacks from another, even more dangerous, enemy” (2003, 233–234).⁶² Frum concludes:

No country on earth more closely resembled one of the old axis powers than present-day Iraq. And just as FDR’s saw in Pearl Harbor a premonition of even more terrible attacks from Nazi Germany, so September 11 had delivered an

62. For a discussion of the shift from 9/11 to Iraq in both Bush’s discourse and the U.S. media, see Althaus and Largio (2004), “When Osama Became Saddam.”

urgent warning of what Saddam Hussein could and almost certainly would do with nuclear and biological weapons. (234)

Bush continues to list the instruments he plans to employ in the defense of America. These include diplomatic efforts such as weapons inspection and defensive ones like missile defense as well as offensive measures, which, if need be, will be carried out unilaterally and pre-emptively:

We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. We will develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack. And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.

("State of the Union Address 2002" 131)

The last sentence of the passage clearly indicates that Bush considers defensive as well as offensive measures necessary to protect America. Here, we can see the nucleus of the strategy of pre-emption that is at the core of the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) published in mid-2002. We also note the repeated use of the presidential "I" (see Chapter 2), which focuses the attention of the audience on the presidential leader:

We will be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons. (131)

After the Axis of Evil speech, James Woolsey, director of the CIA during the first Clinton Administration, and an arms control negotiator during the first Bush administration, commented on the apparent inevitability of a military confrontation with Iraq, linking it to the inhumanity and irrationality of its leader. Echoing Bush's axis reference, Woolsey states: "The point is that with respect to Iraq there's no hope. Iraq is like Nazi Germany. It is not going to throw up an Iraqi Gorbachev. The system is a system essentially of government by torture and murder and rape, and the poor Iraqi people have been governed this way for decades" (PBS 2002).

Bush closes the justification of future, pre-emptive action by again asking Americans for patience and steadfastness: "Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch, yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 132). Here, as in the "I"-laden passage mentioned above, Bush sounds like John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address. There, Kennedy had also readied the nation against a struggle against the "common enemies of man," stating: "All this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1000 days, nor in the

life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.” In Kennedy’s case, of course, the enemies were not Islamic terrorist or the members of the axis of evil but “tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself” (“Inaugural Address” 2).

Before moving on to the domestic section of his speech, Bush repeats his call to arms, “to fight freedom’s fight,” implicitly, but clearly enough discarding any lack of resolve as equivalent to a policy of appeasement. “We cannot stop short. If we stop now, leaving terror camps intact and terror states unchecked, our sense of security would be false and temporary. History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight” (132).

4.1.1.2 *Fighting freedom’s fight – Three fronts and one budget*

In Bush’s presentation of his political agenda, freedom’s fight is fought on three fronts – the War on Terror, homeland security, and the recovery of the economy – and the budget that Bush is about to present in his speech is the key to success on this front and to “freedom’s victory” (135). This imagery allows Bush to move from the first part of the his speech, which represented a crisis speech aimed at preparing the nation for war, to the domestic part of the speech – always a large part of State of the Union addresses – especially with regard to Bush’s financial and economic policy plans: “Our first priority must always be the security of our nation, and that will be reflected in the budget I send to Congress. My budget supports three great goals for America: We will win this war; we will protect our homeland; and we will revive our economy” (132).

Bush invites members of Congress and all Americans to unite, behind their president of course, to overcome the challenges that the nation is facing. This call for unity and his expression of bi-partisanship serves to highlight the unique position of the executive and to prepare the ground for future unilateral presidential action:

September the 11th brought out the best in America, and the best in this Congress. And I join the American people in applauding your unity and resolve. Now Americans deserve to have this same spirit directed toward addressing problems here at home. I am a proud member of my party, yet as we act to win the war, protect our people, and create jobs in America, we must act, first and foremost, not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans. (132)

In the Axis of Evil speech, Bushes used the personal pronoun “I” a total of 32 times and the pronoun “my” eleven times. Having already invested himself in the roles of commander-in-chief and chief comforter, Bush now becomes the nation’s legislator-in-chief.

Justifying the significant increase in government spending with the security of U.S. servicemen and women, Bush prepares the nation for the budget deficit in the making:

It costs a lot to fight this war. We have spent more than a billion dollars a month, over 30 million dollars a day, and we must be prepared for future operations. Afghanistan proved that expensive precision weapons defeat the enemy and spare innocent lives, and we need more of them. We need to replace aging aircraft and make our military more agile, to put our troops anywhere in the world quickly and safely. Our men and women in uniform deserve the best weapons, the best equipment, the best training, and they also deserve another pay raise. (132)

Bush again uses the god term "freedom" to ask Americans for future financial sacrifices, stating: "My budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in two decades, because while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay" (132).

By portraying the spending increase as a rather heroic act in the defense of the culturally highly valuable institution of the United States military and as an indispensable act in the defense of America's security, Bush attempts to pre-empt criticism for his budgetary policy.

The second component of Bush's budget focuses on homeland security, and the expenditure planned for are a direct consequence of the attacks of September 11. Securing American borders and cities becomes the domestic equivalent to the War on Terror, demanding, according to Bush, the same kind of strength and resolve:

The next priority of my budget is to do everything possible to protect our citizens and strengthen our nation against the ongoing threat of another attack. Time and distance from the events of September the eleventh will not make us safer unless we act on its lessons. America is no longer protected by vast oceans. We are protected from attack only by vigorous action abroad, and increased vigilance at home. (132)

Stressing his domestic leadership, Bush describes the fight that will have to be fought on the home front:

My budget nearly doubles funding for a sustained strategy of homeland security, focused on four key areas: bioterrorism, emergency response, airport and border security, and improved intelligence. We will develop vaccines to fight anthrax and other deadly diseases. We will increase funding to help states and communities train and equip our heroic police and firefighters. We will improve intelligence collection and sharing, expand patrols at our borders, strengthen the security of air travel, and use technology to track the arrivals and departures of visitors to the United States. (132)

The spending on homeland security is portrayed in utilitarian fashion as an investment in the future of America's social infrastructure

Homeland security will make America not only stronger, but, in many ways, better. Knowledge gained from bioterrorism research will improve public health. Stronger police and fire departments will mean safer neighborhoods. Stricter border enforcement will help combat illegal drugs. And as government works to better secure our homeland, America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens. (132)

In the final section of the homeland security section of the speech, Bush uses the narrative of the shoe bomber to remind Americans of the reality of the terrorist threat.

A few days before Christmas, an airline flight attendant spotted a passenger lighting a match. The crew and passengers quickly subdued the man, who had been trained by al Qaeda and was armed with explosives. The people on that plane were alert and, as a result, likely saved nearly 200 lives. And tonight we welcome and thank flight attendants Hermis Moutardier and Christina Jones.⁶³ (132)

The third and final budgetary front, so to speak, concerns the revival of America's economy: "Once we have funded our national security and our homeland security, the final great priority of my budget is economic security for the American people" (132). Adopting the same future-oriented, positive tone of the previous war section, Bush promises Americans an economic recovery while identifying in Congress a potential scapegoat should said recovery prove to be more difficult to achieve:

To achieve these great national objectives, to win the war, protect the homeland, and revitalize our economy, our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short-term, so long as Congress restrains spending and acts in a fiscally responsible manner. We have clear priorities and we must act at home with the same purpose and resolve we have shown overseas: We will prevail in the war, and we will defeat this recession. (132–133)

Speaking on behalf of the American worker, Bush reduces his economic policies to one objective, the creation of jobs:

Americans who have lost their jobs need our help and I support extending unemployment benefits and direct assistance for health care coverage. Yet, American workers want more than unemployment checks, they want a steady paycheck.

63. Almost eight years later, the failed 2009 Christmas Day bombing of an airliner over Detroit echoed with Bush's warning of a long struggle and the heroism of ordinary passengers.

When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs. (133)

Under the anaphoric umbrella of the expression "good jobs," Bush presents a "laundry list" of policy proposals. Each item in this economic and social agenda is linked to and subordinated under the ultimate goal of "good job." As Bush explains: "Good jobs begin with good schools.... Good jobs also depend on reliable and affordable energy.... Good jobs depend on expanded trade.... Good jobs depend on sound tax policy.... Good jobs must be the aim of welfare reform.... A good job should lead to security in retirement ..." (133).

Displaying the images of a strong and active executive and a passive and docile legislature typical for presidential discourse (see Chapter 2), Bush continues to tell Congress what needs to be done to win struggle for economic recovery. Here, Bush merges economic with national security objectives, saying that "this Congress must act to encourage conservation, promote technology, build infrastructure, and it must act to increase energy production at home so America is less dependent on foreign oil" (133).

The syntactical patterns and the parallel structure in this section support the hierarchical relationship between president and Congress: "I ask Congress to finally approve trade promotion authority.... I urge the Senate to pass this legislation.... I ask Congress to join me this year to enact a patients' bill of rights.... I ask Congress to enact new safeguards for 401K and pension plans" (133). Any co-operative action between the two branches – "[L]et us make these tax cuts permanent.... [L]et's pass a stimulus package" (133) – is proposed by Bush for the sake of American workers. Here, the use of the hortative "Let us" is typical (see Chapter 2).

Throughout this section, Bush exhibits an entirely non-partisan, paternalistic image of presidential leadership. The president, so Bush's suggestion, and not Congress, knows best what is right for Americans: "Last year, some in this hall thought my tax relief plan was too small; some thought it was too big. But when the checks arrived in the mail, most Americans thought tax relief was just about right" (133).

Everything the president does is done for the benefit and on behalf of the American citizen: "To enact a patients' bill of rights, to give uninsured workers credits to help buy health coverage, to approve an historic increase in the spending for veterans' health and to give seniors a sound and modern Medicare system that includes coverage for prescription drugs" (133).

Bush reaches across the aisle, referring directly to his political antithesis, Senator Ted Kennedy, to show the nation that his policies are indeed transcending traditional partisan lines:

I was proud to work with members of both parties.... And I was so proud of our work, I even had nice things to say about my friend, Ted Kennedy. I know the folks at the Crawford coffee shop could not believe I would say such a thing but our work on this bill shows what is possible if we set aside posturing and focus on results. (133)

For the good of the nation, urges Bush, Republicans and Democrats have to work together, and they have to do so under the leadership of the president: "I ask you to join me on these important domestic issues in the same spirit of cooperation we have applied to our war against terrorism" (134). Thus, the external threat becomes a stimulus for internal co-operation.

4.1.1.3 *The American creed renewed*

Bush opens the final part of the speech in a more thoughtful tone. Changing the focus from the presidential coalition with Congress, Bush directs the American people to center stage. He first presents America as seen through the eyes of its enemy: "During these last few months, I have been humbled and privileged to see the true character of this country in a time of testing. Our enemies believed America was weak and materialistic, that we would splinter in fear and selfishness. They were as wrong as they are evil" (134). Then, Bush contrasts these negative attributes with his own American image, stating: "The American people have responded magnificently, with courage and compassion, strength and resolve. As I have met the heroes, hugged the families, and looked into the tired faces of rescuers, I have stood in awe of the American people" (134).

Having expressed his "awe" for the American people, Bush singles out the First Lady "for the strength and calm and comfort she brings to our nation in crisis" (134). This tribute to the First Lady, unusual as it might seem, is a crucial element in Bush's attempt to change the focus of the speech from the nation's defense against attacks from abroad to the need for a cultural revival at home. This spiritual renewal had been very much present in Bush's 2000 presidential campaign and in his 2001 inaugural address. Then as now, Bush connects the nation's lack of moral direction with the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton. Bush's brief statement at the opening of the final part – "For too long our culture has said, 'If it feels good, do it'" (134) – illustrates this point.

In the Axis of Evil speech, Laura Bush serves as a symbolic counterpart to the cultural policies of the 1990s, and the "expression" "let's roll", referring to the words spoken by Todd Beamer, before he and other passengers on United flight 93 attacked the terrorists who had hijacked their plane, forcing them to crash the airliner into a field in Pennsylvania. The plane's real target was probably the White House or the U.S. Capitol.

Now America is embracing a new ethic and a new creed: "Let's roll." In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters, and the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self. We have been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass. (134)

This new American creed will, according to Bush, find its expressions in the work of the newly formed Freedom Corps, which combines the Peace Corps (established in 1961) and AmeriCorps (created in 1993) with the new Citizen Corps. Bush describes the Corps' objectives as "responding in case of crisis at home; rebuilding our communities; and extending American compassion throughout the world" (134). These objectives again reflect the domestic and international challenges faced by the nation:

One purpose of the USA Freedom Corps will be homeland security.... Our country also needs citizens working to rebuild our communities.... And America needs citizens to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world. So we will renew the promise of the Peace Corps, double its volunteers over the next five years and ask it to join a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world. (134)

The Freedom Corps becomes a symbol of opportunity, as a means to overcome the tragedy of 9/11:

This time of adversity offers a unique moment of opportunity, a moment we must seize to change our culture. Through the gathering momentum of millions of acts of service and decency and kindness, I know we can overcome evil with greater good. And we have a great opportunity during this time of war to lead the world toward the values that will bring lasting peace. (134–135)

On the first anniversary of 9/11, i.e., the first observance of Patriot Day as a new national holiday, Bush again employs this jeremiadic strategy of fetching good out of evil, saying:

We found healing in the national outpouring of compassion for those lost, as tens of millions of Americans participated in moments of silence, candlelight vigils, and religious services. From the tragedy of September 11 emerged a stronger nation, renewed by a spirit of national pride and a true love of country. ("Patriot Day Proclamation")

Here, Bush's discourse resembles Franklin D. Roosevelt's covenant rhetoric of the Great Depression. In his first inaugural, Roosevelt said:

We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of the national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life. ("First Inaugural" 15)

The main difference to Roosevelt, though, and to other types of jeremiadic discourse, is that Bush's call for a moral renewal has not only a domestic but also an international dimension. He thus combines jeremiadic and missionary discourse, stressing that American values are universal values: "All fathers and mothers, in all societies, want their children to be educated, and live free from poverty and violence. No people on Earth yearn to be oppressed, or aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 135).

Pointing to the successful development of the war in Afghanistan, Bush underlines the world's "natural" yearning for freedom:

If anyone doubts this, let them look to Afghanistan, where the Islamic "street" greeted the fall of tyranny with song and celebration. Let the skeptics look to Islam's own rich history, with its centuries of learning, and tolerance and progress. America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. (135)

Equally natural is America's role as freedom's defender and a force for peace:

No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. We have no intention of imposing our culture. But America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance. (135)

The language of America's mission expressed in this passage has of course a long tradition in U.S. legitimizing discourse, as, for example, Paul Chilton writes in his analysis of the use of metaphors during the First Gulf War: "The American mission [is] to bestow its values on the benighted world. And now the American crusade, the invincible march to the East to vanquish the powers of darkness" (1995, 351).

The discourse of American values and America's mission to export these values is part of what Siobhan McEvoy-Levy refers to as "cumulative routine rhetoric" (2001, 3). This general, unspecific rhetoric "creates a climate belief, a consensus on broad values, which supports and enables the contingent use of rhetoric for addressing specific foreign policy issues and international events" (*ibid.*, 3–4). In the case of the Axis of Evil the cumulative rhetoric of American presidential

discourse serves as a basis for bringing American values to the Islamic world and, more specifically, to Iraq: "America will take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 135).

Internationally, Bush sees the evil of 9/11 as an opportunity for global cooperation:

In this moment of opportunity, a common danger is erasing old rivalries. America is working with Russia and China and India, in ways we have never before, to achieve peace and prosperity. In every region, free markets and free trade and free societies are proving their power to lift lives. Together with friends and allies from Europe to Asia, and Africa to Latin America, we will demonstrate that the forces of terror cannot stop the momentum of freedom. (135)

The final passage of Bush's Axis of Evil speech again recalls the Cold War rhetoric of Truman and Eisenhower: "In a single instant, we realized that this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we have been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential" (135).

Here, Bush repeats the central conceptual binary of America's humanity and the enemy's savagery: "Our enemies send other people's children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed. We stand for a different choice, made long ago, on the day of our founding. We affirm it again today. We choose freedom and the dignity of every life" (135).

The parallels to the components of the American Creed expressed in Eisenhower's first inaugural address are unmistakable: "At such a time in history, we who are free must proclaim anew our faith. This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws" ("First Inaugural" 2).⁶⁴

Following the norms and patterns of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext (see next chapter), Bush concludes his speech with an affirmation of America's resolve – "Steadfast in our purpose, we now press on" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 135) – and the reassurance that America's, and freedom with it, will be victorious: "We have known freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory" (135).

64. For a detailed discussion of the strategic dimension of Eisenhower's Cold War rhetoric, see, for example, Ivie (1994). For a discussion of Eisenhower's pre-presidential Cold War discourse see Medhurst (1997).

As Leroy G. Dorsey writes, “of all the decisions for which the chief executive attempts to gain legislative and popular support committing the nation to war, both physically and spiritually, may be the most ambitious” (1996, 42). And he continues:

With the assumption of the commander-in-chief role, the president can command a national forum in which he can justify American military involvement, mobilize the public in service to the martial effort, and call for financial, emotional, and mortal sacrifices.... The president routinely unifies the nation against its “savage” opponent. (42)

In the following, I will take a closer look at how American presidential discourse, over the course of more than two centuries, has continuously contributed to the creation and exploitation of images of the savage, evil other.

4.2 “It’s Us vs. Them” – Identity and alterity in presidential crisis discourse

On January 21, 2000, a year before he became President of the United States, George W. Bush reminisced about the “good ol’ days” of the red threat during a campaign stop at a community college in the straw-poll state of Iowa: “When I was coming up, it was a dangerous world, and you knew exactly what they were. It was us versus them, and it was clear who them was. Today, we are not so sure who the they are, but we know they’re there” (quoted in Chilton 2003, 95).

John Updike’s *Everyman*, Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom, shares Bush’s Cold War nostalgia, yet he expresses it a little less muddled: “Without the cold war, what’s the point of being an American?” (Updike 1990a, 440). In an essay entitled “Why Rabbit Had to Go,” Updike notes:

Like me, Harry has lived his adult life in the context of the cold war. He was in the Army, ready to go to Korea, hawkish on Vietnam, proud of the moon shot, and in some sense always justified, at the back of his mind, by a concept of freedom, of America, that took sharpness from contrast with Communism. If that contrast is gone, then that’s another reason to put him, regretfully, to rest in 1990.

(Updike 1990b)

In yet another variation of the enemy-mine theme, key members of America’s political establishment from both the Democratic and Republican parties, working under the umbrella of the Commission on America’s National Interests sound a similar note of warning. In its 1996 and 2000 reports, the Commission states: “We are concerned that after five decades of extraordinary exertion, the US is

in danger of losing its way" (Allison and Dillon 2000). This bi-partisan group, whose members include amongst others the former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Senator John McCain, the former democratic senator Sam Nunn, as well as Yale professor and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, intensify the urgency of their report by identifying themselves as "Americans who are convinced that in the absence of American global leadership, citizens will find their fortunes, their values, and indeed their lives threatened as surely as they have ever been" (ibid.).

These quotes, referring to the post-Cold-War and pre-9/11 era – a period that historian Walter Russell Mead calls the "lost years" (2004, 3) – show an almost desperate longing for a powerful enemy and the clear-cut political trenches that come with it and that guided American political discourse and American policy during most of the American century.

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, which, echoing its most prominent and most discussed line, would instantly become known as the Axis-of-Evil speech, George W. Bush offered a triad of substitutes for the enemy lost, using the time-tested strategy of pitting the American Us against an oppositional Them to rally his nation around the flag and around the institution of the presidency.

North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens. Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom.... The Iraqi regime ... has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children.... States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. (131)

Clustering negatively aggregated *Angst* words (Bergenholtz 1980), or devil terms, such as "destruction," "terror," or "murder," around god terms, such as "children," "peace," or "freedom," Bush uses a morally binary approach to create an utterly un-American concept of alterity and resurrect the image of the savage other (Ivie 1980) against which American identity is defined.

Throughout the presidency of George W. Bush and particularly towards the end of his two terms and after the electoral victory of Barack Obama, it has become a journalistic and scholarly commonplace to dismiss this type of public discourse and the worldview it expresses as simplistic and idiosyncratic and representative only of one misguided administration. Nevertheless, dismissing the Axis of Evil speech and Bush's post-9/11 "you are either with the president or with Satan" discourse (Murphy 2003, 625) as an exception would be too simplistic and risk ignoring the underlying cultural meaning of said discourse. Here, a less biased analysis of expressions of American national identity through presidential

discourse is called for, and a more neutral, diachronic analysis of presidential crisis and conflict rhetoric is needed. Such a sober and nuanced description of the “big picture” of presidential discourse is of particular importance within the context of America’s foreign relations and the international projection of America’s self-image. It is also relevant with regard to the shaping of or – in the absence of a shaping influence – the provocation of international and intercultural reactions to that image.

What I am going to show in the following is that the discursive paradigm dominant after 9/11, an approach often derided as simplistic by its critics, is indeed not a new phenomenon created by a singular traumatic event and intended to serve the political agenda of a single administration but is much rather a remake of time-tested structural and thematic patterns of American discourse. This repeated re-loading of a robust rhetorical matrix represents a particular intertextual phenomenon, the Us-vs.-Them hypotext. This hypotext provides speakers with a template for the negotiation of identities of selves and others, and for the justification of political actions in a context dominated by uncertainty and fear. As I will show, this fear is often “home made” and created with a clear purpose.

As our analysis of the Axis of Evil speech has shown, the construction of alterity plays a central role in the construction and affirmation of the nation’s self-understanding. Seen against the background of a Manichean worldview, the contradistinction from and confrontation with the negatively charged hetero-images of the evil other becomes crucial in defining the American and the presidential self.

Samuel Huntington’s much discussed notion of the “Clash of Civilizations” needs to be seen with this larger context of a national discourse of otherness, as well, a discourse to which Huntington himself has contributed his fair share, for example, with his 1997 article “The Erosion of National Interests,” where he writes:

The Cold War fostered a common identity between American people and government. Its end is likely to weaken or at least alter that identity.... Given the domestic forces pushing toward heterogeneity, diversity, multiculturalism, and ethnic and racial division ..., the United States, perhaps more than most countries, may need an opposing other to maintain its unity. (1997, 31–32)

Huntington’s notion of the “opposing other” as the glue that holds a multicultural society together underlines the importance of so-called hetero-images in the construction and affirmation of national identity. Huntington also stresses the importance of adhering to a system of collective beliefs, beliefs that, again, are often defined in oppositions to other beliefs (see Huntington’s discussion of the religious beliefs of Latino immigrants in his 2004 book *Who Are We?*).

As scholars from discourse analysis have shown, the construction of alterity and the confrontation with this alternate design plays a crucial role in defining a nation's self-image. Seyla Benhabib describes this process of self-definition and the interplay of auto- and hetero-images as follows: "Since every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from what one is not identity politics is always and necessarily a politics of the creation of difference" (quoted in Wodak et al. 1999, 2). This "difference" is generated and perpetuated through discourse. "National identity," write Wodak et al., "is ... the product of discourse ... brought forth, reproduced and disseminated by actors in concrete (institutional) contexts" (ibid., 23). There are arguably very few institutions with as much power as the American presidency and the consequences of its discourse is without equal.

Given the interrelationship between institutionalized discourses of otherness and the construction of (uniform) identity through the construction of difference, I will in the following look at the clash of civilizations from the point of view of American political and above all presidential discourse and to see the clash concept in the context and as a variation of a deeper-reaching, culturally-constructed discourse of Americanness within which a confrontational rhetorical pattern of Us vs. Them plays a fundamental role.

In showing the longevity of this type of discourse and its continuous use in U.S. presidential rhetoric since the beginnings of the republic, we want to stress that the concept of the clash of civilizations and the binary discourse of good and evil existed as a rhetorical construct long before Huntington's thesis and has been used by American presidents to frame external political events according to current political agendas long before the administration of George W. Bush.

In particular, I will show that the narrative of the clash, of Us vs. Them, represents the main hypertext of American foreign policy discourse. The ultimate goal of this rhetorical template or matrix is the streamlining of American identity through a process of negative selection and contradistinction. And with every new application of the template, with every new hypotext (see below), this process of streamlining becomes more powerful and less permissive of alternative designs of American identity.

As we will see, George W. Bush's "either you're with us or you're with the terrorists" logic and the polarizing effects of such a discourse are by no means without precedence, without pre-text. The discourse of the War on Terror is just the latest implementation of discursive strategies and narrative elements that have a long tradition in American political discourse, above all in presidential crisis speeches. The confrontational discourse of identity and alterity has been a part of American political rhetoric and American politics since the founding of the nation, and it is fair to assume that it will continue to feature prominently in future

presidential discourse as well, especially in the context of legitimizing military action.⁶⁵

In constructing national identity through an ongoing definition of what America is not, this discourse of un-Americanness fulfills the fundamental functions of political communication of group identification and motivation without the cumbersome task of having to positively define what America is. The pragmatic dimension of Us-vs.-Them does, however, go beyond the mere cultural level of shaping national identity and includes institutional, political, and individual goals as well (see Chapter 6).

4.2.1 The Us-vs.-Them hypotext

In the following, I will briefly summarize the main characteristics of Genette's concept of "hypertextuality" (1997a). This specific type of intertextual relation should of course not be confused with the notion of hypertextuality as we understand it in relation to today's Internet-related term that was created by the American Vanevar Bush in the 1940s.

For Genette, a hypertext is a second-degree text, i.e., a text "derived from another preexistent text ... upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of a commentary" (ibid., 5) or, in a mathematical sense, a function of one or more previous texts. These pre-texts are called hypotexts. As a derivative, a hypertext aims at imitating or transforming its hypertextual role models. For Genette, the prototypical imitating hypertext is represented by James Joyce's *Ulysses*, with Homer's *Odyssey* being the corresponding hypotext. However, a hypotext does not necessarily have to be a single, clearly identifiable text but can also represent an aggregate of the main characteristics of a number of pre-existing texts or can be based on a more abstract textual model, the latter being the case in American presidential foreign policy and security policy discourse.

As Genette writes, hypertextuality is the "practice of reusing existing structures" (ibid., 399). Hypertextuality enables an author or speaker to "constantly launch ancient works into new circuits of meaning" (ibid., 400). Over time, a

65. A number of Barack Obama's foreign policy speeches, e.g., his 2009 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, his address on drone policy 2013, and, most notably, his 2009 address in Cairo, seem to indicate an attempt at less confrontational language. Nevertheless, even within this new approach, there are old discursive elements. In his address on the use of drones, Obama states: "The United States is at war with al Qaeda.... We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war – a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defense" ("Remarks at National Defense University").

hypotext thus becomes a stable discursive pattern, a type of speech template, presenting the speaker with a mostly predefined and standardized repertoire not only of argumentative structures but also of propositional elements or *topoi* (see Chapter 3) that can be selected individually or as a group and used in the composition of the new text.

Describing the hypertextuality concept, Genette uses the metaphor of the "palimpsest [where] on the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through" (ibid., 398–399). According to Genette, hypertextuality thus represents, a "model of generic competence," from which "an indefinite number of mimetic performances" can be generated (ibid., 16). As we will see in the discourse of American presidents, these hypertextual variations demonstrate remarkable stability, and, given the fact that they appear across a range of presidential text types including both epideictic and deliberative speeches, clearly represent a transgeneric phenomenon (see Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of hypertextuality and its position in our typology of intertextual relations).

In addition to the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext that I am discussing in this chapter – a template that is prominent and dominant in speeches that have a foreign and/or security policy dimension – we find a second hypotext that is of particular importance in U.S. presidential discourse. This second hypotext is modeled after the puritan sermon, the jeremiad, and is mostly applied in a domestic setting. We find examples of the jeremiadic hypotext in speeches on social issues (see, for example, Johnson's inaugural speech or his Voting Rights speech), in times of economic crisis (see, for example, Reagan's economic discourse or speeches by George W. Bush or Obama on the morals, or lack, thereof of Wall Street), or, most frequently, in campaign discourse. For a comprehensive discussion of the jeremiad as a domestically oriented hypotext see Austerlühl (2014).

In the following, I will analyze the prevalence of the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext in my main corpus (consisting of all inaugural speeches and State of the Union addresses from 1789 to 2008) and in a sub-corpus, containing major foreign policy and security policy speeches after World War II (one speech per presidential term). The analysis is based on a close reading of the speeches and supported by computer-assisted collocation and cluster analyses of selected keywords and semantic fields identified in the analysis of primary and secondary sources. In an attempt to show the stability of the strategic use of *Us* and *Them* and to stress my point of view that the discourse of George W. Bush is not at all a singular occurrence, I will start my analysis with the above discussed *Axis-of-Evil* speech, but will then compare this speech with other, historical instances of the *Us-vs.-Them* hypotext.

4.2.2 Building blocks of a presidential hypertext

The basic hypertextual pattern of U.S. Presidential foreign policy and security policy discourse is composed of seven interconnected levels of argumentation. At the core of the strategy of identity and alterity definition lies the contradistinctive, group-building identification of American (us) and un-American (them) values (level 5). In the following, I will focus on these seven levels and their standard components as well as on the pragmatic dimension of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext.⁶⁶

4.2.2.1 “An hour of maximum danger”

The introductory, tone-setting element of the hypotext serves to highlight the dramatic dimension of the speech, as well as the urgency of the moment and the president’s appeal to the nation. The president thus first describes the rhetorical context as a national emergency, a life-threatening situation that demands immediate action on the part of the American government and the American people.

George W. Bush’s *exordium* of the Axis-of-Evil speech is purposefully blunt: “As we gather tonight, our nation is at war” (“State of the Union Address 2002” 129). And one year later, in preparing the nation for another war, he assures his audience that “decisive days ... lie ahead” (“State of the Union Address 2003” 82) and addresses the Members of Congress to realize the urgency of the moment, stating, “[y]ou and I serve our country in a time of great consequence” (82).

Employing a religious vocabulary typical for presidential discourse in general and for crisis discourse in particular, Bush inflates the drama of the moment. Alluding to Hosea 9:7, he defines the current moment as the “days of reckoning,”⁶⁷ a direct reference to the impending Iraq War and a clear warning for the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Going back to the beginning of the twentieth century, we find a contextual framing very similar to that established in Bush’s 2002 speech. On April 2, 1917, Woodrow Wilson summons both Houses of Congress to “an extraordinary session,” stating, “there are serious, very serious choices of policy to be made, and made immediately” (“Declaration of War”). With these introductory remarks, Wilson immediately puts pressure on a Congress that, like the nation, was very hesitant about entering the war, a decision for which Wilson was going to make the case in his speech.

66. For a more extensive discussion of U.S. foreign policy as well as crisis and conflict discourse see Kiewe (1994), Kuypers (1997), and Peake (2001).

67. “The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand” (Hosea 9:7).

Franklin D. Roosevelt opens his most famous fireside chat on December 29, 1940, in which he refers to America's roles as the "the great arsenal of democracy" ("Arsenal" 643) in similar fashion. Speaking, as he states "in the presence of a world crisis" (633), Roosevelt urges the American nation not to hide from events in Europe – a clear critique of the isolationist position of many Americans – but to meet the challenges posed by the Axis powers head-on: "[F]rankly and definitely there is danger ahead – danger against which we must prepare ... that we cannot escape" (636).

Roosevelt's use of the devil term "danger" becomes one of his key instruments in influencing the position of the American people and the U.S. Congress on entering the war, a strategy very similar to George W. Bush's creation of angst 60 years later. Interestingly, Roosevelt opens his fireside chat with the words "This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security" (633), a strategy that as I have shown above, also serves as the guiding principle of Bush's Axis of Evil speech.

Roosevelt also employs the national security argument in his 1941 State of the Union address, a speech that became known as the Four Freedoms speech. Describing the military success of the German *Wehrmacht* as an immediate threat to America's national security, Roosevelt addresses members of Congress "at a moment unprecedented in the history of the Union[,] ... unprecedented because at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today" (663).

Stressing the foreign, external nature of the threat ("from without"), Roosevelt does not only call for internal unity but also supports this demand by alluding implicitly to the American Civil War. The mentioning of the war, "the nation's second birth" (Nevin 1865), does not only highlight the inseparable relationship between national unity and national survival but also inescapably evokes the culturally powerful memory of Abraham Lincoln, the savior of the Union. The strategic use of America's past is also visible in Roosevelt's Arsenal-for-Democracy fireside chat. Here, he compares the Second World War with the American Revolutionary War, saying: "Never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger" ("Arsenal" 634).

The first step of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext is also clearly visible during the Cold War.⁶⁸ Truman, for example, begins his address to a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947 on granting military aid to Greece and Turkey – a speech better known as the Truman Doctrine – warning the nation that "should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far-reaching to the West as well as to the East" ("Truman Doctrine" 179). Demanding that "[w]e

68. For a comprehensive overview of the discourse of the Cold War, see Medhurst et al. (1990).

must take immediate and resolute action” (179), Truman’s “fear appeal” (Ryan 1993a, 24), pressures members of Congress into following the president’s lead and into pledging their unfaltering support of his plans (see the discursive roles occupied by the president and Congress discussed in Chapter 2).⁶⁹

Kennedy, in his inaugural address, also creates the image of America as nation in immediate peril. In one of the most powerful examples of American public discourse, Kennedy – like Roosevelt and Bush – uses the dramatization of the global political situation to assume the prototypical presidential role as the nation’s protector-in-chief and as freedom’s defender:

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility – I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it – and the glow from that fire can truly light the world. (2–3)

4.2.2.2 “A last-ditch war for the preservation of American independence”

The second level of the *Us-vs.-Them-Template* represents an intensification of the threat scenario created in the opening part of the speech. Here, the danger that the nation is facing is depicted as much more than just a temporary threat to the physical well being of the nation but an impending attack on the very core of the American value system. In this framework, America’s enemies plan a devastating, irreversible strike on the nation’s cultural and normative foundation.

In the Axis-of-Evil speech, this existential danger is at the core of an emotionally charged passage mentioned earlier in the chapter, in which Bush expresses the nation’s sense of loss and mourning after September 11 by referring to an American football left by a little boy for his killed father. The boy’s football symbolizes America’s social and cultural system, which, on September 20, 2001, Bush identifies as the true objective of the terrorist attacks, saying, “[t]hese terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life (“Joint Session” 1142).” Bush’s assessment is shared by Benhabib, who, in the aftermath of 9/11, writes, “[t]he new unit of totalitarianism is the terrorist cell, not the party or the movement; the goal of this new form of war is not just the destruction of the enemy but the extinction of a way of life” (2001).

The most vulnerable and at the same time most valuable elements of the American value systems – above all the freedom and independence concepts – are

69. See Ivie (1999) for a detailed analysis of the rhetorical strategies – especially with regard to the use of metaphors – in the Truman doctrine.

expressed in what Weaver refers to as "god terms" (1953, 212; see Section 3.2.2 for a detailed discussion), i. e., the elements of America's civil religious vocabulary that carry the most positive connotations and evoke the most reverence among the nation.

To increase the nation's fear and hence its emotional response to the threat, American crisis discourse regularly resorts to the notion that the nation's enemies do not only threaten the United States of America but the very idea of America itself. Thus, in the Arsenal of Democracy speech mentioned earlier, Franklin D. Roosevelt justifies the material support for the nations under attack by Nazi Germany, above all for England, by saying that only such a support would save America from having to enter into a final battle for the survival of the American experiment:

This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security; because the nub of the whole purpose of your President is to keep you now, and your children later, and your grandchildren much later, out of a last-ditch war for the preservation of American independence and of all the things that American independence means to you and to me and to ours. (Arsenal" 633)

Ever since the American Revolution has the god term "independence" been a central instrument in leading the nation into war, a strategy that can be seen in the context of America's first war, the War of 1812. In his war message delivered to Congress, Madison stresses the nation's independence, accusing the British of a "series of acts hostile to the United States as an independent ... nation" ("Special Message").

Almost two hundred years later, George H. W. Bush – speaking, as he states, "at a defining hour" ("State of the Union Address 1991" 74) – justifies the first Gulf War as follows:

What is at stake is more than one small country; it is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children's future. (ibid.)

The core components of the American creed (see Myrdal 1944) that Bush lists in this paragraph and the global importance of their survival also form the dominant themes of the first two inaugural addresses of the Cold War era.

As the brief comparative analysis of the inaugural addresses of Truman and Eisenhower in Section 4.3.3.2 shows, both speeches exhibit remarkable similarities in their use of intertextual devices. This refers as much to the strategic use of allusions to the Declaration of Independence as to their adherence to the

Us-vs.-Them hypotext, especially when it comes to defining the uniqueness of the American political system and its key elements.

The contra positioning of American and un-American values is particularly prominent in Truman's inaugural address. Here, Truman uses a sequence of antithetical statement about the nature of the concepts democracy and communism to highlight the fundamental differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. Alluding to the Declaration of Independence, Truman states:

Communism is based on the belief that man is so weak and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters. Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice. (112–113)

In the following, Truman underscores the inhumanity of the Soviet system and the global danger that a spread of said system constitutes:

Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial, and forced labor as the chattel of the state. It decrees what information he shall receive, what art he shall produce, what leaders he shall follow, and what thoughts he shall think.

Democracy maintains that government is established for the benefit of the individual, and is charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights of the individual and his freedom in the exercise of his abilities. (113)

In many ways, Truman's dichotomous discourse is prototypical of the Us-vs.-Them logic. I will discuss this aspect in more detail in Section 4.5.

4.2.2.3 “*Sail On, O Ship of State*”

The elements of America's ideology expressed in the above quotes and their vital global significance point to a third level of the Us-vs.-Them matrix. Here, the urgency and gravity of the situation is further intensified by the claim that it is not only America's well being that is threatened by external forces but that of the entire world. Again, the Axis of Evil speech is prototypical for the confluence of the domestic and the international: “Our nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers” (“State of the Union Address 2002” 129–130). As this example indicates, the word “civilized” becomes a central, contradistinctive element in the creation of American identity.

The Truman Doctrine of 1947 also stresses the link between the fate of the American nation and the fate of the rest of the world. Truman reminds the American Congress and the American nation alike, saying, “[i]f we falter in our

leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation" ("Truman Doctrine" 180).

The symbiosis of America's survival and the freedom and well being of other nations that is at the core of the Truman Doctrine is a recurrent trope of the nation's cultural self-understanding. One hundred years before Truman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow eternalized that thought in his poem "The Building of the Ship:"

Sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

This central element of American identity is also very much present in the discourse of the early Republic. In 1802, Jefferson wrote: "[We are not] acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race. The event of our experiment is to show whether man can be trusted with self-government. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope" ("Letter to David Hall" 732).

This statement, which Nixon quotes in his first State of the Union Address in 1970, is reminiscent of what Jefferson's rival John Adams wrote in 1765: "I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in providence, for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth" (quoted in Federer 1996).

Within this ideological framework, an attack on America becomes an attack on the entire human civilization – an interpretation that also means that the attackers are not considered part of said civilization (see Austermühl 2009 for a more detailed discussion of the strategic use of the term "evil" in presidential discourse). The joint fates of America and the World are very much at the center of Woodrow Wilson's 1917 war address and serve as a primary justification for America's entry into World War I:

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, Gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in balance.
(*"Declaration of War"*)

As this example from Wilson shows, the threat to (Western) civilization is closely connected with the sacrifice topos discussed in Chapter 3. This strategic connection between the global survival of American values and the inevitable loss of American lives is also visible in George W. Bush's 2002 address to graduates of the military academy at West Point: "You walk in the tradition of Eisenhower and MacArthur, Patton and Bradley – the commanders who saved a civilization. And you walk in the tradition of second lieutenants who did the same, by fighting and dying on distant battlefields" ("West Point" 117–118).

Bush's recognition of the nameless soldiers, the "second lieutenants," follows the discursive tradition of allusions to the ordinary American hero, whose idealism and willingness to sacrifice help guarantee the survival of the American nation and its values.⁷⁰

4.2.2.4 *"Last bastion of freedom"*

The speech passages quoted in the previous section point to another, fourth component of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext, America's status as the world's "indispensable nation," as Clinton put it ("Second Inaugural" 44) and its role as the world's leading power in "the struggle to preserve and extend the blessing of liberty" (George H. W. Bush, "State of the Union Address 1991" 75).

America's self-understanding as the "last and greatest bastion of freedom" as Reagan states in his first inaugural address (1) in allusion to Lincoln's "last, best hope of mankind" ("Annual Message"), as the ultimate defender of freedom (see Chapters 2 and 3), is inseparable from the nation's belief in its exceptional status and the resulting global mission. This theme is also central to the Axis-of-Evil speech. As we have shown above, the text's macrostructure highlights the personalized form in which "freedom" is characterized.

In the first part of his speech, George W. Bush symbolizes the threat to the United States and the rest of the world with the formula "freedom is at risk" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 131). Towards the middle of the speech, immediately after uttering the climatic phrase "axis of evil," Bush, evoking memories of Roosevelt and Kennedy, urges the American nation to join ranks with freedom: "History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight" (132). In the concluding part of his speech, Bush renews this call for arms, aimed at signaling an end to the time of national mourning and preparing the launch of the next step in the War on Terror, in a tricolon reminiscent of Lincoln and Churchill: "We have known

70. See, for example, the character of Captain John H. Miller, played by Tom Hanks, in Spielberg's (1998) *Saving Private Ryan*. For an analysis of this movie and its jeremiadic structure, see Owen (2002).

freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory" (135).⁷¹

4.2.2.5 "*The struggle between right and wrong, good and evil*"

The description of America's opponents and enemies, the fifth step in the argumentative structure of Us-vs.-Them represents the central, and name-giving element of the hypotext. Bush's statement in the Axis-of-Evil speech that "evil is real, and it must be opposed" (135) is exemplary for the highly standardized and simplified hetero-images that dominate U.S. Presidential discourse. Reagan's Evil Empire speech is prototypical for an un-nuanced, or clear-cut, distinction between Us and Them. Criticizing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," Reagan refers to the ideological confrontation with communism as a "struggle between right and wrong and good and evil" ("National Association of Evangelicals" 364).⁷²

The attributes used in the creation of these negative images of the opposing other and the contradistinctive American values and virtues displayed at the same time (either implicitly or explicitly), provide the semantic content for the argumentative and narrative structure of the Us-vs.-Them and thus represent the hypotext's most important component. The identification of the opposing forces in America's "long twilight struggle" (Kennedy, "Inaugural Address" 2) against evil in the world is based on a set of relatively constant, pre-defined character traits. Given their particular significance, I will discuss these conceptual binaries.

4.2.2.6 "*Steadfastness and sacrifice*"

In a sixth step, and based on the simplified moral characterization of the nation's enemy, the presidential speaker concludes that given the savage and irrational nature of the enemy – often illustrated by the enemy's unwillingness to negotiate, accept America's reasonable demands, or surrender – any attempt at a peaceful solution will be useless. The only chance to ward off the imminent threat is by showing force and by actively confronting the opponent, including by military means. In this confrontation, steadfastness and sacrifice, including of human lives, are needed to succeed and survive.

71. Bush's depiction of "freedom" as an active force is somehow untypical in presidential discourse. Most often, "freedom" is described as a fragile, feminine icon taking on a passive role (see Ivie's [1987] "The Ideology of Freedom's 'Fragility' in American Foreign Policy Argument").

72. See Ivie (1984), "Speaking 'Common Sense,' Goodnight (1992), "Ronald Reagan's Re-formulation of the Rhetoric of War," and Ivie and Ritter (1989), "Whither the 'Evil Empire'" for a discussion of the rhetorical impact of Reagan's famous line and his "heroic vision of America" (436).

Any military confrontation is described by the president as an *ultima ratio* and as an unwanted, yet – given the stakes that are at play – ultimately unavoidable situation. “[F]or the sake of our freedom and that of others,” says Reagan in 1984, “we cannot permit our resolve to be confused with a lack of resolve” (“Second Presidential Nomination Acceptance” 1177). This example again shows that the application of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext is by no means restricted to conflict discourse.

One of the keys to America’s success in the impending, or ongoing, confrontation, and one of the keywords of the hypotext, is the notion of “steadfastness.” “Steadfast in our purpose, we now press on,” states George W. Bush (“State of the Union 2002” 135), and Clinton, in his first presidential speech, directly addresses the members of America’s greatest generation, saying, “I thank the millions of men and women whose steadfastness and sacrifice triumphed over Depression, fascism and Communism” (Clinton “First Inaugural” 1).⁷³

In this confrontational context, any lack of resolve and steadfastness will be immediately and preemptively sanctioned by the speaker, often times by resorting to the use of one of the most despised devil terms of American foreign policy: appeasement. During the first Iraq War, George H. W. Bush states: “The world has said this aggression would not stand, and it will not stand. Together, we have resisted the trap of appeasement, cynicism, and isolation that gives temptation to tyrants” (“State of the Union Address 1991” 74). Exactly fifty years earlier, Franklin D. Roosevelt refers to isolationist voices as those of “American appeasers,” equating them with the leadership of the axis powers: “[W]e are committed to the proposition that principles of morality and considerations for our own security will never permit us to acquiesce in a peace dictated by aggressors and sponsored by appeasers” (“State of the Union Address 1941” 667).

An image that often appears in the context of the appeasement discussion is that of the opponent as a wild beast (see below).⁷⁴ Roosevelt, for example, warns Americans, “the experience of the past two years has proven beyond doubt that

73. The fact that Clinton equates the economic crisis of the 1930s with the threats posed by the totalitarian regimes in Germany and the Soviet Union underscores the discourse strategy, frequent in domestic policy speeches, of declaring war on economic and social problems. For more on this, see, for example, Elwood’s (1994) *Rhetoric in the War on Drugs: The Triumphs and Tragedies of Public Relations*, Zarefsky’s (1986) *President Johnson’s War on Poverty: Rhetoric and History*, and Meierhenrich’s (2006) “Analogies at War”.

74. Interestingly, there has been relatively little research to date that focuses primarily presidential appeasement or anti-appeasement discourse. One of the few exceptions is Marks’ (1985) “Six Between Roosevelt and Hitler.”

no nation can appease the Nazis. No man can tame a tiger into a kitten by stroking it" ("Arsenal" 638).⁷⁵

4.2.2.7 "We will prevail"

The seventh and final level of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext is dominated by a future-oriented, positive interpretation. "We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail" (1144), proclaims George W. Bush in yet another allusion to Churchill at the end of his speech to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001. In doing so, Bush implements the standard closing formula of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext, in which the promise of America's victory and the defeat of its opponents is coupled with the providential actions of the American nation. The final paragraph of Truman's inaugural address is prototypical of this assurance of national chosenness and the truth of the motto *annuit coeptis* engraved in the Great Seal of the United States:

Events have brought our American democracy to new influence and new responsibilities. They will test our courage, our devotion to duty, and our concept of liberty. But I say to all men, what we have achieved in liberty, we will surpass in greater liberty. Steadfast in our faith in the Almighty, we will advance toward a world where man's freedom is secure. To that end we will devote our strength, our resources, and our firmness of resolve. With God's help, the future of mankind will be assured in a world of justice, harmony, and peace. (116)

The (unprovoked) external threat to America's security is interpreted as a test of the nation's faith and its belief in America's special mission. Ultimately, though, the outcome of the conflicts described will always be an American victory. "So that peace can prevail, we will prevail", proclaims George H. W. Bush with regard to the First Iraq War ("State of the Union Address 1991" 78) and George W. Bush assures his audience at the end of the Axis-of-Evil speech that "[w]e will see freedom's victory" (135). Given the sacred nature of the values at stake in the conflict, generally expressed through the god terms freedom and peace, a different outcome is unthinkable in the logic of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext.⁷⁶

75. In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy warns decolonized nations around the world against an alignment with the Soviet Union, asking them "to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside" (1).

76. In "Remembering the Future," Stuckey describes the negative impact of war rhetoric that lacks this crucial component. "Lacking a vision of victory's rewards," she writes, "Americans also lacked total commitment to the war. Instead of being asked to see Vietnam as their fight, their struggle, Americans were asked to help the South Vietnamese in their war" (1992, 250).

4.3 American auto- and hetero-images

The simplified and dramatized description of the nature of the respective members of a good in-group and an evil out-group, the Us and the Them, is the defining element of the intertextual template described in the previous chapter. As mentioned above, the attributes used to describe the American Self and the un-American Other take on the form of conceptual binaries, i.e., mutually exclusive semantic units that find their lexical implementation in culturally powerful, positively and negatively charged god and devil terms (see Section 2.3.3 for a detailed discussion of these notions; also see Strauss 1986).

4.3.1 Us and Them

The attributes used in the contradistinctive composition of American auto- and hetero-images can be loosely sorted into two groups: (1) political values, and (2) human traits. While the first group is more typical for epideictic discourse, the second group dominates war and crisis discourse.

Political values	Believer	Non-believer
	Democratic	Autocratic, totalitarian
	Free	Enslaved
	Human rights	Inhumane wrongs
	Will of the people	Will of the tyrant
	Rule of law	Rule of faceless masters
Natural attributes	Peace-loving	Bellicose, violent
	Rational	Irrational, deliberate
	Modern	Old
	Natural	Un-natural
	Humane	Brutal
	Civilized	Savage

Figure 64. Us vs. Them: The struggle between good and evil

4.3.1.1 *Political values*

With regard to its political values, America is portrayed as a nation with unshakable principles and beliefs. “We are,” says Lyndon B. Johnson, “a nation of believers, ... believers in justice and liberty and union.... We believe that every man must someday be free” (“Inaugural Address” 73–74). This American creed reflects both the religious and the civil religious faith of the nation. Within this frame of

self-definition, faith in God is inseparably connected with faith in the god terms of America's civil religion. "We are a nation under God, and I believe God intended for us to be free," (3) proclaims Reagan in his first inaugural speech and George W. Bush states nine days after the terrorist attacks of September 11: "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them ("Joint Session" 1144).

And while there is no doubt in Bush's speech on whose side God is on in the War on Terror, the divine favorite is unclear in Lincoln's description of the opponents in the American Civil War:

Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other.... It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces.... The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. ("Second Inaugural")

Exactly because America is a "nation of believers" (Johnson, "Inaugural Address" 73), so the logic of Lincoln's speech that aimed at reconciling North and South, God can not take sides in the fraternal war.

Gerald Ford, in his first speech as president, stresses the defining influence of religion on the nation's identity, stating:

To the limits of my strength and ability, I will be the President of black, brown, red, and white Americans, of old and young, of women's liberationists and male chauvinists and all the rest of us in-between, of the poor and the rich, of native sons and new refugees, of those who work at lathes or at desks or in mines or in the fields, of Christians; Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, and atheists, if there really are any atheists after what we have all been through. ("Joint Session 1974" 13)

The success of the "American experiment" (Eisenhower, "Second Inaugural" 64) can, according to Ford, not be explained by rational arguments alone. America's resolute and unwavering faith is thus pitted against an atheism on the part of America's political and military opponents that does not only encompass the rejection of religious faith of any kind but also the rejection of the universal values of America's civil religion.

The nations described as threatening the socio-political system represented by the United States are generally characterized as totalitarian and autocratic constructs, whose political objective is the enslavement and oppression of mankind. This objective is contrasted with America's respect for human rights and the rule of law, a fact that is already expressed in the Declaration of Independence: "In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most

humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people" (*Declaration*).

Here, the political project of a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" (Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address") becomes the blueprint for a new, democratic political system explicitly designed in opposition to the monarchies of Europe. This sentiment is also present in James Monroe's second inaugural address: "We now, fellow-citizens, comprise within our limits the dimensions and faculties of a great power under a Government possessing all the energies of any government ever known to the Old World, with an utter incapacity to oppress the people" ("Second Inaugural").

Alluding to Winthrop's metaphor of the "shining city upon a hill" (*Christian Charity*), Franklin Pierce, the nation's fourteenth president also used the free vs. oppressed dichotomy to stress America's status as the home of the free: "The oppressed throughout the world from that day to the present have turned their eyes hitherward, not to find those lights extinguished or to fear lest they should wane, but to be constantly cheered by their steady and increasing radiance" ("Inaugural Address").

In both speeches, Monroe's and Pierce's, does the self-image of America as a beacon of hope and liberty combine with the nation's territorial expansion and the increased self-confidence resulting from it.⁷⁷

The Declaration of Independence describes man's freedom as a result of the "laws of nature and of nature's God," a demand that is often repeated in contradistinctive discourse, for example, in Eisenhower's second inaugural address – "the law of which we speak, comprehending the values of freedom, affirms the equality of all nations, great and small" (62) – in which he also underscores the universal validity of the American Creed. And just as these values are an integral part of America's natural state, so is the civil atheism of America's opponent, a fact that, for example, Woodrow Wilson underlines when referring to the political leaders of the German empire as "natural foes of liberty" ("Declaration of War").

As we have said before, the concept of "freedom" plays a most important role in supporting the claim for the uniqueness of the American system. In the binary definition of American identity practiced in U.S. presidential discourse, we therefore also find that a significant number of terms belonging to the semantic

77. During the presidency of Monroe, America acquired Florida (1819), while under Pierce, who was a general during the Mexican War, a large part of Mexico became part of the United States in the so-called Gadsden Purchase of 1853.

field "slavery" feature as agons to the term "freedom."⁷⁸ Eisenhower expresses this dichotomy in his first inaugural address, stating that: "Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark" (4).

Franklin D. Roosevelt also refers to slavery in his third inaugural address in early 1941. His speech, aimed as much at Germany and Japan as at domestic isolationism, becomes both a commitment to upholding America's social and political systems and a promise to fight for the values upon which said system is based:

There are men who believe that democracy, as a form of Government and a frame of life, is limited or measured by a kind of mystical and artificial fate that, for some unexplained reason, tyranny and slavery have become the surging wave of the future – and that freedom is an ebbing tide. But we Americans know that this is not true. (3)

As the above quotes have shown, the political and philosophical values highlighted by American presidents as being at the core of America's national identity often overlap with a second group of quasi-natural attributes of the Self and the Other that form conceptual binaries such as *good* vs. *evil*, *humane* vs. *inhumane*, and above all, *civilized* vs. *savage*.⁷⁹

4.3.1.2 *Natural attributes*

In times of crisis and conflict, the stereotypical descriptors that represent the character traits of the American nation are dominated by such attributes as rationality and peacefulness. Thus, Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, speaks on behalf of the nation when he proclaims: "I have seen war, I hate war" ("Chautauqua" 285), and Reagan confirms: "America is the most peaceful, least warlike nation in modern history" ("Second Presidential Nomination Acceptance" 1177).

Other nations, however, are being governed by war-mongering madmen and become monolithic "forces of violence," as Johnson declares in the context of the Vietnam War in 1965 ("Johns Hopkins" 395). As Murphy writes, George W. Bush "framed the [war on terror] as a war between citizens and barbarians, between American values and those of a horde rushing the gates of civilization from the Middle East and Afghanistan" (2003, 621).

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the concept agon and an introduction of cluster-agon analysis see K. Burke (1937), Berthold (1976), and Foss (2009).

⁷⁹ John Oddo, in his comparative analysis of Franklin D. Roosevelt's and George W. Bush's crisis discourse, refers to these pairs as "polarizing lexical resources" (2011, 287).

America's actions are not only guided by rationality but they are also moral, guided by a higher objective and therefore just. The notion of the just cause,⁸⁰ along with the idea of the just war,⁸¹ is a common element of presidential discourse. Eisenhower's first inaugural address, for example, becomes a public pronouncement of America's values: "In pleading our just cause before the bar of history and in pressing our labor for world peace, we shall be guided by certain fixed principles" (5). Eisenhower then continues to list a total of nine principles, concluding his enumeration as follows: "By these rules of conduct, we hope to be known to all peoples. By their observance, an earth of peace may become not a vision but a fact. This hope – this supreme aspiration – must rule the way we live" (6–7).

In unison, both George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush qualify the first and second Iraq Wars as just. "This we do know: Our cause is just," says George H. W. Bush, "our cause is moral; our cause is right" ("State of the Union Address 1991" 79), and eleven years later, his son reaffirms himself and the nation that "[o]ur cause is just, and it continues" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 130).

America's just actions are contrasted with the unlawfulness of the deeds of the nation's opponent, a tradition that can be traced back as far as Madison's second inaugural in 1813, which was overshadowed by the War of 1812 against Great Britain:

I need not call into view the unlawfulness of the practice by which our mariners are forced at the will of every cruising officer from their own vessels into foreign ones, nor paint the outrages inseparable from it. The proofs are in the records of each successive Administration of our Government, and the cruel sufferings of that portion of the American people have found their way to every bosom not dead to the sympathies of human nature.

As this example shows, America's opponents are described as not only violating the law of humans but also the laws of nature and of God. In the context of the Cold War, this Godlessness becomes a defining part of Communist ideology, as Truman points out in his inaugural address in 1949: "Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial, and forced labor as the chattel of the state" (113).

The comparison of the political system of America's autocratic opponents and its interpretation of lawfulness with the deliberate rule of medieval potentates expressed in Truman's speech, points to yet another set of conceptual binaries: the

80. See, for example, the American invasion of Panama in 1989, which was entitled "Operation Just Cause."

81. For a more detailed discussion of the just-war doctrine in post-9/11 discourse, see, for example, A. Burke's (2004) "Just War or Ethical Peace?" and Coles' (2002) "Manifest Destiny."

contrasting of America as a modern, progress-affirming nation on the one hand and antiquated, status quo-defending regimes. Wilson, for example, refers to American policies at the beginning of the twentieth century as the "modern ways," while describing the German imperial leadership as representative of the "old days" ("Declaration of War"). America's self-image as a nation of the future finds its expression in the frequent use of typical American god terms such as "progress," "change," or future. Weaver refers to these progress-oriented and scientific expression – other examples are "facts" or "science" – "uncontested terms" (1953, 213).

Most importantly, within the logic of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext, the confrontation between America and its enemies boils down to the question of the humanity, or the absence thereof, of its opponents, expressed through oppositional terms such *good* vs. *evil*, *humane* vs. *inhumane*, and above all, *civilized* vs. *savage*. During the heyday of the Cold War, Eisenhower explicitly refers to the inhumanity of America's communist enemy, while at the same time stressing America's own devoutness:

At issue is the true nature of man. Either man is the creature whom the Psalmist described as "a little lower than the angels," crowned with glory and honor, holding "dominion over the works" of his Creator; or man is a soulless, animated machine to be enslaved, used and consumed by the state for its own glorification.

("State of the Union Address 1955" 7–8)

The image of the irrational savage has a long tradition in the representation of American political and military enemies. In 1813, Madison described the Indians fighting in the war of 1812 (and through them their British allies) as "eager to glut their savage thirst with the blood of the vanquished and to finish the work of torture and death on maimed and defenseless captives" ("Second Inaugural"). The enemy's brutality is often augmented through the feminization of the values that are targeted by the savage, and through the recurrent victimization of women (see Ivie 1987). References to female rape victims, for example, in Clinton's retrospective justification of American military action in Bosnia, have to be seen in this context: "Remember the skeletal prisoners, the mass graves, the campaign to rape and torture, the endless lines of refugees, the threat of a spreading war. All these threats, all these horrors have now begun to give way to the promise of peace" ("State of the Union Address 1996" 85).

Very few presidential speeches have been as explicit in the description of the evil Other as George W. Bush's 2003 State of the Union address: "International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues and rape. If this is not evil then evil has no meaning" (89).

Given the prisoner abuse in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, it seems cynical that in U.S. presidential discourse the degree of the enemy's cruelty is increased by comparing it with America's own honorable behavior. Wilson, for example, speaking of America's impending entry into the First World War, states: "[W]e shall, I feel confident, conduct our operations as belligerents without passion and ourselves observe ... the principles of right and of fair play we profess to be fighting for" ("Declaration of War").

America's noble actions are contrasted with the deviousness of its enemies, a strategy that for examples George H. W. Bush uses to legitimize the first Iraq War, saying: "This conflict started August 2nd when the dictator of Iraq invaded a small and helpless neighbor. Kuwait – a member of the Arab League and a member of the United Nations – was crushed; its people, brutalized.... Saddam Hussein started this cruel war against Kuwait" ("Persian Gulf" 42–43).

The demonization of the opponent includes the opposing nation state and its undemocratic and often dictatorial leadership. As the following segment from George W. Bush's 2003 State of the Union address, shortly before the start of the second Iraq War, shows, American identity is not only constructed through an opposition of the regime and the individual representing it but also through the negation of the ideologies that motivate the enemy:

Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men seized control of great nations, built armies and arsenals, and set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, their ambitions of cruelty and murder had no limit. In each case, the ambitions of Hitlerism, militarism and communism were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances and by the might of the United States of America. (86–87)

While the positive attributes describing the American in-groups refer symbiotically to the government, the people and the ideological foundations of the political and social system alike, the negatively connotated attributes describe the collective. They do, in general, not refer to the citizens of the opposing regime but exclusively to their autocratic political leaders and their accomplices. "We have no argument with the people of Iraq," ("Persian Gulf" 44) says George H. W. Bush to the national and global public in the days before the first Iraq War. Expanding the groups of victims of Saddam Hussein's aggression to include not only the citizens of Kuwait but also the populace of Iraq, Bush continues: "Indeed, for the innocents caught in this conflict, I pray for their safety. Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq. It is the liberation of Kuwait" (44). And Wilson, in his war message to Congress in 1917 states explicitly: "We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship." Wilson

continues this strategy of isolating the autocratic and misguided leadership of the enemy from its own people by saying:

It was not upon their impulse that their government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old, unhappy days when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or of little groups of ambitious men who were accustomed to use their fellow men as pawns and tools. ("Declaration of War")

Repeating the modern-vs.-old dichotomy mentioned above, Wilson describes the actions of the German government, to which he refers to again and again as "imperial," as the fatal consequences of an outdated, undemocratic political system: "Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbor states with spies or set the course of intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which will give them an opportunity to strike and make conquest."

This quote also shows the link between the two groups of attributes that we are discussing in this chapter. The enemy's savagery is seen as a direct result of its ill-chosen political system. The clear separation between those who govern and those who are governed is also clearly visible in Kennedy's description of the Soviet Union in one of his major foreign policy speeches, delivered at American University in Washington, D.C., on June 10, 1963. By paying special tribute to the Russian people and showing his respect for their accomplishment, he increases the perversity of the Soviet political system:

No government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue. As Americans, we find communism profoundly repugnant as a negation of personal freedom and dignity. But we can still hail the Russian people for their many achievements – in science and space, in economic and industrial growth, in culture and in acts of courage. ("Towards a Strategy of Peace" 461)

Kennedy's expression "profoundly repugnant" also gain shows the natural, instinctive aversion of Americans to Communism. The two-fold distinction between the "good" *Russian* people and the "evil" *Soviet* government also features in Kennedy's address on the situation of Berlin on July 25, 1961: "I cannot believe that the Russian people who bravely suffered enormous losses in the Second World War would now wish to see the peace upset once more in Germany. The Soviet government alone can convert Berlin's frontier of peace into a pretext for war" ("Berlin" 539).

In 1984, Reagan directly addresses the citizens of the evil empire, saying: "Tonight, I want to speak to the people of the Soviet Union, to tell them it is true that our governments have had serious differences, but our sons and daughters have

never fought each other in war" ("State of the Union Address 1984" 93). And in his address on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of D-Day, the landing of allied troops in France, Reagan, like Kennedy in the anode example, expresses his respect for the citizens of the former enemy, and, like George H. W. Bush in 1991, explicitly refers to America's non-imperialist tradition of liberation:

When men like Private Zapata and all our allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy 40 years ago they came not as conquerors, but as liberators. When these troops swept across the French countryside and into the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg they came not to take, but to return what had been wrongly seized. When our forces marched into Germany they came not to prey on a brave and defeated people, but to nurture the seeds of democracy among those who yearned to be free again. ("D-Day" 822)

In this segment, Reagan expresses the all-American conviction of humankind's natural wish for democracy and freedom, a conviction that is also at the core of George W. Bush's positive domino theory of a democratizable Middle East. Reagan's statement, however, is in direct historical opposition to Churchill's appraisal of the German people:

[T]he German eruption swept like a sharp scythe around the right and rear of the Armies of the north.... Behind this armored and mechanized onslaught came a number of German divisions in lorries, and behind them again there plodded comparatively slowly the dull brute mass of the ordinary German Army and German people, always so ready to be led to the trampling down in other lands of liberties and comforts which they have never known in their own. ("Beaches")

The dividing line between the enemy's system and his people that dominates U.S. foreign policy discourse is absent from Churchill's speech.

Ivie uses the image of the "modern savage" (1980) to describe a systemic opponent who, while capable of barbaric brutality, is nevertheless rational in his objective of global dominance. The image of the modern savage that dominates the war discourse of the twentieth century is in contrast to the traditional, imperialist hetero-image of the "primitive savage" that John Butler sees reappearing in the post-Cold War discourse of American presidents (2002, 3). The image of the primitive savage can also be found, amongst others, in speeches delivered by Bush's immediate predecessors Clinton and George H. W. Bush on the crises in Panama, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. As Eran Ben-Porath points out "the post-Cold War era has brought about a need for change in presidential discourse, aimed at filling the rhetorical void created by the fall of communism" (2007, 181).⁸² This

82. For an in-depth analysis of Clinton's post-Cold War rhetoric, see Edwards (2008).

void has been filled by a "rhetoric of atrocities," the purpose of which Ben-Porath explains as follows:

Presidents applying the rhetoric of atrocities go beyond denouncement of the perpetrators and beyond mere factual description of the extent of these crimes. They turn to narrative form, particularly anecdotes detailing the torment experienced by individuals as a result of the enemy's misdeeds. (ibid., 182)

Ben-Porath has also shown that in cases where there was to be no American military intervention – as in the early stage of the Bosnian genocide or in Rwanda – descriptions of atrocities were much more abstract and impersonal than in cases where military action was imminent.

Using Clinton's discourse on Somalia as a case in point, Butler also shows that Clinton's portraying of the Somali nation as primitive and uncivilized does not allow for a clear separation between the people and America's actual military opponents: the Somali war lords. A similar overlap of government and people can be found in Clinton's speech on the war in Kosovo, in which he blames the political leadership under "President Milosevic" and condemns Serbia's military "for the brutality in Kosovo," but does not explicitly absolve the Serbian people as a whole.

In the War on Terror, the Bush administration went to great length – especially after Bush's much criticized allusion to the war as a modern crusade – not to demonize the cultural heritage of the nation's opponents so as to avoid a collective condemnation of an entire people or culture.⁸³ In his address to graduates of West Point, Bush states:

When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations. The requirements of freedom apply fully to Africa and Latin America and the entire Islamic world. The peoples of the Islamic nations want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as people in every nation. And their governments should listen to their hopes. ("West Point" 921)

As I have mentioned above, the term "evil" plays a crucial role within the Us-vs.-Them hypotext. I have discussed the use of evil in presidential discourse, including in domestic settings, in a separate publication (Austermühl 2009). One of the key findings of that study is that the use of evil has a long tradition in American public discourse and that presidents long before George W. Bush have used the term to justify actions against their own enemies and against those of the American nation.

83. As Butler (2002) points out, this strategy has had a long tradition in presidential discourse and was, among others, applied by McKinley's in his discourse on the Philippines.

4.4 The pragmatic dimensions of the Us-vs.-Them matrix

Having identified the main structural and topical elements of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext, I will now focus on the functions that this specific type of intertextuality performs within U.S. presidential discourse. The Us-vs.-Them hypotext has five different, yet very interconnected pragmatic levels. These are (i) the policy level, aiming at supporting the current political agenda of the office holder, (ii) the institutional level, which focuses on projecting a specific image of the presidency and enhancing its intra-systemic power, (iii) the personal level, which aims at the creation of positive, individual presidential self images, (iv) the systemic level, on which the nation's political beliefs and their uniqueness are declared and confirmed, and (v) the national level, on which cultural identity is created and affirmed.

In an attempt to justify political decisions, including but not limited to military actions, the seven-stage narrative of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext creates an atmosphere of insecurity and urgency that is heightened by constant references to the enemy's savagery and lack of reason forces the president to take immediate action and the audience to take sides. Chilton describes the consequences of the negative hetero-images as follows: "If you want to justify the war, you must first demonstrate that all 'rational' means of persuasion have been used up. If it can be shown that the opponent will not *listen to reason*, then the conclusion is that the opponent has not reason, is irrational" (1995, 354).

Adding the godlessness of America's enemies, Chilton continues: "If an opponent is irrational, will not listen, and perhaps godless as well, then the 'logical' conclusion is to control the opponent by force or threat of force" (ibid.).

In the logic of Us-vs.-Them, staying neutral is not an option, neither for the domestic nor the international public. Going beyond immediate action, the Us-vs.-Them hypotext also serves to support the presidential political agenda in general. As we have seen, for example, in the Axis of Evil speech, this agenda can include domestic policy initiatives (e.g., tax cuts) as well.

In the dramatic framework of Us-vs.-Them, the political decision-making process becomes a mere matter of side-taking. In a world divided in good and evil, rational debate is replaced by a process where political decisions are based on what needs to be done to overcome evil and preserve good. As Ivie states:

[The] Manichean distinction between good and evil ... expressed in melodramatic narrations of victimization and heroic redemption, structures American political discourse and news coverage alike, diminishing public debate and conflating the exercise of state power with national identity. (2007, 223)

In such a context, the pressure on Americans, above all on their representatives in Congress, is significant, as any political opposition can easily be countered as unpatriotic and un-American.⁸⁴

The effects of the Us-vs.-Them argument and the legitimization of unilateral executive action that it implies also functions on a third pragmatic level, which focuses on the institution of the American presidency. Here, the atmosphere of fear that the hypotext contributes to and the perceived immediate threat to the nation and the system serve as justification for the president to don his cloak of commander and defender-in-chief, and in doing so expand the powers of the Executive and contribute to the phenomenon of the unilateral presidency that we discussed in Chapter 2.

As Roper points out: "George W. Bush, in unilaterally declaring his 'War on terror,' has re-created the circumstances of the Cold War, in which Presidential military initiatives in support of the broader campaign become battles in that war" (2004a, 5). In the War on Terror, as well as in the military conflicts of the 1990s, the super nation language (see Germino 1984) of the Cold War with its Manichean binaries of light and dark and good and evil continues to support the chief executive's dominance over the government's legislative branch. As John Owens states:

[T]he president and the executive have aggressively asserted and extended their unilateral or plenary powers, especially in the areas of national and domestic security, and the Congress has generally been unwilling or unable to insist on its prerogatives. As such, Congress's acquiescence ... represents ... a permanent shift in power within the constitutional system that is legitimated by the president's "war" on terrorism metaphor. (2004, 33–34)

The "existential fear" (Roper 2004b) created through the hypotext's simultaneous summoning of past and current threats and the "existential conflict" (ibid.) that it prepares for, has pragmatic consequences with regard to creation of presidential images as well. As we have discussed above, the hypotext's rhetoric of fear aims at the legitimization of unilateral presidential action. The framing of any international conflict or crisis as an existential struggle against an evil enemy bound to destroy the United States and all it stands for promotes an environment of insecurity that in turn facilitates unilateral executive action. The language of evil induces a language of fear, aimed at creating an atmosphere of angst and dependency in which the nation turns to its only nationally elected leader for guidance and

84. See Ivie's (2003) "Evil Enemy Versus Agonistic Other," for a critical discussion of the undemocratic nature of the discourse of evil. Also, for a discussion of the rally-around-the-flag phenomenon during the First Iraq War, see Parker (1995).

protection. This is the image of the presidential leader that Kennedy responded to when he proclaimed in his inaugural address: "I do not shrink from this responsibility. I welcome it" (2–3). In similar fashion, Bush personally confronted evil in his Axis of Evil speech, solemnly declaring that: "I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer" ("State of the Union Address 2002" 131).

As I have described in Chapter 2, the image of the president as the nation's symbolic, and heroic, leader is reinforced through the introduction of an individual opponent. This personification of evil – a characteristic of post-Cold War discourse – helps to establish a pronominal proxy war on the level of the singular. Within the larger battle of Us vs. Them, this leads to a showdown between Me and Him (see Section 2.3.2, "The Presidential Hero," for more detailed discussion of the consequences of this personalization strategy).

On the systemic level, the Us-vs.-Them logic aims at highlighting America's unique and exceptional status among the nations of the world, a status that then serves as a basis for not only justifying but even demanding unilateral actions, including military ones, by the United States. By continuously and incessantly decrying the flaws of oppositional political systems, the Us-vs.-Them hypotext vilifies any alternative ideological design and ultimately glorifies the "great American experiment in democracy" (Tocqueville 1840). America, the idea as much as the country, thus becomes "the new colossus" that Emma Lazarus writes about; it becomes Miss Liberty, proclaiming, again and again: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to be free...."

As I have shown, in the logic of the Us-vs.-Them matrix, the "huddled masses" are never part of the enemy. There are seen as separate from and misled and abused by the undemocratic government of their state. The enemy's people are victims themselves, are threatened themselves, and are always addressed as potential "We's."

In his inaugural address, Carter explicitly refers to America's special status, saying: "Ours was the first society openly to define itself in terms of both spirituality and of human liberty. It is that unique self-definition which has given us an exceptional appeal ..." (1).

The current discourse in the War on Terror shows the close link between American cultural and political identity and the nation's prerogative to act unilaterally: "[T]he course of this nation," so George W. Bush in his 2003 State of the union address, "does not depend on the decisions of others" (87). The defense of the American way of life becomes the ultimate reason for unilateral actions by the "world's indispensable nation" (Clinton, "Second Inaugural" 44).

In the discourse of U.S. presidents, the American nation and American values merge symbolically, giving increased importance and moral strength to America's

mission to defend and promote these values wherever necessary. The continuous contradistinction between the values associated with the political systems representing the civilized in-group and the anti-values of the savage other points to the cultural dimension of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext.⁸⁵

Here, on the national, cultural level, finally, the Us-vs.-Them logic of presidential discourse plays a decisive role in defining American identity through continuously defining what American identity is not. This discourse of un-Americanness fulfills the important political function of identification and motivation by contrasting the natural goodness of America with the natural savagery of its enemy.

The identity creating power of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext is probably best expressed in what I call the "Truman Show;" i.e., the Cold War discourse of the American nation's thirty-third president, Harry Truman:

Communism is based on the belief that man is so *weak* and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters.

Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and *justice*.

Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, *punishment* without trial, and *forced labor* as the *chattel* of the state. It decrees what information he shall receive, what art he shall produce, what leaders he shall follow, and what thoughts he shall think.

Democracy maintains that government is established for the benefit of the individual, and is charged with the responsibility of protecting the *rights* of the individual and his *freedom* in the exercise of his abilities.

Communism maintains that social wrongs can be corrected only by *violence*.

Democracy has proved that social justice can be achieved through peaceful change.

Communism holds that the world is so deeply divided into opposing classes that *war* is inevitable.

Democracy holds that free nations can settle differences justly and maintain lasting *peace*.
(“Inaugural Address” 112–113; emphasis mine)

This anaphoric, antithetical comparison between the United States and the Soviet Union, taken from Truman’s Inaugural Address, are dominated by the struggle between the god term *democracy* and the devil term *communism*. *Democracy’s* halo is further brightened by the use of a surrounding cluster of terms with positive connotations, such as *peace*, *law*, *justice*, and *freedom*, whereas the negative

85. See Hixson (2008) for a comprehensive analysis of the link between U.S. foreign policy and American national identity.

associations of *communism* are made explicit through collocations with terms such as *war* or *violence*. The enduring nature of the Truman story can not only be seen in subsequent U.S. presidential speeches but is also reflected in a strikingly similar statement by British Prime Minister Tony Blair on September 14, 2001:

We are democratic. They are not. We have respect for human life. They do not. We hold essentially liberal values. They do not.... Our beliefs are the very opposite of the fanatics. We believe in reason, democracy and tolerance. These beliefs are the foundation of the civilized world. (2001)

The conviction of a superior American ideology, central to both the cultural and systemic dimensions of the Us-vs.-Them hypotext, is also very much reflected in an article by Samuel Huntington published in *Foreign Affairs* four years after his controversial "The Clash of Civilizations" (1993). In a piece entitled "The Erosion of National Interests," Huntington warns of possible dangers resulting from the end of the Cold War: "[T]o what extent will the American Creed retain its appeal, command support, and stay vibrant in the absence of competing ideologies?" (1997, 32). Alluding to Francis Fukuyama, Huntington continues, "the end of history, the global victory of democracy, if it occurs, could be at most traumatic and unsettling event for America" (ibid.). For Huntington, the lack of an identity creating a (and identity standardizing) common national enemy becomes a danger to social stability, since, in his view subnational interests will no longer be kept under control through the perceived threat to America's way of life: "If the United States becomes truly multicultural, American identity and unity will depend on a continuing consensus, on political ideology.... If multiculturalism prevails and if the consensus on liberal democracy disintegrates, the United States could join the Soviet Union on the ash heap of history" (ibid., 34–35).

Huntington particularly criticizes Clinton for fostering "the cults of diversity and multiculturalism" that he thinks are destroying "the sense of national identity" (ibid., 48). A reversal of Huntington's criticism of Clinton highlights the fact that given the president's image of "the locus of national identity" (Stuckey 1991, 19), the actualization of the Us-vs.-Them pattern in presidential discourse becomes a powerful remedy against social disintegration and against the creation of alternative designs of Americanness.

As I have shown, the "either you're with us or you're with the terrorists" approach epitomized in the Axis of Evil speech, is not at all without precedent in the discursive history of the nation. As a rhetorical construct, the binary discourse of Us-vs.-Them existed long before the War on Terror and before Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" (1993). Like the post-Cold War discourse of the 1990s, the Axis of Evil speech and its numerous variations are typical applications of continuously recurring structural and topical elements that have been employed

by American presidents since the inception of the nation and that in the future will continue to be a fundamental ingredient of American speech, and therewith, policy making. As mentioned above, Barack Obama's foreign policy discourse does seem to feature a less confrontational approach. Here, his speech on U.S.-Muslim relations in Cairo in 2009 entitled "A New Beginning," serves as the most prominent example. Whether, however, Obama will be able to sustain such a nuanced approach against conservative criticism at home remains to be seen.

From an international relations perspective, the ability to read, understand, and react to the American Us-vs.-Them hypotext will be of great importance. To avoid a discursive pattern turning into a political clash, the discursive model underlying American foreign policy speeches with its individual components and functions needs to be recognized, properly analyzed, and possibly countered. In the aftermath of the Axis of Evil speech and, more importantly, in the prelude to the Second Iraq War, Germans, French, and, after the troop withdrawal from Iraq, Spanish politicians have already gotten a taste of what it could look like if the American Us-vs.-Them logic is turned towards, or against, Europe. In such a scenario, Donald Rumsfeld's Old Europe vs. New Europe dichotomy would only be the tip of the iceberg.

CHAPTER 5

“In the words of ...”

Sacred texts, lieux de mémoire, and presidential allusions

The final type of intertextual reference in my typology represents the most restricted and, at the same time, the most tangible representation of presidential intertextuality. This type of intertextuality, which Plett refers to as “material intertextuality” (1991, 7), presupposes “the literal presence of one text within another” (Genette 1997b, viii). Commonly, material intertextuality is implemented in what literature refers to as quotations or allusions from one text to a specific second text. Genette defines material intertextuality as “an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible” (1997a, 2).

This type of link between a text and a specific, identifiable pre-text is neither random nor invisible. Allusions, be they of a quotational nature or some other, need to be considered as deliberate and as having a predetermined pragmatic dimension. In addition, as the adjective “material” indicates, this type of reference has a visible presence in the other text. Furthermore, allusions tend to be explicitly or implicitly marked and as such are easily recognizable. Allusions trigger in the audience not only the pre-text that was alluded to, but also the contextual and semantic dimensions of this pre-text. As such, allusions become an intertextual link that opens a new text next to the current text.

Given the ceremonial and epideictic nature of presidential discourse on the one hand and occurrences the ornamental nature of quotations on the other hand, I do expect to find a high prevalence of material intertextuality in presidential speeches. However, I also expect the use of allusions to significantly surpass that of an aesthetic element. That is, I expect to find not only identifiable patterns of allusions to a rather fixed set of pre-texts but also evidence of a strong semantic and functional dimension.

Given their tangible nature and their direct reference to an identifiable pre-text, instances of material intertextuality are constitutive of the dialogicity of texts. Dialogicity is an important part of intertextuality and a major contributing factor to the degree of intensity of any intertextual reference. This concept acknowledges

Bakhtin's idea of ideological tension between one's own utterances and those of others (1981, 315). I therefore expect allusions to play an important part in establishing a dialogic element in presidential discourse. I will attempt to describe and measure this American dialog on the basis of the most presidential of genres, the inaugural address. Based on my analysis of the generic features of this presidential text type and the thematic continuity of inaugural addresses as part of America's civil religion (see Chapter 3), I expect the majority of allusions to be of an affirmative nature. Yet at the same time, I claim that allusions, including those in inaugural addresses, can become an instrument of systemic criticism as they allow the speaker to draw the audience's attention to national shortcomings through the voices of revered "proxies," such as, for example, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., or Robert F. Kennedy. Thus, depending on the speaker's intentions, allusions can be used either affirmatively or, if more rarely, subversively.

In the following, I will first introduce a typology of allusions and in doing so describe their forms and functions (Section 5.1). Second, I will analyze the occurrence of material intertextuality in presidential inaugural addresses (Section 5.2). In doing so, I will propose three main categories of pre-texts that are dominant in this type of presidential discourse. Finally, I will identify the functions that allusions acquire in presidential inaugural speeches (Section 5.3).

5.1 Types of allusions

The explicit referencing of specific elements of the given pre-text comes with a large number of labels (see, e.g., Genette's notion of "intertextuality" or Plett's "material intertextuality"). In the following, I will base my analysis of this inner core of presidential intertextuality on Udo Hebel's (1991) typology of allusions.

In an attempt to categorize the many, often conflicting denominations and definitions of intertextuality in general and referential intertextuality in particular, Hebel develops a model in which the concept of allusion becomes the main organizing principle. Hebel defines allusion as "a directional signal that refers the reader to another text outside the alluding text" (1991, 137). For him, allusion becomes "the over-arching category under which quite diverse devices for establishing verifiable intertextual relations can be subsumed" (ibid.).

Hebel's typology of allusions is made up of three main forms: "quotational allusions," "titular allusions," and "onomastic allusions" (ibid., 142). Furthermore, Hebel introduces the notion of pseudointertextual allusion as a fourth type.

With regard to the signaling of intertextual references, Hebel differentiates between "marked (explicit)" and "unmarked (implicit)" allusions and states that the type of allusion influences the type of marking (ibid.). Marking itself is

defined as "the manifestation of the intertextual link within the syntagmatic flow of the text" (*ibid.*).

In the following, I will describe the different forms of allusions proposed by Hebel. To illustrate the various forms of referencing and marking, I will provide examples taken from post-World War II presidential inaugural addresses.

5.1.1 Quotational allusions

According to Hebel, quotational allusions are the "specific fillings of the syntagmatic space of the allusive signal" (*ibid.*, 137). Quotational allusions appear in both marked and unmarked forms, with quotation marks, italicization, spacing or the integration of a foreign language element being the most frequent signaling variants. These devices also appear in combination.

In the post-1945 inaugural corpus, quotational allusions appear both in marked and unmarked form. What is striking is that every single biblical quotation found in these inaugural addresses is explicitly graphemically marked and, with one exception (Nixon), accompanied by an additional onomastic, or name, signal. Kennedy, for example, names and quotes the prophet Isaiah (58:6) ("undo the heavy burdens ... and to let the oppressed go free"), and Johnson metonymically refers to an "ancient leader," and continues to quote from Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom (1 Kings 3:9). Interestingly, Johnson's prayer quote and the public display of humility it expresses – his inauguration takes place little over a year after Kennedy's assassination – references the same pre-text as Truman did when – only four days after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt – he first addressed the United States Congress as President on April 16, 1945.⁸⁶ Clinton, using the term "scripture" instead of Bible, quotes from Galatians 6:9 to complement the gardening imagery of his first inaugural ("And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not" [3]).

Quotational allusions referring to public personae that I subsume under the category "moral authority" are also always graphemically (or, in spoken form, phonemically) marked. In addition, as with the religious quotes mentioned above, they can be combined with an onomastic signal. Reagan, for example, refers explicitly to Churchill in his first inaugural address, quoting him literally, hoping

86. Johnson: "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" ("Inaugural Address" 74).

Truman: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" ("Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress" 6).

to show some of the “undimmed eloquence” of the British war-time premier that Kennedy referred to in his first State of the Union (19).

As we have seen, these forms of intertextual references are clearly marked and as easily recognizable for the recipient as the implied invitation to the reader/listener to complete the link between text and pre-text. However, with regard to allusions that are not marked at all, i.e., that are implicit according to Hebel’s definition, the realization of this link is less automatic. As Hebel states, “the recognition of unmarked quotations depends almost entirely on the reader’s allusive competence” (1991, 143). With regard to my objects of study, the public discourse of U.S. presidents, the intertextual competence of the audience and the identification of allusions and allusion markers are to a significant degree supported by the mediation of presidential spin doctors and media representatives alike.

While explicit quotational allusions are generally rendered completely, implicit, i.e., unmarked quotations are only rendered in parts. This pattern is especially visible in cases where the pre-texts originate from other instances of presidential discourse. Here, it is above all central statements of predecessors that are alluded to without either explicitly referring to the quotation’s original text and context or reproducing the original entirely and literally.

Yet, given the limited scope of the presidential pre-text universe, the identification of even implicit quotational allusions is not always difficult. In many cases unmarked references include a strong intertextual signal only because the pre-text or pre-text passage alluded to has already entered the nation’s collective discourse memory. This can be seen in Clinton’s second inaugural address. Criticizing the nation’s past and present record in racial policies, Clinton refers to the “scourge of slavery,” and without explicitly naming the source of this phrase undoubtedly evokes not only the image but also the help of Abraham Lincoln, who in his second inaugural said: “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.”

The fact that in all 55 presidential inaugural addresses, the term “scourge” appears only a total of three times – in addition to Lincoln and Clinton, George H. W. Bush uses the term in reference to drugs – further increases the markedness and the intensity of this specific intertextual reference. The popularity of the Lincoln quotation with its memorable, syntactically symmetrical *inversio* – “fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray” (see also Kennedy’s “not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need – not as a call to battle, though embattled we are”), renders any additional marker superfluous. The same can be said for another Lincoln quotation that occurs again and again in American public discourse, his reference to America as being the “last best hope on Earth” (“Annual Message to Congress 1862”). Any explicit reference to this notion, which has become one of the central topoi of American discourse, is void. On the contrary, given the fact

that any Lincoln quotation has to be considered as belonging to the basic intertextual equipment of any American, and explicit, graphemic signaling or even the explicit dropping of Lincoln's name would most likely be considered as a superfluous, professorial gesture, one that would probably undo any positive connotation otherwise associated with this kind of quotational allusion.

5.1.2 Titular allusions

In addition to being a quotational allusion to a main campaign issue, the reference to the Great Society can also be considered as belonging to a second group or type of allusions in Hebel's typology called titular allusions. Here, the point of reference of the allusion is the title of a work, e.g., a book, painting, journal, song or film.

Like quotational allusions, titular allusions can be grouped into marked and unmarked ones (Hebel 1991, 142). Typical markers include italicization, capitalization and the use of quotation marks. In the absence of an explicit marker, recognition of the intertextual reference depends on the audience's "quotation competence" (Plett 1991, 12) with the cultural knowledge of the recipient being essential in the determination of an allusion's signal threshold mentioned above. As Hebel points out, "these dynamic conceptions of allusion require the active participation of the reader in the actualization process in order to exhaust the allusion's evocative potential as far as possible" (1991, 140). While this statement supports the notion of intertextuality as a text reception phenomenon (see Holthuis 1993), I also need to stress that with regard to the reception of political discourse in general and presidential discourse in particular, the text's reading is not at all a private or individual activity but a publicly mediated global event.

Examples of titular allusions in inaugural addresses resemble a canon of American documents. In his second inaugural address, Reagan refers to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862 – "The time has come for a new American emancipation ..." (56) – and Clinton, in his second inaugural, pays tribute to the American Century – "Then, in turmoil and triumph, that promise exploded onto the world stage to make this the American Century" (43–44). Here, Clinton is referring to the article of the same name written by Henry Luce, the founder of *Life* magazine, in 1941. Two more documents whose titles are alluded to numerous times in presidential inaugural addresses are the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Allusions to these two sacred American documents will be described and analyzed in detail in Section 5.2.1.

5.1.3 Onomastic allusions

The third category of Hebel's typology consists of name-related references. These onomastic allusions include references to personal names as well as names of places (toponyms) and significant historical events and eras.

In the same way that literary allusions are considered evocative links between texts, allusions to nonliterary points of reference – nonliterary texts, persons of past or contemporary history, events of social or political history etc. – may be regarded as evocative links between the text and the intertextual *déjà*.

(1991, 138)

This third group of allusions illustrates the cultural studies perspective that underlies my intertextuality concepts and that sees one-to-one text references as the deliberate, intentional and recognizable allusions to a pre-text where the latter is not restricted to verbal representations.

The acceptance of non-verbal texts as parts of an intertextual relationship reflects an expansive interpretation of text as culture (see Bachmann-Medick 1997) and also supports Hebel's statement that "in the wake of post-structuralist textual theory and in accord with major theoreticians of *allusion*..., it seems possible and only consequent to extend the scope of this concept of allusion beyond ... literary allusions" (1991, 138; emphasis in the original). The numerous examples of onomastic allusions found in presidential inaugural addresses – allusions that access the nation's public memory – support the validity of this approach and also demonstrate the shortcomings of more linguistically oriented approaches to material intertextuality.

For both groups of onomastic allusions, references to personal names as well as to place names, the question of marking is of lesser importance, since "owing to their particularly referential nature, proper names are able to direct the reader to referents all by themselves" (ibid., 142). In addition, the capitalization of proper names in English is already a form of explicit marking.

One group of persons that fall under the category of onomastic allusions, i.e., moral authorities such as Mother Theresa or Winston Churchill as well as biblical figures, has already been mentioned above. A second dominant group of individuals who are quoted either directly or via their involvement in the drafting of the nation's founding documents are the Founding Fathers. In some inaugural addresses, see, for example, George W. Bush, Clinton or Reagan, the Founders, or Framers, are explicitly named, here Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, John Page, and Joseph Warren. In several cases, onomastic allusions to these figures are complemented with quotational allusions, oftentimes referring to the written correspondence of the members of the founding generation.

George Washington is, not surprisingly, a fixture among onomastic allusions in presidential inaugural addresses. Reagan referred to Washington in his second inaugural – "When the first President, George Washington, placed his hand upon the Bible, he stood less than a single day's journey by horseback from raw, untamed wilderness" (55) – and managed not only to evoke the long and continuing history of the presidency but also, by introducing the wilderness topos, the historical achievements of the American nation and its present and future challenges.

In addition to references to personal names, we find, as mentioned above, a second group of onomastic allusions in inaugural addresses that draw their power from the resonance of the names alluded to. In this case, the allusions take on the form of toponyms, or place-names, referring to the nation's "*lieux de mémoire*" (Nora 1989), the American sites of memory. An extreme application of this type of allusion can be found in both inaugural addresses by Reagan, who refers to central sites of American history and war history – Belleau Woods, Valley Forge, the Alamo, the Argonne, Omaha Beach, Salerno, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Pork Chop Hill, the Chosin Reservoir, Vietnam.

Allusions that tap into the collective memory of the American public represent what Hebel calls "the text's historical and social coordinates" (1991, 139). In this regard, allusions to significant events and important eras of the nation's history enter the nation's public discourse. Thus, the revolution, the Civil War or War of Secession, the Great Depression, the two World Wars, the Cold War, and September 11 feature prominently in presidential discourse in general and in inaugural addresses in particular. Common to all these references is that all presidents characterize these events as national challenges or tests, an example of which can be found in Clinton's first inaugural (1): "From our revolution, the Civil War, to the Great Depression to the civil rights movement, our people have always mustered the determination to construct from these crises the pillars of our history."

References to historical figures, places or events such as the examples provided above open a text, in this case a presidential speech, to new dimensions of meaning. Through the "semantic enrichment of the alluding text" (Hebel 1991, 139) these allusions are able to formulate, in a very condensed way, elemental thematic statements and serve as discursive shortcuts for, for example, the demonstration of patriotism and steadfastness or warning against the dangers of diplomatic appeasement.

This attribute, i.e., the ability to reduce qualitative statements about American identity to toponymic cognitive triggers, turns onomastic allusions into efficient narrative and argumentative tools. They are particularly suitable for inaugural addresses, as the generic conventions of this presidential text type lead to relatively

short speeches – averaging less than 2,000 words per speech – that need to fulfill a multitude of functions (see Chapter 3).

Furthermore, allusions also allow the speaker to refer to historical liabilities and times of domestic conflict, such as slavery or the civil rights era, and to pay respect to the victims of these events without endangering the typological norms of an inaugural address as a festive, ceremonial occasion through a critique of the nation's past. In Chapter 6, I will show how allusions can nevertheless become a powerful tool of systemic criticism in inaugural addresses.

Monuments are also among the sites of memory often alluded to in presidential inaugural addresses. Given the fact that a presidential inauguration is celebrated, since 1981, on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, a site overlooking the National Mall and its numerous examples of memorial architecture, it is not surprising to see them being part of presidential inaugural discourse. An example can be found in Reagan's first inaugural: "Standing here, one faces a magnificent vista, opening up on this city's special beauty and history. At the end of this open mall are those shrines to the giants on whose shoulders we stand" (3).

Yet, in these monuments, all of them commemorating either presidents or wars, we can also find evidence of reversed allusions, i.e., the monuments do not only serve as pre-texts but actually become metatexts referring to presidential pre-texts themselves. The best-known example of these architectural metatexts is probably the Lincoln Memorial whose north and south walls are covered with the texts of Lincoln's Second Inaugural and Gettysburg Address, respectively. Yet, the Jefferson Memorial (with quotations from the Declaration of Independence), the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial (with quotations from Roosevelt's main speeches engraved on the "four rooms" that represent his four terms in office), or Vietnam War Memorial with the engraved names of the war dead, are all starting points into the great American intertext.

5.1.4 Pseudointertextual allusions

The fourth and final category of allusions in Hebel's typology comprises what he calls "pseudointertextual allusions" (1991, 141). This type, which can be found very often in political discourse, consists of fictitious statements referring to and suggesting the presence of a pre-text that actually does not exist. As Steyer explains, these allusions are characterized by "a type of global ... reference to a world of possible statements" ["globale ... Referenz auf eine Welt möglicher Äußerungen"] (1997, 96–97). Examples of pseudointertextual allusions include negations, fictitious or rhetorical questions, or references to unidentified addresses (ibid.).

While we find abundant evidence of pseudointertextual allusions in campaign discourse, policy speeches and other, more deliberate genres, they are relatively rare in inaugural addresses, a primarily epideictic genre. An exception can be found in Reagan's first inaugural address, a speech that is generally characterized by its more programmatic character: "Those who say that we are in a time when there are no heroes just don't know where to look. You can see heroes every day going in and out of factory gates" (2).

The formula "those who say" that is present in Reagan's speech can be found again and again in more argumentative genres, such as the State of the Union Address or political debates. Here, pseudointertextual allusions, e.g., "some say", allow the speaker to enter into a rather one-sided dialog with invisible opponents, a function exemplified in Ronald Reagan's address to the nation on the attacks of the U.S. Marine base in Beirut and the invasion of Granada: "Let me ask those who say we should get out of Lebanon: If we were to leave Lebanon now, what message would that send to those who foment instability and terrorism?" ("Events in Lebanon and Grenada" 1519).

Steyer explains the discursive power of pseudointertextual allusions and their suitability for argumentative and persuasive strategies by the fact that these vague references allow for enough leeway to refer to different statements without having to attribute responsibility for these statements to anyone in particular (1997, 96).

By referring to a non-identifiable or nonexistent pre-text, the text producer can "give his argumentation a quasi-dialogical character" (ibid., 97), something that we see, as shown above, quite often during the presidency of Reagan. In his discourse, Reagan portrays himself as personally engaged in a never-ending struggle against invisible yet always present opponents, a narrative that also dominates his discussion of the so-called SDI project, an enterprise better known as the Star Wars program, in the 1985 State of the Union address:

Some say it will bring war to the heavens, but its purpose is to deter war in the heavens and on Earth. Now, *some say* the research would be expensive. Perhaps, but it could save millions of lives, indeed humanity itself. And *some say* if we build such a system, the Soviets will build a defense system of their own. Well, they already have strategic defenses that surpass ours; a civil defense system, where we have almost none; and a research program covering roughly the same areas of technology that we're now exploring. And finally *some say* the research will take a long time. Well, the answer to that is: Let's get started.

(134; emphasis mine)

The repetitive structure of this text passage emphasizes the dialogic nature inherent in pseudointertextual allusions.

5.2 Allusions in presidential inaugural addresses

In the following, I will analyze the intertextual potential of presidential speeches using the 15 inaugural addresses given from 1949 to 2005 as my corpus. The theoretical approaches presented above will serve as a framework for orientation. The main objective of this intertextual analysis is to identify and describe the pre-text references dominant in the speeches, with a specific emphasis on analyzing their functions. In addition, I will present a more extensive, categorizing description of the speeches, aimed at establishing a typology of pre-texts and showing diachronically stable reference types and strategies.

In general, intertextual references in the inaugural addresses of American presidents after the Second World War manifest themselves in three broad categories: (i) references to central civil religious documents, first and foremost the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution; (ii) allusions to other American presidents, which are often closely linked to references to the nation's significant sites of memory; and (iii) references to God and the Bible.

Given the often-quoted role of the American president as the high priest of the nation's civil religion, it is not surprising that the nation's founding documents – the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution – are the most frequently used pre-texts. In individual cases we also find references to other semi-sacred documents in American history, for example, John Winthrop's sermon aboard the *Arabella* (see, for example, Johnson's reference to the "American Covenant") or the Pledge of Allegiance (see, for example, Reagan's reference to "One nation under God," which appears in both of his inaugural speeches). References to patriotic slogans like Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death," which are ever-present in Fourth of July addresses (see Lubbers 1989), do not appear in the inaugural genre.

The names and speeches of other American presidents represent a second major beacon of presidential allusions. Here, in addition to the direct predecessor, it is above all the national icons Washington, Lincoln, and Kennedy and, with a more partisan perspective, the great Democratic presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Jefferson as well as the Republican hero Reagan, who are at the center of the allusive network. These allusions are often linked to onomastically and metonymically marked textual elements invoking the nation's sites of memory. These include references to the names of historically relevant geographic places as well as the evoking of significant events in the nation's history, such as the American Revolution, the Civil War, or the Great Depression, and the men and women involved in these events.

References to other presidents, and in some cases to other political leaders such as Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King Jr. (see below), mostly take on the form of concrete quotational allusions but can also appear as imitations of the structural, stylistic, or formal nature of previous presidential speeches (see Austermühl, forthcoming).

Figurenrede, or character speech, in this case the voices of regular, Main Street Americans – a quotational device found in abundance in campaign speeches, town hall discussions, and even in numerous State of the Union addresses, often implemented in quotations from personal letters written by everyday Americans to the president – is missing almost entirely from inaugural addresses. The exception to this rule occurs in Reagan's second inaugural address where he quotes from the diary of a soldier killed in World War I.

An important third category of allusions consists of textual references to God and the Bible. As I have shown in detail elsewhere (see Austermühl, forthcoming), general onomastic allusions to God serve a number of equally general purposes. They fulfill generic discursive conventions, demonstrate the faith of the speaker, reassure the audience of God's favorable view of the presidential office and the American values it stands for, reflect the chosen status of the American people, highlight the importance of America's national and global mission, remind Americans of their covenant and the importance of national unity, and allow a religiously and morally based contradistinction from the nation's godless enemies.

However, as my analysis also shows, the pragmatics of more specific and precise allusions to the Bible as well as to religious and moral authorities in general, go beyond aesthetic and generic reasons. Instead, they pursue a set of more differentiated and deliberate objectives and are generally more closely aligned with the main ideological and political principles of the inaugural address and the president's future political agenda.

In line with Bellah's claim that "biblical (and other) imagery has operated powerfully, consciously and unconsciously, to shape the American interpretation of reality and to some extent the actions of Americans in the world" (1975, 13), this type of allusion represents a way of affirming the president's current and future political positions and manipulating the behavior of the polity. As such, we often find a clear connection between the key tenets of an inaugural address and the sentiments expressed in the biblical passages they allude to. An example of this functional relationship can be found in George W. Bush's first inaugural address, in which he underlines his commitment to his ideology of compassionate conservatism with an allusion to the book of Mark: "And I can pledge our nation

to a goal: When we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side" ("Inaugural Address" 2).⁸⁷

In the following, I will focus on the first two major categories of pre-texts – civil religious documents and allusions to other presidents.⁸⁸

5.2.1 Sacred documents and presidential intertextuality

References to pre-texts and pre-text passages from documents that belong to the core of America's civil religion constitute the most visible and culturally aggregated group of targets of intertextual references in presidential inaugural addresses. The two documents most referred to, and the most revered ones, are the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, and the Constitution of the United States from 1787. The special status of these two texts in American discourse reflects their exalted position within the history of America. Bellah describes the documents' uniqueness and the religious view of the nation's past as follows: "The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were the sacred scriptures and Washington the divinely appointed Moses who led his people out of the hands of tyranny" (1974, 30).

Heidekind, in his study of the celebratory culture of the young American Republic, stresses the devout, quasi-religious treatment extended to the founding documents in the context of public celebrations. Describing the annual processions remembering the ratification of the Constitution, known as the Grand Federal Processions, Heidekind writes:

The processions endowed the new political system with moral dignity and religious legitimacy. The presence of members of the clergy (often including a Jewish rabbi) and the biblically inspired rhetoric created an atmosphere of sacredness, while symbolic and allegorical arrangements situated the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence in a religious context, for example, by placing the documents on the "altar of liberty" or in a "federal temple." (2000, 242)

87. Luke 10:30: Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion."

88. A much more detailed discussion of presidential allusions, including religious references and allusions to American sites of memory, can found in Austermühl, forthcoming, which also contains an in-depth theoretical introduction to this specific type of intertextuality.

Both documents have played an important strategic role in the nation-building experiment of the Founding Fathers. As Smith and Smith point out, while the Founders' strategies were eternalized in these basic texts, it is the public discourse of American presidents that continues the dissemination of these ideas into the present: "The Founders' subsequent covenant is recorded in sacred documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the pronouncements of various presidents" (1994, 134).

Hans Vorländer refers to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as the "founding documents of [America's] national existence" ["die Gründungsdokumente nationaler Existenz"] (1998, 281). That, in such a context, the American president should become the interpreter-in-chief of these "sacred writings" ["heilige Schriften"] (ibid.) is therefore not surprising.

Despite the fact that, as shown in the above quotations, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are often referred to in the same sentence, their evocation in the presidential inaugural addresses analyzed, exhibits rather different and more idiosyncratic patterns. This can be explained by acknowledging the different roles and statuses that the two documents have had for the American nation and by their respective dramatic weights. Ed Swartz, for examples, writes that for historians the "Declaration of Independence [is] the central source for national civic ideals, just as political scientists recognize the Constitution and the Federalist Papers [as] the final word on American political institutions" (1976, 40).

Given its status as the nation's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence is an inseparable part of "America's myth of origin" (Bellah 1975, 3), a fact that endows the document with a dramatic dimension well-suited for epideictic discursive situations. The U.S. Constitution, on the other hand, is a rather sober, republican document aimed at establishing political order. The success with which that aim has been achieved has made the U.S. Constitution an international role model, a fact that Heidekind highlights with regard to the interwar period. "President Woodrow Wilson's League of Nation scheme promised the right to national self-determination and democratic self-government, a system of collective security, and precedence of the law over power – in other words, an international constitutional order on the American model" (2000, 251).

The presence of the U.S. Constitution in presidential discourse is made somehow awkward by the fact that it is clearly not a presidential document. In fact, the Constitution's first article is dedicated entirely to the legislative branch of the American political system and does not at all ascribe a position of supremacy to the executive. Consequently, the Constitution cannot easily be depicted as a power source for the presidency. As Thurow explains, the primary source of presidential power resides in the president's role as the representative and leader of the American people: "The presidency is not primarily an office of constitutional

responsibilities and republican instruction, but an office of popular leadership” (1996, 23). I will discuss the semantic and cultural differences in the usage of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution separately (see Sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2).

Another civil religious document that occurs with noticeable frequency in presidential speeches is John Winthrop’s sermon on the ship *Arabella*, entitled *A Model of Christian Charity*. Its covenant metaphor is continuously present in the public discourse of the United States, yet nowhere is it more prominent than in Johnson’s inaugural address:⁸⁹

They came here – the exile and the stranger, brave but frightened – to find a place where a man could be his own man. They made a covenant with this land. Conceived in justice, written in liberty, bound in union, it was meant one day to inspire the hopes of all mankind; and it binds us still. If we keep its terms, we shall flourish. (72)

Reagan also refers to Winthrop’s lay sermon to illustrate his vision of America. The most striking link between his and Winthrop’s visions can be found in the 1988 State of the Union address:

We can be proud that for them and for us as those lights along the Potomac are still seen this night – signaling, as they have for nearly two centuries and as we pray God they always will, that another generation of Americans has protected and passed on lovingly this place called America, this shining city on a hill, this government of, by, and for the people.⁹⁰ (90)

The fact that the Republican vice presidential candidate for the 2008 elections, Sarah Palin, credited Reagan and not Winthrop with the “shining city on a hill” quotation⁹¹ not only shows a lapse of cultural memory but also serves as proof of the authenticity of Reagan’s reference and the wide acceptance of the quotation’s premises.

89. The official version of Johnson’s inaugural as published in the *Presidential Papers* is entitled *The American Covenant*.

90. Here, Reagan not only taps into the imagery of the shining city upon a hill but also manages to insert another jewel from the American anthology of quotations, the final words of Lincoln’s Gettysburg address: “... and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

91. Palin had said when she described the worldview that she shared with John McCain: “That world view that says that America is a nation of exceptionalism. And we are to be that shining city on a hill, as President Reagan so beautifully said, that we are a beacon of hope and that we are unapologetic here” (New York Times 2008).

The "Winthrop Machine," as Thomas Pynchon calls it (quoted in Madsen 1998, 154), is always present in the discourse of American exceptionalism. It dates back to the Pilgrims' crossing of the Atlantic on board the ship *Arabella*. Quoting Matthew 5: 14 – "Thou art the light of the world" – Winthrop reminded the Puritan settlers of their special status by saying, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a Hill. The eyes of all people are upon us" (*Christian Charity*).

The passage from Reagan's speech also highlights what Vorländer calls the "heilsgeschichtliche Interpretation" (1998, 280–281) of America's civil religious documents, a strategy that Neil Renwick praises as follows:

Cleverly, Reagan's scriptwriters fell back upon the established precepts of the constructed "idea" of American identity, through which the president could express his personal political values to a people desperate to be told how good America really was. Thus, Reagan's oratory returned again and again to the tried and tested American pilgrim ... vision of a "shining city on the hill." (2000, 153)

Another fixture of presidential discourse is a reference to a passage from the Pledge of Allegiance. The full text reads: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

It is above all the passage "one nation under God" that occurs again and again in presidential speeches, for example, in Truman's national address on Korea. Yet it is again Reagan whose references to the Pledge of Allegiance are most numerous and most telling. We find the phrase "one nation under God," among others, in both of Reagan's inaugural addresses, in the so-called Evil Empire speech, and in four of his eight State of the Union addresses.

The quotational allusion essentially fulfills two purposes: domestically, and culturally, it serves to unite Americans and to define the nation as a religious one, chosen and favored by God. This call for unity and the emphasis on the chosen status of the nation then joins forces with the second purpose, the allusion's international pragmatic dimension, i.e., the attempt to highlight the differences between the God-fearing United States and the atheistic states and rulers of the Communist world. This strategy is very much in line with the Us-vs.-Them narrative of the Cold War presidencies of Truman and Eisenhower (see Chapter 4).

The Pledge of Allegiance was first published in the youth magazine *The Youth's Companion*⁹² in 1892. Fifty years later, it was officially recognized by the American government. In 1954, the words "under God" were added at the insistence

⁹² This historical fact, however, did not stop Clinton attaching a different origin to the Pledge in his 2000 State of the Union Address: "And we will become at last what our founders pledged us to be so long ago – one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." (130)

of President Eisenhower. Eisenhower himself used the phrase in his nationally televised speech on civil rights on September 24, 1957 – “Thus will be restored the image of America and of all its parts as one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” (“Radio and Television Address” 694) – but did not use the words “under God.”

As this example shows, the “one nation” phrase of the Pledge is a discursive instrument suitable for calling for national unity and warning against social ills and injustice. In several cases, the “one nation” phrase helps to put the discrimination towards America’s black population into the national spotlight. Examples include Nixon’s first inaugural address – “This means black and white together, as one nation, not two” (3) – and Johnson’s Voting Rights speech – “This is one Nation. What happens in Selma or in Cincinnati is a matter of legitimate concern to every American” (“The American Promise” 284).

Among the historical documents that serve as presidential pre-texts, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution occupy the dominant position. In the following, I will analyze in depth the intertextual relevance of these two founding documents. Given the degree of familiarity of both texts and their core passages, I expect the references to both documents to be mostly implicit, i.e., without mention of, for example, the document’s title or typographic elements.

5.2.1.1 *The Declaration of Independence as a presidential pre-text*

A discussion of the intertextual dimension of the Declaration of Independence must begin with an acknowledgement of the civil religious nature of the document. In his essay “What I saw in America,” the English writer Gilbert K. Chesterton explains the special relevance of the Declaration of Independence as follows: “America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence” (1990, 105). Bellah also links the drafting and signing of this founding document with the origin of American nationality and identity, stating: “Unlike most historic peoples, America as a nation began on a definite date, July Fourth, 1776. Thus, in analyzing America’s myth of origin, close attention must be paid to the mythic significance of the Declaration of Independence, which is considerable” (1975, 3).

With regard to the exploitation of the cultural power of the Declaration of Independence in the inaugural addresses of U.S. presidents after the Second World War, we find three distinct pragmatic phases. The first phase, which I shall call the internationalization of the Declaration of Independence during the presidencies of Truman and Eisenhower, exhibits references of the highest intensity. Here, the Declaration of Independence becomes a participant in the drama of the Cold War inaugural address. In the second phase, during 1961 and 1976, i.e., from

Kennedy to Carter, we can only measure a very low intensity in the allusions to the Declaration, indicative of a mere routine-like affirmation of American values as demanded by the generic norms of the inaugural address. The third and final phase, representing the double presidencies of Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush, then reflects a revival of the Declaration of Independence as a pre-text, a development brought about by both ideological and individual considerations.

5.2.1.1.1 The internationalization of the Declaration of Independence. In Truman's inaugural address and in both of Eisenhower's inaugurals, the Declaration of Independence serves as the dominant pre-text. Following the generic norms of inaugural addresses, all three speeches fulfill the purpose of national credos, the public display of the American people's basic belief or guiding principles, expressed by its highest representative, the president: "At such a time in history, we who are free must proclaim anew our faith. This faith is the abiding creed of our fathers. It is our faith in the deathless dignity of man, governed by eternal moral and natural laws" (Eisenhower, "First Inaugural" 3). Eisenhower's use of the performative verb "proclaim" demonstrates that the affirmation of the nation's beliefs is not only directed at a national audience but made with a global, politically and ideologically bipolar audience in mind.

In Truman's inaugural address, the affirmation of eternal American values – laid out in the Declaration of Independence, continued in the U.S. Constitution, and perpetuated by presidential discourse – is also a public exhibition of the American self to the world: "It is fitting, therefore, that we take this occasion to proclaim to the world the essential principles of the faith by which we live, and to declare our aims to all peoples" (112).

Truman and Eisenhower both express the unavoidable universal reach of the American creed and its potential as a force for freedom. "Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark," Eisenhower states in his first inaugural address, continuing: "The faith we hold belongs not to us alone but to the free of all the world" (4). Here the slavery imagery resonates with the liberating tenor of the Declaration of Independence – "A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people" (ibid.).

The belief in America's global mission of liberation and enlightenment expressed in the Cold War inaugurals of Truman and Eisenhower is strikingly similar to the aspiration of America's founding generation, as the following excerpt from a letter written by John Adams illustrates: "I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in providence, for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth" (C. Adams 1856, 66).

The prominent role of the Declaration of Independence in the inaugural addresses of Truman and Eisenhower reflects, of course, the global political context of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Given the bipolar constellation of the global geopolitical map after World War II and the ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Truman and Eisenhower not only deliberately aimed their public credos at a domestic audience but opened their civil religious congregation to the Soviet satellite states of Central and Eastern Europe as well. In doing so, Truman and Eisenhower excluded the Soviet Union from this community of values, an attempt at isolating its ideological rival internationally. As Truman's speechwriter George Elsey explains, the inaugural address represented a unique opportunity to focus on international issues and for projecting the American president as the moral leader of the world:⁹³ "No other occasion in the foreseeable future offers the President so great an opportunity to speak to the entire world ... and I believe that his words on January 20 should match the dignity and responsibility of that role [leader of the free world]" (quoted in Ryan 1993c, 141).

Eisenhower's inaugural addresses are also dominated by foreign and security policy issues, first and foremost by America's confrontation with communism. In his first inaugural, Eisenhower states: "The future shall belong to the free" (1). According to Medhurst the objective of Eisenhower's speech was to publicly declare "that the American people, and those who shared American values, constituted 'the Free'" (1993, 164). In the attempt to achieve this objective the Declaration of Independence – a document of indictment as well as liberation – becomes the basis of the President's argumentation.

The opening statements of both the 1949 and the 1953 inaugural addresses – Truman's "essential principles" and Eisenhower's "abiding creed of our father" respectively – clearly allude to the Declaration of Independence and correspond, in chronology as well as in content, to the first sentence of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident." The sacred dimension of the pre-text is semantically symbolized through the use of the positively charged terms "creed," and, in Truman's case, "faith": "The American people stand firm in the faith which has inspired this Nation from the beginning. We believe that all men have a right to equal justice under law and equal opportunity to share in the common good" ("Inaugural Address" 112).

In Truman's address, the principles of equality and the rule of law, the "truths" that the Founders discussed, become the moral basis of his argument for democracy and against communism. His discursive strategy mirrors the way in which

93. As the incumbent president, Truman had the opportunity to use his annual State of the Union Address, delivered on January 5, 1949, to address domestic policy issues.

the signers of the Declaration of Independence justified their revolutionary act: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them."

In his first inaugural, Eisenhower also proclaims that he himself and the nation he represents are guided by a higher purpose, or as he puts it, "governed by eternal moral and natural laws" (3). This line from Eisenhower's speech not only resembles the "laws of nature and of nature's God" from the Declaration of Independence," but also represents one of the many instances where Eisenhower's inaugural is strikingly similar, in tone and style, to Truman's.

In his second inaugural, Eisenhower again uses the law analogy and the equality of all human beings that springs from these laws. Even more so than in his first inaugural, Eisenhower explicitly highlights the global reach of these natural laws, saying that "the law of which we speak, comprehending the values of freedom, affirms the equality of all nations, great and small" (62).

The fact that both Truman and Eisenhower base their demands for global equality and freedom – directed at the Soviet Union – on the same universal moral and legal basis that Jefferson established in the Declaration of Independence is exemplified in the references that both presidents make to the Declaration's most famous passage: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Truman directly quotes the equality principle, which Schwartz refers to as the axiom of Jefferson's "theory of equality" (1976, 40), saying: "We believe that all men are created equal because they are created in the image of God" ("Inaugural Address" 112). In doing so, he again stresses the God-giveness of his statements. Eisenhower, in his first inaugural address, again follows Truman's example, categorically stating: "It [the creed] establishes, beyond debate, those gifts of the Creator that are man's inalienable rights, and that make all men equal in His sight" (3). Here, Eisenhower introduces the notion of the "inalienable rights" that in the continuation of his speech will serve as the basis for his discursive confrontation with communism. Truman had used the allusion in one of his parallel, repetitive antitheses that function as the main structural device of his address:

Communism is based on the belief that man is so weak and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters.

Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice. ("Inaugural Address" 112)

Continuing his harsh criticism of the communist ideology, “this false prophecy,” Truman enumerates several rights that the citizens of the states under the control of the Soviet Union are denied: “Communism subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial, and forced labor as the chattel of the state. It decrees what information he shall receive, what art he shall produce, what leaders he shall follow, and what thoughts he shall think” (113).

Truman contrasts the behavior of the communists with the Democratic creed helped by the United States and the nation it leads: “Democracy maintains that government is established for the benefit of the individual, and is charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights of the individual and his freedom in the exercise of his abilities” (ibid.). This passage also resonates with Jefferson’s opening statement: “... To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed” (*Declaration*).

In addition, Truman’s list of Soviet offenses – made more dramatic through the anaphoric and contrasting views of the words “communism” and “democracy” – becomes an indictment of the Soviet Union, just as the Declaration of Independence was designed as an indictment of the British king.

It is exactly this contrast between ideals of American democracy and the crimes of Soviet communism – expressed in Manichean form – through which the Declaration of Independence and Truman and Eisenhower’s allusions to it gain their moral strength. The intertextual references to the Declaration of Independence in the Cold War inaugurals strongly support the affirmative, meaning constructing function of intertextuality discussed in the previous chapters.

Truman’s inaugural address, delivered on January 20, 1949, and the references to the Declaration of Independence also need to be seen against the background of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration had been adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. While 48 countries in the General Assembly voted in favor of the adoption of the document, the Soviet Union, along with five of its satellites, as well as South Africa and Saudi Arabia, abstained.

In the confrontational, bipolar atmosphere of the mid-twentieth century and in light of America’s containment policy, the Declaration of Independence becomes the ideal pamphlet to signal support to states that were under Moscow’s control or that were threatening to fall under Soviet rule. As the Declaration of Independence also serves as proof of America’s long history of democracy, the document became a symbol, an icon of freedom. Intertextual references to America’s founding document became a declaration of solidarity and, at the same time, took on the form of a universal declaration of independence, issued by Truman and Eisenhower on behalf of all nations threatened by Soviet-led communism. In his second inaugural on January 21, 1957, Eisenhower included the citizens of the oppressed Eastern European countries – he referred metonymically to the

Hungarian revolt of October 23, 1956 – into the ranks of America's revolutionary troops, saying: "Yet the world of International Communism has itself been shaken by a fierce and mighty force: the readiness of men who love freedom to pledge their lives to that love" (62). Like Berlin, the toponym Budapest thus enters the inventory of freedom symbols: "Budapest is no longer merely the name of a city; henceforth it is a new and shining symbol of man's yearning to be free" (62).

By explicitly referring to the pledge made by the signers of the Declaration – "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor" (*Declaration*) – Eisenhower establishes an emotional link between Eastern European resistance to communism and the fight of the American colonies against the British monarchy.

The phrase "Divine Providence" that is found in this passage of the Declaration of Independence and that is itself taken from John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity* also appears in Eisenhower's first inaugural address, more specifically in a part of the speech in which he describes the global changes and challenges that the United States and the rest of the world are facing. In this decisive moment, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution become bright beacons of freedom:

It is because we, all of us, hold to these principles that the political changes accomplished this day do not imply turbulence, upheaval or disorder. Rather this change expresses a purpose of strengthening our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents, a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence. (3)

The role of the Declaration of Independence as a moral tool in the fight against communism that characterizes the first three inaugural addresses after the end of World War II is also an image found in Kennedy's inaugural address. The intertextual chain connecting Jefferson's "truths" to Truman's "essential principles" to Eisenhower's "abiding creed of our father" is continued by Kennedy, as is the notion of divine laws: "[T]he same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe – the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God" ("Inaugural Address" 1).

For Kennedy as well, the Declaration of Independence becomes the philosophical basis in the nation's confrontation with the Soviet Union. In his speech, the memory of America's revolution becomes a symbol of the nation's international responsibilities:

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by

war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage – and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. (1)

Yet, even though Kennedy refers to the founding generation and the revolutionary beliefs expressed in the Declaration of Independence as part of his rhetorical confrontation with the Soviet Union, the *dispositio* of his address is not as dependent on the exemplary status of the Declaration of Independence as the inaugural addresses of Truman and Eisenhower. The same applies to the inaugural address of Lyndon B. Johnson, despite the fact that he repeats the central tenet of the Declaration at the end of his speech: “For we are a nation of believers. Underneath the clamor of building and the rush of our day’s pursuits, we are believers in justice and liberty and union, and in our own Union. We believe that every man must someday be free. And we believe in ourselves” (73). In Johnson’s domestically oriented jeremiad, the Declaration of Independence is, however, not the dominant pre-text but only one in a group of references that includes allusions to the U.S. Constitution, John Winthrop, and the Civil War.

Kennedy’s rhetorical wake-up call as well as Johnson’s vision of a Great Society that would overcome social and racial conflicts both used the references to the beginning of the nation and to the American creed laid down in the Declaration of Independence to highlight the common origin of the nation’s missionary journey and the need for national unity resulting from that joint responsibility. In addition to helping fulfill this unifying function, the Declaration of Independence becomes a reassuring symbol guaranteeing the ideational and ideological stability of the United States in a rapidly changing world: “Our destiny in the midst of change will rest on the unchanged character of our people, and on their faith” (Johnson, “Inaugural” 72). This reference also points to the significant difference between the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Both documents are undoubtedly symbols of continuity. Yet, while the Declaration of Independence represents the continuity of America’s values, the Constitution stands for the longevity of the nation’s legal order and institutions that in turn are based on the nation’s eternal set of beliefs expressed in the Declaration.

The decreasing importance of the Declaration of Independence as a pre-text in inaugural addresses can, in Kennedy’s case, be explained by his deliberate rejection of the supranational rhetoric (see Germino 1984) exhibited by Truman and Eisenhower. As Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy’s advisor and main speechwriter, explains in his memoirs, Kennedy’s objectives for the inaugural address were clear in this respect:

He wanted it short. He wanted it focused on foreign policy. He did not want it to sound partisan, pessimistic or critical of his predecessor. He wanted neither the customary cold war rhetoric about the Communist menace nor any weasel words that Khrushchev might misinterpret. And he wanted it to set a tone for the era about to begin. (1965, 240)

To break away from the one-dimensional moral discourse of his predecessors, Kennedy needed to reduce the importance of the Declaration of Independence as a pre-text, which had become a forceful Manichean instrument in the hands of Truman and Eisenhower. In addition, the tradition and continuity symbolized by the Declaration of Independence were counterproductive to Kennedy's goal of heralding a generational changing of the guards, a new beginning, a new Camelot after eight years of political standstill and ennui:

The Eisenhower era had been viewed as one of gray conformity, or to use the words of Adlai Stevenson, an administration of "the bland leading the bland." Public service seemed a burden to Eisenhower and his appointees. The president often appeared more interested in golf than government. His administration had been one of "normalcy" in that ugly word's most unctuous expression. (Windt 1993, 182–183)

Imitating the strategic intertextual use of the Declaration of Independence pursued by his predecessors, who were born in a different century, was not compatible with Kennedy's claim to renewal and to a change in leadership style. The same is true for the discursive confrontation with the Soviet Union. Here, Kennedy replaced the war imagery of his predecessors' inaugural addresses with a more diplomatic vocabulary. Following the advice of writer and journalist Walter Lippmann, Kennedy labeled the Soviet Union not as an "enemy" but as an "adversary" (see Windt 1993, 185). This change in register corresponded with Kennedy's famous "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate," a line that made the chiasm a stock item in presidential discourse. In the context of this "live-and-let-live arrangement" (Pollard 1961, A01), there was little room for the anti-Communist functionalization of the Declaration of Independence.

While the Declaration's function as a moral basis for denouncing the Soviet Union's violation of what the American government considered God's and nature's laws made it a central pre-text in the three inaugural addresses after World War II, its importance declined in the 1960s and 1970s. From Kennedy to Carter, the presence of the Declaration of Independence in inaugural addresses became less prominent and its purpose was mostly reduced to an epideictic and decorative element. In most cases, the references to America's revolution and independence became a routine exercise in patriotic name-dropping combined with a

more or less automatic affirmation of basic American principles. References to the Declaration of Independence during these years never reached the intensity and impact that the passionate credos of Truman and Eisenhower had. At the center of the ornamental allusions are the pre-text passages focusing on the equality principle to which, for example, Kennedy – “the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God” (“Inaugural Address” 1) – and Nixon – “the God-given right of every American to full and equal opportunity” – refer (“Second Inaugural” 14).

As we can see, Nixon mentions not only equality but also opportunity (i.e., “the pursuit of happiness”), a fact that reflects the dire economic situation of the United States in the early 1970s. This focus on the Declaration’s concept of opportunity is an interpretative direction in intertextual evocation of the Declaration of Independence that becomes much more visible in the inaugural addresses of Reagan and Clinton (see below).

Except for the references to the notions of equality and (economic) opportunity, the inaugural addresses from 1961 to 1977 exhibit only general allusions to the American creed, as seen, for example, in Kennedy’s attempt to stress the global reach of the Declaration’s principles. Other examples include Nixon, who, in his second inaugural address, speaks of “the spirit and the promise of America as we enter our third century as a nation” (13), and Carter, who evokes the nation’s foundation to highlight current social inequalities, stating: “Two centuries ago our Nation’s birth was a milestone in the long quest for freedom, but the bold and brilliant dream which excited the founders of this Nation still awaits its consummation” (“Inaugural Address” 1).

These last two examples highlight another characteristic related to the intertextual referencing of the Declaration of Independence as the ideational beginning of the nation, i.e., the use of a specifically American calendar that starts with the Fourth of July, 1776.

5.2.1.1.2 *Guaranteeing the American Dream.* With the election of Reagan came a renaissance of the Declaration of Independence as a more powerful pre-text in presidential inaugural addresses, a development that carried over into the presidencies of Clinton and George W. Bush. Contrary to the international dimension that the Declaration of Independence displayed in the speeches of Truman and Eisenhower, though, the references in the 1980s and 1990s pursued a primarily domestic purpose. This domestic focus on social and economic issues is also evident in George W. Bush’s first inaugural address. Only in his 2005 inaugural address – in the aftermath of September 11 and with America’s engagement in two wars – do we again witness a more international trajectory of allusions to the Declaration of Independence.

In his first inaugural address, which assumes the form of an economic jeremiad, Reagan focuses on the ever-present freedom topos as well as on the promise of equal opportunity and the pursuit of happiness as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, stating that: "I believe we, the Americans of today, are ready to act worthy of ourselves, ready to do what must be done to ensure happiness and liberty for ourselves, our children and our children's children" (3).

Clinton explicitly refers to Jefferson's "simple truths" and "inalienable rights" in both his inaugural addresses. In his first inaugural, Clinton uses the Declaration of Independence as a symbol for continuity in a time of change, another parallel to the inaugural address of John F. Kennedy: "When our founders boldly declared America's independence to the world and our purposes to the Almighty, they knew that America, to endure, would have to change. Not change for change's sake, but change to preserve America's ideals – life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness" (1).

In his second inaugural address, in which Clinton also uses references to Martin Luther King and Abraham Lincoln to support his call for equality for all Americans, Clinton places the equality principle of the Declaration of Independence at the center of his argument, saying: "The promise of America was born in the 18th century out of the bold conviction that we are all created equal" (43). In line with the "hope discourse" of his election campaign (see Austermühl 2002) and his self-presentation as a middle class hero, Clinton highlights the role of the Declaration of Independence as the origin and at the same time the guarantor of the American Dream, a concept that James Truslow Adams described as follows: "[T]hat American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have as yet made to the thought and welfare of the world" (1931, vii–viii).

In his first inaugural address, George W. Bush also acknowledges the equality principle of the Declaration of Independence, stating: "And this is my solemn pledge: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity. I know this is in our reach because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves who creates us equal in His image" (1). Reminiscent of Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy, Bush also stresses the global validity of the Declaration of Independence in his first inaugural address, saying: "Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country, it is the inborn hope of our humanity, an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along" (1).

In Bush's second inaugural address, the international dimension and validity of the American creed becomes the central theme. Showing strong parallels to the Cold War inaugurals of Truman and Eisenhower, Bush uses the Declaration of Independence to build a moral basis for the War on Terror:

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time. (66)

The parallels between the post-9/11 and post-World War II discourse are even more striking when we compare Bush's second inaugural with the Truman Doctrine. In his speech to Congress on March 12, 1947, Truman said: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure" (178). Almost 60 years later, Bush stated: "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (66).

Bush referred to the "honorable achievement of our fathers" (67), closing his speech with an explicit reference not only to the Declaration of Independence but also to another American icon of freedom: "When the Declaration of Independence was first read in public and the Liberty Bell was sounded in celebration, a witness said, 'It rang as if it meant something.' In our time it means something still" (70).

5.2.1.1.3 *The intertextual power of the Declaration of Independence.* Given their continuous and visible presence in the inaugural addresses analyzed, intertextual references to the Declaration of Independence need to be considered as representing constitutive generic elements of American presidential inaugural addresses. Generic models of presidential discourse will have to take the national and the international pragmatic dimensions of America's founding document into consideration.

Allusions to the Declaration of Independence serve as an affirmation of the basic American principles and values as expressed in Jefferson's writing. These principles function as guiding principles for the political agendas presented in the inaugural addresses. The purpose of referring to the Declaration of Independence is both domestic, highlighting quality and opportunity concepts, and international, emphasizing the global reach and universal validity of the values of the American creed.

As we have seen, the intensity of the intertextual references to the Declaration of Independence varies according to the time period studied. The heyday of the Declaration of Independence as a presidential pre-text is certainly the height

of the Cold War. Here, the nation's founding document became a symbol of the universal fight for freedom. After a period of decreasing importance in the 1960s and 1970s, we again witnessed an increase in intertextual references to the Declaration of Independence during the 1980s and 1990s. Here, however, the main pragmatic direction is towards the domestic arena, with a strong focus on economic and social issues against the background of the Declaration's equality and opportunity themes. Only after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 does the Declaration of Independence again inhabit a dramatic, universal position, a fact that underlines the parallels between the discourse of the war on terror and the Cold War rhetoric of Truman and Eisenhower discussed in Chapter 4.

The manifold references to the Declaration of Independence also illustrate the two-dimensionality of the American dream. In the inaugural addresses studied, we thus find references highlighting both the moral and the materialistic dimensions of the dream. Johnson's inaugural address and Clinton's second inaugural focus on the domestic moral promise of the Declaration, stressing civil liberties and equality. Truman and Eisenhower also exemplify the moral side of the American dream in their inaugural addresses, yet they, as does Bush in his second inaugural, project its validity internationally. In Reagan and Clinton's speeches, we find the expression of the materialistic dimension of the dream, stressing the Declaration's promise for success, i.e., the pursuit of happiness. These two dimensions of the dream are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3).

5.2.1.2 *The U.S. Constitution as a presidential pre-text*

America's second sacred document, the Constitution of the United States – drafted in 1787, and finally ratified in 1788 – plays a less prominent role in the inaugural addresses studied than the Declaration of Independence. Yet, on account of the high degree of recognizability of the passages quoted, the Constitution is still very visible. A diachronic analysis of the occurrence of the term "constitution" in presidential inaugural addresses from 1789 to 2005 reveals the changing role of this concept.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Washington to McKinley, the term "constitution" appeared a total of 187 times in 25 out of 29 inaugural addresses (86 percent).

According to Thurow, the dominant role of the Constitution in the early inaugural addresses can be traced back to Jefferson:

It remained for Jefferson, among the founding presidents, to formulate a portrayal of the relationship between presidential virtue and republican government that presidents copied until well into the twentieth century.... Jefferson constitutionalizes virtue. Where virtue in Washington's inaugural is portrayed as an individualistic characteristic that can be brought to the support of the Constitution,

in Jefferson virtue itself seems to be the result of the Constitution and to be noble because it serves the Constitution. (1996, 20–21)

Jefferson's interpretation of the relationship between Republican values and the nature of the presidency and the president illustrates the supremacy that was given to the Constitution by nineteenth century presidents – with the exception of Jackson and Lincoln – and the leadership role of the legislature that the Constitution entails.

The inaugural address of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States and son of the second president, John Adams, is exemplary in this regard. Adams explicitly refers to the Constitution as an authoritative guide to the American government, saying:

In unfolding to my countrymen the principles by which I shall be governed in the fulfillment of those duties my first resort will be to that Constitution which I shall swear to the best of my ability to preserve, protect, and defend. That revered instrument enumerates the powers and prescribes the duties of the Executive Magistrate, and in its first words declares the purposes to which these and the whole action of the Government instituted by it should be invariably and sacredly devoted – to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to the people of this Union in their successive generations. (“Inaugural Address”)

The phrase “a more perfect union,” taken from the Constitution's preamble, is, as I will demonstrate below, the most frequently quoted line from the constitutional text.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the turn of the nineteenth century represents the Great American Divide in American presidential discourse. This is also reflected in the use of the term “constitution.” In the 27 inaugural addresses from Theodore Roosevelt to George W. Bush the word “constitution” occurs a total of eight times in eleven addresses (40.7 percent). For the time after the Second World War until 2005, the percentage of speeches in which the term is explicitly used decreases to 26.6 percent (four out of 14 addresses). In all four cases, these are inaugural addresses by Republican presidents (Eisenhower's, Nixon's, Reagan's first and George W. Bush's second).

Eisenhower's use of the Constitution as a unity-creating device is typical of the document's pragmatic dimension: “May cooperation be permitted and be the mutual aim of those who, under the concepts of our Constitution, hold to differing political faiths; so that all may work for the good of our beloved country and Thy glory. Amen” (“First Inaugural” 1).

As this example shows, allusions to the Constitution serve to fulfill a central function of inaugural addresses in general, i.e., the reconstruction or reconstitution of an American citizenry divided by a long partisan campaign into one American union. Yet, references to the Constitution are not only part of the generic conventions of inaugural addresses but of executive discourse in general. As Fields explains in his study of the role of public discourse in the early days of the republic: "Presidential eloquence attempts to synthesize apparently disparate elements into a single whole, and wholeness is always, directly or indirectly, the message presidents have to deliver" (1996, 16).

In very few presidential speeches was the need to reconstitute the American public as a collective as great as in Ford's remarks after he had been sworn in as the 38th president. In this address – Ford himself referred to it as a "little straight talk among friends" ("Inaugural Address" 1) – Ford, who became president after Nixon resigned because of the Watergate affair, declared an end to the crises of the 1970s, the Vietnam War and the oil crisis, stating: "My fellow Americans, our long national nightmare is over" (2). In his speech, the Constitution serves as the guarantor of the nation's survival: "Our constitution works" (2).

Johnson also refers to the Constitution in a time of national division, stating in his 1965 inaugural: "Liberty was the second article of our covenant. It was self-government. It was our Bill of Rights" ("Inaugural Address" 72). More specifically, he refers to the first ten amendments that were added during the constitutional ratification process as a response to criticism of the original version.

The strategic, persuasive use of the Constitution in inaugural addresses does, however, account for only a minor part of the total references to the document. Most often, presidents refer to the Constitution in acknowledging its role as the origin of the inauguration ritual. Examples of this quasi-generic type of allusion can be found in the addresses of Kennedy ("For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago" ("Inaugural Address 1"), Nixon ("I have taken an oath today in the presence of God and my countrymen to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States" ("First Inaugural" 4), Reagan ("The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place as it has for almost two centuries and few of us stop to think how unique we really are" ("First Inaugural" 1), and George W. Bush ("On this day, prescribed by law and marked by ceremony, we celebrate the durable wisdom of our Constitution, and recall the deep commitments that unite our country" ("Second Inaugural" 66).

Despite the fact that both Reagan and Clinton use clearly marked implicit allusions to the Constitution – to provide support to their respective definitions of the government concept – it is apparent that, as a focal point of collective memory, the Constitution plays only a minor role in the inaugural addresses of the twentieth

and twenty-first centuries. The decreasing importance of the Constitution can be explained by the fact that the risks to the union of the American nation had diminished over time. Indeed, in cases where the union does seem or is considered to be threatened – above all due to racial or social inequalities – we can observe a semantically more powerful presence of the Constitution in the inaugural addresses (see, for example, Johnson's and Clinton's second inaugurals).

The mercurial nature of the Constitution's origin also makes it difficult to precisely localize it as an American site of memory. With the months-long sessions of the Constitutional Convention, the drawn-out ratification process, as well as subsequent and still ongoing improvements in the form of amendments and Supreme Court decisions, the Constitution lacks not only a certain dramatic flair – it is, after all, a rather technical text – but also a tangible birth date like the Declaration of Independence's Fourth of July.

As explained in Chapter 2, however, the most important reason for the decreasing importance of the Constitution as a presidential pre-text is the doctrinal change in the interpretation of the presidency in the early twentieth century. As Thurow points out, Wilson played a decisive role in undermining the Constitutional balance of power: "In Wilson we see a turn away from the Constitution and the principles of republican government.... Prior to Wilson, American presidents tended to view the presidential office through the Constitution" (Thurow 1994, 23–29).

The fading importance of the Constitution as a pre-text and a source of presidential authority appears simultaneously with the re-interpretation and modernization of the presidential office started by Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson and completed by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The Constitution favors the legislative branch of government and provides Congress with supremacy over the Executive. Thus, the Constitution can be interpreted as a rather unpresidential text, and as such does not fit the design of a presidential inauguration ceremony aimed at celebrating the only national political representative elected by all Americans.

In many ways, the Constitution insulates the presidential office from the populace, a fact manifested by the institution of the Electoral College, and its sober, technical character reduces its epideictic usefulness as a reference text in ceremonial presidential discourse considerably. The inauguration festivities, above all the presidential post-inaugural parade down the so-called Avenue of the Presidents, i.e., Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and the White House, largely symbolize and celebrate the union between the American people and its president. In the multi-million dollar spectacle of the presidential inauguration, the president and the people take center stage against the backdrop of the memorial architecture of the National Mall. Representatives of the second, third, and fourth

estates – members of Congress, federal judges, and the media – are mere spectators in the induction of the modern people's tribune.

Contrary to the position expressed by John Quincy Adams, in the modern presidency the Constitution is replaced as the primary source of presidential power by the populace. As Thurow explains: "The office and its tasks are defined not by reference to the Constitution but by the president's extraconstitutional relationship to the American people" (1996, 29).

Inauguration Day is the day of the executive. Other branches of the American political system – legislature and judiciary – inhabit only a celebratory, ornamental role. This fact is symbolized by the rare mention of Congress in presidential inaugural addresses. Here, we can witness an evolution similar to that of references to the Constitution. In the first 29 inaugural addresses the term "Congress" – referring to the country's legislative branch – appears at least once in 59 percent of all cases. This number drops to less than 30 percent in the inaugural addresses after 1900.

Coming back to the Constitution, an analysis of the references to the document grouped according to major eras of American history show that explicit references to the Constitution are continuously declining. From the beginning of the Republic to the eve of the Civil War, the Constitution appears regularly and in 89.5 percent of inaugural addresses. Only Madison and Monroe, in their second inaugurals, do not refer to the text explicitly. During the Reconstruction and the Industrial Revolution, the frequency of the titular allusion to the Constitution decreases slightly, to 80 percent. Starting with the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt this trend intensified, with less than two thirds of the speeches between 1901 and 1945 referring to the Constitution (63.6 percent). After World War II and after the institutionalization of the modern presidency, this number drops considerably. The Constitution appears only in one out of four inaugural addresses (Eisenhower in 1953, Nixon in 1969, Reagan in 1981, and G. W. Bush in 2005).

The marginalization of the Constitution is further supported by the images that Americans have of the president (see Chapter 2). As the only politician with a truly national mandate, "the president, beginning with Washington, has often been at the center of the people's consciousness of themselves as a nation" (Langston 1995, 12).

Unlike the Declaration of Independence, written in the elegant, at times philosophical language of Jefferson, or the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, the Constitution of the United States can hardly be considered a literary text. As a collage of numerous individual drafts and compromise forged out of countless political positions, the Constitution has a formal, legal style that is neither emotional nor moving. The literary deficits did not win the Constitution much popular praise or reverence in the early days of the republic, as the following passage demonstrates:

During the nineteenth century, the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution of the United States, as physical artifacts, were not celebrated or revered in the same manner as the Declaration. The ideas contained in these two documents, unlike the Declaration, outlined the structure and powers of the Government in legal terms, making them more difficult to read and understand.

(National Park Service 2003)

Another important reason for the reduced suitability of the Constitution as a pre-text projecting moral authority is the fact that the Constitution – despite its widely recognized and oft-quoted sacred character – is, in the end, an imperfect text. Its single most important failure – not to include a general prohibition of slavery – hurt its reputation significantly, especially in the nineteenth century. The editor of the newspaper *The Liberator*, the Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, expressed his contempt for the Constitution as follows: “A sacred compact, forsooth! We pronounce it the most blood and heaven-daring arrangement ever made for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villainy ever exhibited on earth” (quoted in White 2002, 91).

Bellah explains the different emotional connotations attached to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and their different, yet interconnected functions as follows:

Revolution, like conversion, is an act of liberation, a leaving of old structures, a movement away from constraint ... but unless the free act of liberation moves rapidly toward an act of institution or constitution, an act not of throwing off the past but of establishing the future, then even the liberation itself turns into its opposite. (1975, 33)

In his second inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt refers to precisely this order-creating function of the Constitution, saying: “At that [Constitutional] Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War” (2).

Compared to the revolutionary nature of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution – aimed at establishing a new order for the ages that also had to be socially and politically implementable – lacks the daring and the dramatic, the throwing-off of chains that proves so suitable within the Manichean discourse of the Cold War, the War in Terror, and to situations of conflict in general.⁹⁴

94. The Declaration of Independence served, for example, as the basis for the Declaration of Sentiments, written primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1848 and ratified by 68 women and 32 men at the Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls. Here, the Declaration of Independence serves as a hypotext, a textual template that Stanton deliberately imitates.

Yet, in its preamble the United States Constitution also contains a text passage that has been recycled many times over. Here, in addition to the phrase "to form a more perfect union" that was mentioned above, it is predominantly the formula "We the People," that has become a much-used intertextual instrument. One of the factors that make this phrase particularly suitable for inaugural addresses is that it ritually acknowledges the aforementioned communion between president and people. As Michael Nelson writes, "the democratic element in the presidential icon ... is that the president somehow must represent the people as a whole and, at the same time, be one of them" (1997, x). The inclusive, collective "We the People" supports this democratic appeal. Not surprisingly, we find the formula in bipartisan unity in the inaugurations of both Reagan and Clinton. In Reagan's first inaugural address, the populist dimension of "We the People" is particularly apparent:

We hear much of special interest groups. Our concern must be for a special interest group that has been too long neglected. It knows no sectional boundaries or ethnic and racial divisions, and it crosses political party lines. It is made up of men and women who raise our food, patrol our streets, man our mines and our factories, teach our children, keep our homes, and heal us when we are sick – professionals, industrialists, shopkeepers, clerks, cabbies, and truck drivers. They are, in short, "We the people," this breed called Americans. (1)

As I have shown in Chapter 2, the formulaic "We the People" becomes a powerful intertextual tool in redefining America's democratic space and in strengthening the president's iconic role as the people's representative.

Another of the pragmatic aspects of intertextual references to the Constitution lies in the monopolization of the Constitution as an interpretative aid when it comes to defining the politico-cultural concept of "government." Reagan's strategy aims at highlighting the limits of government:⁹⁵

This is ... the 50th time that we the people have celebrated this historic occasion. Four years ago, I spoke to you of a new beginning and we have accomplished that. But in another sense, our new beginning is a continuation of that beginning created two centuries ago when, for the first time in history, government, the people said, was not our master, it is our servant; its only power that which we the people allow it to have. (55)

95. As Carlson points out, Reagan's politics manifested a significant discrepancy between rhetoric and reality: "In fact, during the Reagan years the Federal government grew so large that there was one government-paid employee for every fifteen citizens, which was precisely the same ratio as in the then Soviet Union" (1999, 100).

In the public discussion over the meaning of government, the Constitution becomes the servant of two masters: those who, like Reagan, call for a minimally invasive federal government and those who favor a more active, socially sensitive vision of government. The inaugural addresses of Reagan and Clinton are representative of these positions, and in comparing them we can see a dialog emerging. Twelve years after Reagan's second inaugural address, Clinton offers a thinly veiled refutation of Reagan's demands, saying: "Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution. We – the American people – we are the solution" ("Second Inaugural" 44). The explicit allusion to the American sovereign and the Constitution is probably the most characteristic textual passage appearing in Clinton's speeches. He uses the formula "We the People" not only in both of his inaugural addresses but also in all of his eight State of the Union messages, where he employs the same formula a total of 50 times. In all other State of the Union addresses between 1946 and 2005, "We the People" occurs only five times (four times in speeches delivered by Nixon and one time in a speech by George W. Bush).

The unusual frequency with which Clinton evokes the American people emphasizes the exceptional nature of Clinton's political conversation with America's middle class that is so characteristic of his presidency (see von Bardeleben 1999 and Austerhmühl 2002).

In his second inaugural address, Clinton twice explicitly refers to the Constitution's objective to form a "more perfect union" (44–46). Clinton is the first American president since Lincoln to quote this passage from the Constitution's preamble literally in an inaugural address. Clinton, a self-described New Democrat, also quotes the phrase in all of his last five State of the Union addresses, an indication of his domestic aspirations as well as of his strategy of triangulation, i.e., of finding a Third Way away from beaten liberal and conservative paths.⁹⁶

The decreasing importance of the U.S. Constitution as a pre-text in presidential inaugural addresses after World War II and the pragmatic differences between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence need to be seen in light of the fact that the Constitution is not exactly a presidential document. As I have stated, its original design called for a dominant role of the legislative branch of the American government. This proposition, which governed the American political process during the nineteenth century, is in direct opposition to the re-interpretation of the presidency during the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations and to the concept of the modern presidency implemented by Franklin D.

96. In this context, it was above all Clinton's 1996 State of the Union address that premiered the triangulation strategy. For a more detailed description of the triangulation strategy in Clinton's discourse, see Austerhmühl (2002).

Roosevelt. The decrease in explicit references to the Constitution in presidential inaugural addresses mirrors this political development. It is also not surprising that Congress, the president's main constitutional rival, is neglected in presidential inaugural addresses. Out of the 15 post-war inaugurals from 1949 to 2005, the terms "Congress," "House of Representatives," and "Senate" occur in only four of them. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, presidents explicitly name the legislative body in 17 out of 29 inaugural addresses. In the context of the American political system, the Constitution, as Mark Peterson states, makes the American Congress the president's "inescapable partner" (2000, 478). Peterson explains: "Presidents can accomplish little of enduring value without the support or, at the very least, the acquiescence of a significant number of representatives and senators" (*ibid.*).

On the day of his personal and political triumph, however, no president wants to let such constitutional ambiguities divert the public's attention from its highest representative.

5.2.2 Presidential pre-texts

The largest group of one-to-one references in presidential inaugural addresses consists of onomastic allusions to other presidents and quotational and titular allusions to their speeches, be they from the same genre, i.e., inaugural addresses, or from other types of presidential discourse. Based on the level of intensity of these allusions, we can create a hierarchy made up of five separate levels. Starting with the least intense type of allusions, this hierarchy consists of (1) a mere formal acknowledgment of the immediate predecessor in the presidential office (a tradition established by Jimmy Carter); (2) (in the case of re-elected presidents) self-congratulatory and self-affirmative references to the incumbent's own first inauguration; (3) ideologically charged echoes of the patriarch of the president's political party (e.g., Franklin D. Roosevelt for the Democrats and Reagan for the Republicans); (4) a self-defining, party-transcending imitation and evocation of ideational and individual role models; and (5) (in line with the nation's epic narrative) the evocation of the eternal high priests of American civil religion, Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln.

Independent of these functional aspects, we can see that with regard to onomastic and quotational allusions, Lincoln's major speeches and Kennedy's inaugural address constitute two major focal points of U.S. presidential discourse. In many cases, quotations from the speeches of these two rhetorical role models become the linking elements in generation-spanning intertextual chains.

The grateful acknowledgment of the president's immediate predecessor for services rendered to the nation represents the type of intra-presidential reference with the lowest intensity. This type of explicit, onomastic allusion has been a constant element in inaugural addresses since Carter's 1977 speech, in which he acknowledged Ford's time in office following the resignation of Nixon. The public recognition of Ford's work primarily serves the purpose of promoting the reconstruction of a nation divided by the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and Ford's pardoning of Richard Nixon. As Craig Allen Smith writes:

In his first sentence, he [Carter] thanked Ford "for all he has done to heal our land" and paused to shake Ford's hand, thereby prolonging heartfelt applause for the presidency itself. Carter's word functioned only to frame the symbolic gesture: He neither mentioned Ford's name nor specified what had been done to heal the country. Precisely because the people were left to complete the tribute themselves, the handshake conveyed unambiguous national solidarity.

(1993, 247)

Smith stresses the uniting function of Carter's gesture and also points out how it helped to elevate the office of the President above internal and partisan strife. In addition to stressing the uniqueness of the presidential office and the need for national unity, Carter's reference to Ford and the handshake that underscored his words also represent an acknowledgment of the need for bipartisan cooperation on the part of a president who was elected by only a very small majority.

The mentioning of the respective predecessor in the presidential office, independent of party membership, also serves as a public declaration of the continuity of American policy and the support of that policy by the American *res publica*. The explicit reference to the transition of power from one administration to another is thus directed both at a national audience and at international observers, often meant as a warning to hostile states and organizations. In few presidential inaugural addresses is this statement of continuity and unity more visible than in Reagan's first presidential act:

Mr. President, I want our fellow citizens to know how much you did to carry on this tradition. By your gracious cooperation in the transition process, you have shown a watching world that we are a united people pledged to maintaining a political system which guarantees individual liberty to a greater degree than any other, and I thank you and your people for all your help in maintaining the continuity which is the bulwark of our Republic. ("First Inaugural" 1)

Against the background of the Iran hostage crisis – on the day of Reagan's inauguration, the 52 U.S. citizens that had been held hostage in Iran for 444 days were finally freed – Reagan's public expression of thanks to his Democratic

predecessor became a demonstration of bipartisan national unity under the umbrella of the U.S. presidency. The same strategy of demonstrating American internal unity in the face of external challenges can be witnessed in Eisenhower's first inaugural address, a speech that in content and style very much resembles that of Eisenhower's predecessor Truman.

Given the fact that presidential campaigns are often fought tenaciously and that modern campaigns have a tendency to "go negative," expressing gratitude to the defeated political opponent becomes a rhetorical balancing act. Reagan, for example, had criticized the Carter administration in his nomination acceptance speech for providing only "mediocre leadership" and described it as "drift[ing] from one crisis to the next." Reagan had even asked whether the nation "[could] survive the Carter policies of national defense" ("Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination"). Yet, given the potential and real division of the electorate that presidential campaigns unavoidably create, presidential acknowledgments of their predecessors play an important and unifying role, making it difficult to dismiss them as hypocritical. As described in Chapter 3, the reconstitution of the American nation is a central function of the inaugural address, and the gracious references to the predecessor or the opponent in the presidential election campaign play an important symbolic role in achieving this goal.

Yet despite their mostly conciliatory nature, allusions to presidential predecessors and their political positions undoubtedly also have a critical dimension. Entering into a quasi-dialog with the predecessor allows the new president to sharpen his own profile and to focus on his own political agenda by contrasting it with the decisions made by his predecessor. Thus, Clinton's inauguration as a whole represents a symbolic negation of the Republican administrations of Reagan and George H. W. Bush (see also the deliberate visual contrast to the Eisenhower years established in Kennedy's inaugural described in Chapter 2). Clinton's physical presence and attitude, the future-oriented tone in his speech (the "vision thing" that George H. W. Bush had ridiculed during the campaign), and his open imitation of Kennedy all stand in direct and deliberate opposition to the political and personal style of George H. W. Bush. Bush, for his part, had distanced himself not only from the policies of Reagan (see below), but also explicitly from the glamorous style of Clinton's role model Kennedy, saying: "Some see leadership as high drama, and the sound of trumpets calling, and sometimes it is that. But I see history as a book with many pages, and each day we fill a page with acts of hopefulness and meaning" (Bush, "Inaugural Address" 3).

A critical dialog with the predecessor is by no means restricted to political constellations in which the new and the old president hail from different political parties. Thus, while George H. W. Bush in his inaugural address explicitly thanks

the man whom he had served as vice president for eight years ("There is a man here who has earned a lasting place in our hearts and in our history. President Reagan, on behalf of our Nation, I thank you for the wonderful things that you have done for America." [1]), he also distances himself clearly from Reagan's social policies, stating only a few paragraphs later:

We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world. My friends, we have work to do. There are the homeless, lost and roaming. There are the children who have nothing, no love, no normalcy. There are those who cannot free themselves of enslavement to whatever addiction – drugs, welfare, the demoralization that rules the slums. (2)

The patrician stance of Bush, markedly different from the plebeian prose of both Reagan and Clinton, is clearly visible in this quotation. To signal his change of course and also to demonstrate his willingness to cooperate with the Democratically controlled Congress, Bush enlists the help of the Democratic *übertvater* Franklin D. Roosevelt in his criticism of the consumption-driven attitude of the 1980s, frankly telling the American people: "My friends, we are not the sum of our possessions. They are not the measure of our lives. In our hearts we know what matters. We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account" (2).

In his first inaugural address in 1933, a time dominated by the effects of the Great Depression, Roosevelt had used similar words to chide the greed of the 1920s, saying: "Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits" ("First Inaugural" 12).

Allusions to predecessors that go beyond the expression of gratitude on behalf of the American nation are usually implicit and, as shown in the above examples, aim at establishing a critical rather than affirmative dialog with the political ideas and style of the respective predecessor.

In the inaugural addresses of re-elected presidents or of presidents confirmed in the office, we also find consistent examples of autotextuality, i.e., the explicit or implicit allusions to the first inauguration or the first inaugural address. This second type of president-to-president allusions can be found in all second inaugural addresses in the post-World War II era. Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush, as well as Johnson, all explicitly refer to their first day as president. The style of the rhetorical retrospective ranges from the sober, as in the case of Eisenhower ("We meet again, as upon a like moment four years ago, and again you have witnessed my solemn oath of service to you." [60]), to the melodramatic,

as Johnson's 1965 address ("I will repeat today what I said on that sorrowful day in November 1963: 'I will lead and I will do the best I can'" [74]).

In most cases, though, the look back to the first inauguration serves as a public self-assessment of the president's first term in office. Here, not surprisingly, the re-elected presidents hand themselves perfect or near-perfect scorecards for the work they have done, while congratulating the electorate for the wise decision it made four years ago. As the following example from Clinton's 1997 speech shows, a retrospective inaugural address shares many aspects with presidential farewell addresses and even State of the Union addresses, albeit without the latter's abundance of statistics and policy details:

When last we gathered, our march to this new future seemed less certain than it does today. We vowed then to set a clear course to renew our nation. In these four years, we have been touched by tragedy, exhilarated by challenge, strengthened by achievement. America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation. Once again, our economy is the strongest on Earth. Once again, we are building stronger families, thriving communities, better educational opportunities, a cleaner environment. Problems that once seemed destined to deepen now bend to our efforts: our streets are safer and record numbers of our fellow citizens have moved from welfare to work.
(*"Second Inaugural"* 44)

In addition to serving as a self-congratulatory pat on the presidential back, the celebration of the presidential re-election – an important historical achievement – serves the purpose of reminding the nation of its own and the administration's unfinished business, i.e., political goals to be achieved during the second presidential term. This reminder of the renewed presidential mandate is of particular significance in instances where the legislative branch is partly or entirely controlled by the opposition party, as was the case for Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush. In such a context, the presidential stock-taking is only a momentary exercise that aims at stressing the urgent need to continue the political work of the first four years, a strategy pursued, for example, by Nixon in 1973: "When we met here 4 years ago, America was bleak in spirit, depressed by the prospect of seemingly endless war abroad and of destructive conflict at home. As we meet here today, we stand on the threshold of a new era of peace in the world" (*"Second Inaugural"* 12).

The peace in Vietnam to which Nixon refers, and with it America's role as "peacemaker" that Nixon had assumed in his first inaugural address, had not yet been completely achieved (the Paris peace talks did not conclude until a few days after Nixon's second inaugural).

In his second inaugural address, Reagan repeats the theme of a new beginning that he used in his 1981 speech (which in many ways resembled his final campaign speech) to stress the importance of political continuity:

When I took this oath four years ago, I did so in a time of economic stress.... Four years ago, I spoke to you of a new beginning and we have accomplished that. But in another sense, our new beginning is a continuation of that beginning created two centuries ago when, for the first time in history, government, the people said, was not our master, it is our servant; its only power that which we the people allow it to have. (55)

Reagan thus embeds his presidency and the continuation of the new beginning into the larger history of the American nation. The above passage expresses Reagan's nostalgic interpretation of the American Dream. For Reagan, fulfilling the dream, and with it achieving future economic success, depends greatly on the nation's ability to return to its Republican roots and values, an attitude clearly reflected in Reagan's anti-federal discourse.

A third group of references to presidential pre-texts consists of quotational and onomastic allusions to those known as the Great Presidents of the political party of the current officeholder. The evocation of these revered party figures is significantly more extensive on the part of Democratic presidents. One reason for this partisan lopsidedness is the fact that, with the towering exception of Lincoln and the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the Republican Party did not have a single presidential "star" comparable to Democrats like Wilson, Roosevelt or Kennedy. As mentioned, the major exception here is of course Lincoln, yet as I will show later, Lincoln tends to be described as a largely party-transcending president in the inaugural addresses of his successors.

The most important Republican presidents of the second half of the twentieth century are often considered boring (Eisenhower) or have been discredited by their own political actions or lack of political success (see Nixon or George H. W. Bush). In the future, Reagan's speeches might become a treasure chest for partisan Republican quotations. The presidency of George W. Bush seems to support this possibility.⁹⁷ Already in Bush's first presidential sentence, we see parallels with Reagan: "The peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history, yet common in our country. With a simple oath, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings" ("First Inaugural" 1).

Twenty years earlier, Reagan had opened his own first inaugural address as follows:

97. The discourse employed by the Republican vice presidential nominee in the 2008 presidential campaign, Sarah Palin, also showed consistent allusions to the Great Communicator.

To a few of us here today, this is a solemn and most momentous occasion; and yet, in the history of our Nation, it is a commonplace occurrence. The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place as it has for almost two centuries and few of us stop to think how unique we really are.

(1)

The rhetorical bond between George W. Bush and Reagan is also visible in Bush's adaptation of the type of Manichean discourse that was the cornerstone of Reagan's rhetorical strategy in the 1980s (see also the use of the term "evil" in presidential discourse as described in Austerhöhl 2009). Another indication of Bush's imitation of Reagan's discursive style is that both George W. Bush and Reagan have a penchant for quoting the British war premier Winston Churchill. Allusions to Churchill must be seen as a strategic move by Republican presidents, allowing them to evoke the emotionally and patriotically charged time of the Second World War and the heroic struggle against both Nazism and Communism without having to pay too much rhetorical tribute to the Democratic war presidents Roosevelt and Truman.

Among Democratic presidents it is Franklin D. Roosevelt, the nation's only four-term president and, according to numerous rankings, one of America's three great presidents,⁹⁸ who is the main focus of the intertextual references. In his inaugural address, Truman, for example, refers repeatedly to Roosevelt's 1940 State of the Union address, the so-called Four Freedoms speech, stating, for example: "We are aided by all who wish to live in freedom from fear.... We are aided by all who desire freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom to live their own lives for useful ends" (15). And Clinton, who after his election in 1992 had Roosevelt's old office desk put into the Oval Office, quotes from a 1932 campaign speech by Roosevelt, saying, "[l]et us resolve to make our Government a place for what Franklin Roosevelt called bold, persistent experimentation" (2). The metaphorical description of poverty as a national army – a strategy developed in Roosevelt's depression discourse – appears in the inaugural addresses of four post-World War II Democratic presidents: Truman ("ancient enemies" ["Inaugural Address" 115]), Kennedy ("the common enemies of man" ["Inaugural Address" 2]), Johnson ("this injustice to our people, this waste of our resources, was our real enemy" ["Inaugural Address" 72]), and Carter ("our wars against poverty" ["Inaugural Address" 3]).

Despite the partisan claim to Roosevelt or other great presidents in general, these presidential icons are also alluded to by presidents from the other party.

98. Alongside Washington and Lincoln, Roosevelt consistently ranks among the top three of American presidents (see, for example, A. Schlesinger 1997 or C-SPAN 2009).

As we have seen in the passage taken from George H. W. Bush's inaugural above, Roosevelt's speeches become pre-texts for Republican presidents as well. Nixon, like Bush, refers to Roosevelt's first inaugural, stating:

Standing in this same place a third of a century ago, Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed a nation ravaged by depression and gripped in fear. He could say in surveying the Nation's troubles: "They concern, thank God, only material things." Our crisis today is in reverse. We find ourselves rich in goods, but ragged in spirit; reaching with magnificent precision for the moon, but falling into raucous discord on earth. ("First Inaugural" 1-2)

Reagan refers to Roosevelt numerous times, mentioning him explicitly in five of his seven State of the Union addresses. Roosevelt's memory is evoked particularly with regard to his leadership during the Great Depression and the Second World War, two of America's defining challenges (the Revolution and the Civil War being the other two significant events). Roosevelt's role in overcoming the economic and social hardships of the 1930s and the defeat of the fascist axis powers in World War II are also remembered in Bill Clinton's 1995 State of the Union address: "[It has fallen] [t]o Franklin Roosevelt, to fight the failure and pain of the Great Depression, and to win our country's great struggle against fascism" (76).

On account of his unique twelve-year presidency and his extraordinary role in leading the nation through the economic crisis of the Great Depression and four years of global war, Roosevelt loses his partisan coloring and becomes an unassailable intertextual authority for Democrats and Republicans alike. This fact is particularly noticeable in times of national crisis when references to the great challenges that the nation faced and overcame during Roosevelt's time in office aim at calling for national unity and instilling confidence in the American people. This intertextual function is exemplified in George W. Bush's speech during the remembrance service in Washington's National Cathedral on September 14, 2001: "Today, we feel what Franklin Roosevelt called the warm courage of national unity. This is a unity of every faith, and every background" ("National Day of Prayer" 1109). Three days after the 9/11 terror attacks, Roosevelt's statement, from his first inaugural address in 1933, becomes a *consolatio* for the American people.

Even more frequent than references to Roosevelt are allusions to America's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln. Here, his deeds are recounted as often as his words are quoted. As Lincoln is considered the "savior of the nation" (Heidekind 2000, 249), onomastic allusions to him and the memories of the Civil War that his name evokes always serve to remind Americans of the importance of national unity. Nixon, for example, quotes from Lincoln's first inaugural address, asking Americans "to listen to 'the better angels of our nature,'" to overcome the nation's current "crisis of the spirit" ("First Inaugural" 2). Clinton refers to the same line

in his 1994 State of the Union Address, urging Americans, and his political opponents, to work together:

But the American people, they just came together. They rose to the occasion, neighbor helping neighbor, strangers risking life and limb to save total strangers, showing the better angels of our nature. Let us not reserve the better angels only for natural disasters, leaving our deepest and most profound problems to petty political fighting. (135)

Lincoln spoke of "the better angels of our nature" in his first inaugural address on the eve of the Civil War. In that speech, Lincoln appeals to the compassion and solidarity of American citizens, saying:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. ("First Inaugural")

Allusions to the texts of the "literary genius" (Barzun 1960) also always serve an aesthetic purpose. This strategy of increasing the rhetorical value of one's own speech is apparent in allusions to another well-known passage from Lincoln, the phrase "We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth" from his Annual Message to Congress from December 1, 1862.⁹⁹ References to this passage highlight the important role of "the martyred Christ of democracy's passion play" (Rossiter 1956, 102) in the context of American exceptionalism (see Lipset 1996 and Madsen 1998). Both Eisenhower, in his second inaugural, and Kennedy pick up Lincoln's "last best hope," assigning, however, this honorary title to the United Nations as an explicit sign of solidarity and support. In his 1970 State of the Union address, Nixon reclaims the attribute for the United States, saying: "Its [America's] destiny of being the world's best hope for liberty" (16). In the discourse of Reagan, Lincoln becomes a staple element of a neo-Republican exceptionalist discourse. The allusion does not only appear in Reagan's second inaugural address ("we are all Americans pledged to carry on this last, best hope of man on Earth" [57]) but

99. Interestingly, Lincoln's speech was most likely inspired by the inaugural address of Thomas Jefferson, who also called for national unity, saying: "I know, indeed, that some honest men fear that a republican government can not be strong, that this Government is not strong enough; but would the honest patriot, in the full tide of successful experiment, abandon a government which has so far kept us free and firm on the theoretic and visionary fear that this Government, *the world's best hope*, may by possibility want energy to preserve itself?" (Jefferson, "First Inaugural;" emphasis mine).

also, and with slight variation, in his speeches on his “Program for Economic Recovery” less than one month after his inauguration (“the last, best hope of man on Earth” [108]), in a speech that combines the American invasion of Grenada and the bombing of a U.S. marine base in Lebanon (“that last, best hope of a better future” [“Events in Lebanon and Grenada” 1522]), in the Evil Empire speech (“this experiment in liberty, this last, best hope of man” [“National Association of Evangelicals” 360]) as well as in his 1983 and 1984 State of the Union addresses, in both of which he refers to the United States as “this last best hope of man on Earth” (“State of the Union Address 1982” 79 and “State of the Union Address 1984” 93).¹⁰⁰

The extensive allusions to Abraham Lincoln are motivated by the speaker’s intention to signal to his audience the discursive links and parallels that he is not merely Lincoln’s successor in office but, more importantly, in spirit and status as well. Rossiter stresses the increase in presidential authority implicit in such an equation in the following way: “And who, then, can measure the strength that is given to the President because he holds Lincoln’s office, lives in Lincoln’s house, and walks in Lincoln’s way” (1956, 102–103).

The fact that for his second inaugural, Reagan used a table that was originally built for Lincoln as a Bible stand (see Architect of the Capitol 2011) underlines Rossiter’s statement. An even more dramatic – one might say, tacky – reference to the hereditary nature of presidential succession occurs in Theodore Roosevelt’s 1905 inauguration. Here, Roosevelt was carrying a ring containing a strand of hair taken from Lincoln after his assassination.

In contemporary U.S. political discourse, three further documents associated with Lincoln play a most prominent role. These are the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural. These pre-texts have gained a degree of sacredness and devotion comparable to that of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.¹⁰¹ They are particularly prominent pre-texts in domestic discourse, especially in speeches that are critical

100. Other occasions on which Reagan alludes to Lincoln’s “last best hope” include his remarks at the memorial service for the crew of the Challenger on Jan. 31, the swearing-in of Chief Justice William Rehnquist on September 26, 1986, as well as a speech on the occasion of the presentation of the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Jan. 19, 1989 – the Great Communicator’s farewell address in all but the name.

101. The importance of these documents, two of which form part of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, are discussed in Austerhöhl, forthcoming. This publication also analyzes the place of American memorial architecture in presidential discourse and discusses the use of references to American sites of memory.

of and directed at changing existing social, economic and political circumstances (see Chapter 6 for a detailed analysis).

5.3 Functions of presidential allusions

Given their significant frequency and stability, quotational, onomastic, as well as titular allusions to presidential pre-texts have to be considered constitutive elements of presidential inaugural addresses. Their pragmatic functions do include the "rehearsal of communal values drawn from the past" that Campbell and Jamieson have identified in their seminal study (1990, 15), but they also go beyond that. The functions of allusions within the presidential intertext are manifold, comprising stylistic-aesthetic, political-cultural, ideological, and personal motivations.

First, in any kind of political discourse, allusions always fulfill an aesthetic function. Combining *imitatio verum* and *imitatio veritas* portrays the speaker as cultured and eloquent. Thus, in the context of institutionalized celebratory discourse, allusions, be they of a quotational, onomastic, or titular nature, always serve to elevate the status of the speaker by placing him or her in the halo of the texts, places, or people alluded to.

Going beyond this mere ornamental function, allusions in presidential discourse also aim at supporting two general functions of political language, namely that of "interpretation and linkage" and "action stimulation" (see Graber 1985, 42–44). In this context, one-to-one references aim, on the one hand, at creating an emotional framework supporting the American system of government in general and, on the other hand, at constructing specific situational contexts that favor a specific way of action. Allusions are at the same time general and specific, aiming at explaining and legitimizing certain decisions that have been or will be made by the president.

With regard to their intertextual intensity, the pre-texts alluded to in presidential inaugural addresses form a hierarchy with clearly identifiable text categories. The most important group of texts alluded to comprise the primary texts of America's civil religion, above all the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. By citing these sacred documents, the newly elected or re-elected president publicly demonstrates his worthiness as the high priest of American civil religion. Given the fact that one of the most important cultural functions of the inaugural genre is to serve as a collective expression of faith, the invocation of the so-called Freedom Charter – the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights – is a compulsory element of the official beginning of the president's new term.

Referring to the symbolic keepers of the American creed becomes part of the nation's celebration of itself, a major purpose of any inaugural address, and serves as the basis for the continued confirmation of America's exceptional status that this celebration entails. In this context, the uniqueness of the fundamental values of the American system expressed in the nation's sacred documents becomes the focal point to which the presidential speaker guides the audience. Featuring prominently in this strategy is the continuous celebration of the concepts of freedom and self-government, and the highly positively charged unification formula "We the People."

As I have shown, allusions to the Declaration of Independence are significantly more frequent than allusions to the U.S. Constitution. Given the dramatic setting of the inauguration, the Declaration's mythical significance for the American nation and the core elements of the creed that it expresses make it a much more appropriate pre-text than the more sober, legalistic Constitution.

The Declaration's symbolic significance is particularly visible as part of the rhetorical confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, when Truman and Eisenhower converted the Declaration into an anti-communist pamphlet, injecting it with a global significance and validity that transcend its national origins.

With Kennedy, the Declaration started to lose some of its pragmatic importance as a presidential pre-text. Kennedy deliberately tried to depart from the Cold War rhetoric of his immediate predecessors, and Johnson and Nixon also avoided the bi-polar perspective that the early post-war inaugurals reflected. Alluding to the Declaration of Independence, a document that had become an instrument of confrontation during the Truman and Eisenhower inaugurations, would have been semantically and pragmatically opposed to the signals for co-operation and negotiation present in the inaugural addresses of the 1960s and 1970s.

During the presidencies of Reagan and Clinton, the Declaration of Independence celebrated a renaissance as a presidential pre-text, but, as in Johnson's inaugural, within a clearly domestic framework. Both Reagan and Clinton allude to Jefferson's philosophy of equality and opportunity to support their claims for greater self-sufficiency and responsibility (Reagan) and for greater social equality (Clinton). In the case of Clinton, we can also see how the Declaration of Independence and the values it embodies become the narrative basis of Clinton's personal success story (see Austermühl 2002).

The U.S. Constitution, the nation's second founding document, is less frequently quoted than the Declaration of Independence in inaugural addresses, yet its presence is clearly evident. The Constitution's role as the mistress of the inauguration ceremony is generally explicitly acknowledged by the speakers, and the oath of office is taken directly from Article II, Section 7.

More focused and deliberate allusions to the Constitution as a source of authority can be found in speeches that deal in more detail with the concept of the federal government and its powers. In this context, references to passages such as "We the People" or "a more perfect union" serve on the one hand to argue for a restriction of the powers of the federal government and for more self-reliance on the part of the citizenry, and on the other hand to demand the improvement of social conditions. The following "dialog" between Clinton and Reagan shows that Clinton not only distances himself from a merely passive role of the federal government, favored by Reagan and the Republicans, but also from the big-government ideas of more liberally minded fellow Democrats. Clinton states:

Today we can declare: Government is not the problem, and government is not the solution. We, the American people, we are the solution. Our founders understood that well and gave us a democracy strong enough to endure for centuries, flexible enough to face our common challenges and advance our common dreams in each new day. ("Second Inaugural" 44)

Twelve years earlier, Reagan had said:

[O]ur new beginning is a continuation of that beginning created two centuries ago when, for the first time in history, government, the people said, was not our master, it is our servant; its only power that which we the people allow it to have. Let us resolve that we the people will build an American opportunity society in which all of us – white and black, rich and poor, young and old – will go forward together arm in arm. ("Second Inaugural" 55)

The importance of the Constitution as a source of allusions in presidential speeches has significantly decreased since the beginning of the twentieth century. This can already be seen in the number of times that the Constitution is explicitly mentioned in inaugural addresses. The reasons for this development can primarily be found in a redefinition of the office of the presidency and the change in the power balance between the Executive and Legislative that resulted from this redefinition. Initiated by Theodore Roosevelt (and pioneered by Jackson and Lincoln), intensified by Wilson, and completed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, this redefinition of the U.S. presidency enabled the Executive to become the dominant force in the American political system. The Legislative, originally favored by the Constitution, saw its significance reduced by a number of developments, above all the internationalization of politics, the growth of the presidential bureaucracy, and, not to be forgotten, the technologically enabled rhetorical presidency. As the American president's national and international power increased, the Constitution, being an "unpresidential" document, lost some of its relevance and authority.

Another reason for the reduced importance of the Constitution as a presidential pre-text is its lack of the dramatic and mystical components that are inherent to the Declaration of Independence as a revolutionary tool, as the philosophical basis of the American experiment, and as the origin of America's exceptional status. Dan Nimmo and James Combs describe the function of the exceptional myth as follows:

[B]asically the myth fulfills a deep collective need for legitimacy, giving the present significant meaning by linking it with a mythical past. In the unfolding political drama, recurrent crusades and challenges simply make the present the latest act of the play. It is an almost universal impulse for political cultures to make government something more than a mundane administrative matter, "sanctifying" it by placing it within a mystical sociopolitical "sacred canopy." (1980, 65)

By alluding to the founding of the nation and quoting from the founding documents, the presidential speakers utilize the power of the Declaration of Independence's revolutionary birth. The Constitution, produced only after a complex and drawn-out drafting and ratification process and still changing due to constitutional amendments and Supreme Court decisions, lacks a precise, tangible, and dramatic origin.

Nevertheless, allusions to the Constitution in presidential discourse are still significant, especially in regard to the creation of national unity. In the civil rights discourse of Eisenhower and Johnson, for example, the Constitution features alongside the covenant metaphor of John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity* or the Pledge of Allegiance to overcome racial and social tensions among the populace.

The allusions to the founding documents and related praise for the founding generation also repeatedly serve as a reminder for the American people not to forget the national covenant of their ancestors. Thus, allusions to American civil religious texts become a means of affirming the country's political system: "The desire for legitimation provokes a political order to turn to the institutions that are the guardians of transcendent values for sanctification. Usually, this means religious institutions" (*ibid.*).

Especially in times of crisis, and regardless of whether that crisis is real or constructed, this reminder becomes an appeal to return to the sacred unity of the puritan-republican age of innocence, while less innocent aspects of that era are omitted. The return to the nation's original values and the political principles become a cure-all for current economic, political, and social problems. In this context, for example, Johnson's allusion to the Bill of Rights or Clinton's allusions to the Emancipation Proclamation clearly signal to the American people

that they should live up to the basic principles of equality and unity expressed in these texts.

Similarly, Reagan's numerous allusions to the Pledge of Allegiance and use of "We the People" highlight the speaker's religiously charged, anti-federal patriotism. The fact that allusions to the same pre-texts pursue different pragmatic goals becomes clear when one compares the discourses of Reagan and Clinton. Reagan also alludes to the authority of the Emancipation Proclamation, yet uses it in the context of his "new American emancipation" to demand greater power for the individual and federal states in contrast to the federal government. Like Reagan, Clinton refers to "We the People" in several speeches, yet he uses the passage taken from the preamble of the Constitution as an appeal for an increased sense of community. In both cases, the regular use of "We the People" has a populist motive, i.e., to establish the speaker as part of the people.

Independent of the number of occurrences of allusions to either text, it is important not to forget the close relationship of and functional connection between the two founding documents. As Fields points out:

The duality at the core of American identity is not, however, a simple opposition that pits one revered document against another. Both the Declaration and the Constitution contain a similar double-mindedness and are to a remarkable degree – intentionally or not – collaborative in developing the theme of being both one and many. (1996, 3)

For Fields, both documents are representations of "our double devotion to being independent *and* being together," symbolizing the American motto *e pluribus unum*: "Above all else, our documents suggest we long to be whole, but on the condition that, in that wholeness, we do not lose our individual selves" (ibid., 4; emphasis in the original).

While allusions to the nation's sacred documents generally represent a confirmation of America's special mission and thus a celebration of its own system, intertextual references to other American presidents pursue a more personal goal. In this type of self-serving allusion, the speakers refer particularly to historically exceptional presidents such as Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and, as the only president of the modern era, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Hinckley explains the selective allusions to these presidential successors as follows: "In associating themselves with Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson, and not the recent presidents, even the relatively popular ones, they give the impression that it is not a problem of government they are involved with, but a carrying on of a patriotic spirit and a cultural tradition" (1990, 63–64).

By presenting themselves as part of a political elite and the latest addition to the nation's chain of chosen individuals, newly or re-elected presidents do not only partake in the historic-patriotic glory of the quoted, but at the same time also manage to leave current politics behind. In addition, the time- and space-transcending echoes of the predecessors stress the non-political, bipartisan nature of the presidential office. The desire to establish a special relationship between the quoter and the quotee that is at the core of all allusions to predecessors is nowhere more evident than in Clinton's frequent references to Kennedy.

Allusions to other presidents from another political party also serve to emphasize the non-partisanship of the presidential office, a fact that is often stressed on inauguration day and that supports the reconstruction of unity among the voters after the presidential election campaign.

In addition to the more general purpose of affirming and praising America's national identity, the intra-presidential allusions described above play an important role in motivating the populace and in justifying more specific political actions. Especially in times of crisis, these texts and their symbolic meaning are exploited to support the political agenda of the speaker. Thus, more domestically oriented speeches dealing with social issues, such as Johnson's inaugural address or Clinton's second inaugural, are dominated by allusions to Lincoln and the American civil war (with the god term "union") or to the Emancipation Proclamation ("liberty") as well as the civil rights movement by Martin Luther King. In times of economic crisis, for example, in George H. W. Bush's inaugural address, we repeatedly find allusions to the Depression and Franklin D. Roosevelt's moral leadership. Memories of the economic crisis of the 1930s often serve as a warning against purely materialistic policy positions, especially during an economic downturn. It is thus not surprising that the Republican presidents Nixon (in his first inaugural) and George H. W. Bush both quote a passage from Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address: "They concern, thank God, only material things" (11). There are no such appeals for humility and moderation in boom years.

Because of his position as America's commander-in-chief during World War II, allusions to Franklin D. Roosevelt can be found in inaugural addresses that have a strong focus on security policy. The same applies to the British wartime premier Winston Churchill, whose speeches represent a much-respected volume in the library of presidential pre-texts. Both Roosevelt and Churchill epitomize the steadfastness of the nation and its leadership in times of crisis and conflict, with which American presidents underline the firmness of their resolve and their willingness to use military force (see Chapter 4).

As Roosevelt and Churchill are the prototypical anti-Chamberlains, allusions to them are particularly prominent when the country is facing totalitarian threats. Reagan's anti-communist discourse, for example, contains numerous references

to the British premier. In his 1982 State of the Union address, Reagan, speaking in the American Capitol, said: "From this podium, Winston Churchill asked the free world to stand together against the onslaught of aggression. Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of a day of infamy and summoned a nation to arms" (72).

And seven years later, in the same location, George H. W. Bush also recalled the Englishman:

On February 9th, 1941, just 48 years ago tonight, Sir Winston Churchill took to the airwaves during Britain's hour of peril. He'd received from President Roosevelt a hand-carried letter quoting Longfellow's famous poem: "Sail on, O Ship of State! Sail on, O Union, strong and great! Humanity with all its fears, With all the hopes of future years, Is hanging breathless on thy fate!" And Churchill responded on this night by radio broadcast to a nation at war, but he directed his words to Franklin Roosevelt. "We shall not fail or falter," he said. "We shall not weaken or tire. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job."

("Administration Goals" 80)

This call for perseverance, here applied to the economic difficulties of the late 1980s, also dominated George W. Bush's speech from September 20, 2001, nine days after the mass murders in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Invoking Churchill's resolution, he said: "We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail" ("Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11" 1144).

When Kennedy named Churchill an honorary citizen of the United States on April 9, 1963, he said in his speech, "in the dark days and darker nights when Britain stood alone – and most men save Englishmen despaired of England's life – he mobilized the English language and sent it into battle" ("Conferring Honorary Citizenship" 315).

This mobilization was never more dramatic than in Churchill's speech before the British House of Commons on July 4, 1940:

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender...

("We Shall Fight on the Beaches")

The *appeasement* topos, which represents a constant, highly negative element of the security policy passages of the speeches analyzed (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion), is always connected to America's role as defender of freedom, as Ronald Reagan illustrates: "As for the enemies of freedom, those who are

potential adversaries, they will be reminded that peace is the highest aspiration of the American people. We will negotiate for it, sacrifice for it; we will not surrender for it – now or ever” (“First Inaugural” 3).

Reagan unmistakably recalls Kennedy’s speech on West Berlin (“Berlin Crisis”) on July 25, 1961, and his 1962 State of the Union address, in which Kennedy placed the god term “freedom” in opposition to the devil term “appeasement.”

In these last 6 months the Allies have made it unmistakably clear that our presence in Berlin, our free access thereto, and the freedom of two million West Berliners would not be surrendered either to force or through appeasement - and to maintain those rights and obligations, we are prepared to talk, when appropriate, and to fight, if necessary. (“State of the Union Address 1962” 13)

References to the Cold War, World War II or the Great Depression are examples of another category of intertextual allusions in presidential speeches, i.e., references to core coordinates of the collective American memory. Of particular importance are events and eras as well as onomastic allusions to specific, positively connotated sites of memory.

Like allusions to key elements of the American civil religion, intertextual references to speeches of other presidents or extraordinary personalities such as Churchill or King serve to perpetuate the recurrent themes of presidential inaugural addresses discussed in Chapter 3. “The record of past speeches,” says Hinckley, “becomes the vehicle through which ideas and phrases are carried on across time” (1990, 23). The continued affirmation of a special American identity is certainly the most significant and often also the most obvious function of presidential intertextuality. Every new allusion enhances the discursive net created by America’s chief executives and thus solidifies and perpetuates the self-conception of the nation.

Yet, as the discussion above demonstrates, the functions of the various types of allusions found in presidential discourse clearly go beyond civil religious reflexes, the narcissism of an exceptional nation, or the self-adulation of the elected president. The allusions’ affirmative or critical potential allows presidents to sharpen their ideological and individual profile themselves, a fact that gives allusions a more programmatic dimension and reduces the monologicity of epideictic discourse usually found in the inaugural genre. The act of alluding, especially of alluding to former presidents, is thus not so much characterized by the standardized affirmation of the pre-text’s contents as by political criticism and ideological and individual differentiation.

“Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans” (1), said Kennedy

in his inaugural address, and in doing so, he not only sent Eisenhower into retirement but also sent a clear signal to the nation and the world alike that he would bring a new style of governing to the White House.

While Kennedy's allusion to Eisenhower aimed at contradistinction, Bill Clinton's references to Kennedy are devoid of criticism and dominated by a wish to be identified with the pre-text author. Clinton affirms Kennedy's departure signal, stating "we have heard the trumpet" (3), positions himself as Kennedy's immediate intellectual successor, and, through the analogy to the Eisenhower years, discredits the politics of his predecessor George H. W. Bush at the same time.

It is exactly this pragmatic dimension, i.e., the renunciation of political and ideological notions through a critique of the pre-text, in which the subversive potential of allusions is displayed. This form of intertextual references develops into dialogs that reach across time and place, a phenomenon that, as I stated above, is clearly discernible in the discussion about the role of the government. The departure from primarily affirmative replications of presidential pre-texts is an exception in the strategic use of allusions, yet, as I will show in the next chapter, their norm-defying nature makes these instances of one-to-one references particularly intense.

CHAPTER 6

The Great American Scaffold

In 1957, the National Historical Publications Commission, a statutory body created by the United States Congress in 1934, recommended the establishment of an official series in which “presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available” (U.S. Government Printing Office 2013). This series became known as the *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, and its main purpose is to provide “a uniform compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents.” In the foreword to the papers covering his presidency, Harry S. Truman, whose compiled public papers represented the series’ first volume, acknowledges the historical, political, and cultural relevance of the *Public Papers*, and hence of presidential discourse in general:

The importance of this series lies in the extraordinary character of the office of President of the United States. A President’s written and spoken words can command national and international attention if he has within him the power to attract and hold that attention. It is partly through the use of this power that leadership arises, events are molded, and administrations take their shape. It is this power, quite as much as powers written into the Constitution, that gives to the papers of Presidents their peculiar and revealing importance.

(Truman 1961b, v)

Truman’s perspective, an understandably “presidential” one, directly links the significance of presidential discourse as an instrument of national and international leadership to the status of the American presidency. In doing so, he echoes Wilson’s claim for the uniqueness of the presidential office. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Wilson stated: “There is but one national voice in the country and that is the voice of the President.... When he speaks in his true character, he speaks for no special interest” (1961, 67). Like Truman, Wilson – considered by many to be the father of the rhetorical presidency – sees discourse as a means for leadership: “A leader according to Wilson, is preeminently a public speaker” (Thurrow 1996, 23).

Within the context of political leadership through public discourse, the status of the language user can serve as an indicator of the effect of his or her utterances. This notion is often highlighted by discourse analysts. Jürgen Link (2009), for example, defines discourse as institutional talk with a power effect, and Ruth Wodak

states, “language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it” (2001, 10). Seen in the context of domestic and international politics, there are arguably few people more powerful than the President of the United States of America.

According to Michel Foucault (2002), power and hegemony are based on a shared and normalized system of beliefs. Within this framework, the dialectical relationship between presidential discourse and presidential power becomes apparent. On the one hand, presidential discourse contributes greatly to the establishment of a shared belief system – including the definition of the beliefs themselves; on the other hand, the cultural common ground established through presidential discourse reaffirms the cultural and systemic power of the presidency. Presidential speeches represent, as Thomas Ricento writes, “texts of power elites ... [that] command the most attention (by virtue of their privileged access to fora in which to air their views) and whose views are most influential in the hegemonic construction of mainstream American identity” (2003, 615). This construction of identity is one of the main functions of presidential discourse, and I will discuss this aspect in greater details below.

The manifold intertextual links existing between the speeches of American presidents and between them and other elements of American cultural *bibliothèque* strengthen the power of the presidency and contribute to a standardization of public presidential discourse. As Beasley writes:

One almost has to marvel at the rhetorical genius of the U.S. presidency. It is as if an automatic, institutional impulse forces itself on the presidents, regardless of their circumstances, party affiliation, or specific legislative agenda, to respond similarly to wildly divergent social and political needs. (2001, 30)

Beasley’s work focuses on definitions of citizenship through presidential discourse but, in my mind, her statement describes the realities of American presidential discourse in general as well. She continues: “We might ask questions about how established patterns of discourse continue to produce certain imperatives for U.S. presidents” (ibid., 33). The different types of presidential intertextuality discussed in this study help answer Beasley’s questions.

As I have shown, the combined discourse of American presidents represents a multifaceted textual universe, whose elements are linked to one another by a number of intertextual devices. The overall framework of presidential discourse is controlled by historically grown norms of presidential language use. As discussed in Chapter 2, these norms, which, while fluctuating in the first century of the American republic, have remained stable since the advent of the modern presidency, have a number formal, syntactical, semantic, and pragmatic consequences. Overall, the elements making up the phenomenon of discursive intertextuality

have led to a democratization of presidential discourse and have aided in establishing a clear power hierarchy within the American system of government that sees the chief executive as the dominant player. In addition, presidential discourse contributes significantly to the effort of creating an image of heroic presidential leadership that strongly favors unilateral executive action (see below).

Within the overall framework established by the discursive level of presidential intertextuality, other forms of intertextual references unfold – all of them instances of the discursive imperatives mentioned by Beasley.

The next level of intertextuality – the second concentric circle in our typology – consists of the normative demands exercised by the various presidential genres. As discussed in Section 2.5, generic intertextuality is a situation-based and function-oriented phenomenon that established clear discursive boundaries for the presidential speaker according to the contextual and pragmatic demands of the discursive occasion.

While closely related to generic intertextuality and often overlapping with its features, the next two types of intertextuality – thematic intertextuality and hypertextuality discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively – are transgeneric phenomena and are found in a number of presidential speech types. An analysis of thematic intertextuality points to the continued presences of a stable set of American topoi in presidential speeches, above all in celebratory discourse. Dominant among these eternal topoi are civil religious themes such as the American mission, the exceptional nature of the nation's political system and the uniqueness of its values system.

These thematic clusters become the building blocks of a fourth intertextual type – the *Us-vs.-Them* hypertext. Within the hypertext's formulaic structure, the American themes become flexible discursive fillers aimed at completing the dichotomous template of the *Us-vs.-Them* hypertext.

Allusions, finally, represent the most tangible and visible of the various types of intertextuality discussed in this study. Situated at the core of my typology of presidential intertextuality, they allow for the inclusion of more deliberate, targeted references to selected pre-texts. More than simply ornamental elements, allusions in presidential speeches support the identity creating function of presidential discourse in general and are employed to stimulate action among the populace through the invocation of the nation's sacred texts. Furthermore, the dialogic nature of allusions and their potential for both affirmation and subversion allows presidents to sharpen their ideological and individual profile enabling them to identify themselves with previous presidents. Interestingly, and as I will discuss later in greater detail, presidential allusions offer a way of criticizing the American system from within. Allusion thus can help reduce the monologicity of

presidential discourse and become an instrument of political criticism and ideological and individual differentiation.

We have also seen that presidential discourse in general and the intertextual relations existing within the presidential discourse universe in particular aim at fulfilling a number of complex functions. These functions can be summarized as the production, confirmation, and control of various types of identity. As indicated in the introduction to this study, I expect these identities to cover five different levels, i.e., the national, the systemic, the institutional, the ideological, and the individual. Given the close and rather inseparable link between the American nation and its underlying social system as well as the equally close relationship between ideological and individual constructions of identity in presidential discourse, I propose to look at the functions of presidential discourse in general and of presidential intertextuality in particular as focused on three main areas; (i) the controlled construction of national identity; (ii) the strengthening of the institution of the president; and (iii) the projection of carefully crafted self-images of the presidential as an individual.

The largest of these three areas, the construction of national identity, includes strategies for fostering national unity and the use of negatively charged images of otherness aimed at generating public support and justifying political actions. The definition of the nature of the office of the chief executive and its powers is a truly bi-partisan endeavor, closely linked to self-projected and publicly expected image of the hero president. Identification with selected presidential predecessor through allusions, finally, presents a powerful means of ideological and individual positioning for the presidential speaker, while, as I will show, the same intertextual devices can also be used for the rare expression of criticism of the American system itself.

6.1 Affirming national identity

The central aspect of the presidential intertext – represented by the scaffolding metaphor used in the title of the book – is the creation and affirmation of American national identity. Here, presidential intertextuality works within the overall pragmatic framework of presidential discourse in general, but stresses in particular the transcendental nature of such discourse as forming part of and at the same time contributing to a multidimensional, highly interconnected web of culturally significant texts and topoi. The nature of these texts, the themes that they develop, and the images of selves and others that they portray contribute significantly and continuously to the definition of what it means to be American (and what not). Like a scaffolding, the clearly defined boundaries of the presidential intertext

control the overall form of American national identity, standardizing it and preventing the development of an alternative design of American national identity. As Stuckey explains, presidents

articulate national identity and, to be successful, must do so in ways that will be accepted as obvious, even inevitable.... Enough of us must recognize ourselves in presidential formulations of national identity to legitimate and sustain the projects of national leadership. (2004, 2)

To do so, presidents continuously address a fixed set of beliefs that establish a cultural base for the development of the nation's self-image. At the same time, this common ground also serves as a major unifying factor, central to the stability of the American covenant. As Beasley, building on Benedict Anderson, states, "this image of communion must be continually manufactured, articulated, and maintained to be functional" (2001, 25). As I will show later, the identity creating power of presidential discourse is also closely related to the image of the presidency and its position in American culture.

If, as Campbell and Jamieson posit, "public communication is the media through which the national fabric is ... woven" (2008, 9), then it is safe to say that presidential intertextuality enhances the cultural power of presidential communication. If we further accept the idea of presidential discourse in general and presidential intertextuality in particular as supporting and enhancing presidential power through the promotion of shared and standardized belief systems, the study of this phenomenon inescapably leads us also to the analysis of the iconicity of the U.S. presidency and the cultural power of presidential discourse. "More than for any other participant in the national conversation," writes Stuckey, "the task of articulating the collective culture, like the responsibility for managing the collective action, belongs to the president" (2004, 7). As the leading member of America's political elite, and its most visible representative, the President of the United States is central to the definition of the nature of America's self-understanding.

The recurrent thematic clusters in presidential discourse discussed in Chapter 3 and the hypertextual patterns of self-description identified in Chapter 4, reveal a stable set of beliefs, which, as Stuckey points out, represent "specific visions of national identity, the parameters of which are defined precisely by that which is assumed to be natural, even inevitable. The lack of contestation reveals that which is most widely shared, most constitutive of our shared national identity" (2005, 640–641). Wodak et al. describe these parameters as "a complex of similar conceptions and perceptual schemata, of similar 'emotional dispositions' and attitudes, and of similar behavioural conceptions, which bearers of this 'national identity' share collectively" (1999, 4).

As Ricento explains, a central theme “in the collective American narrative was the ideology of American exceptionalism” (2003, 613). Beasley supports this notion, stating, “the American people’s self-image as ‘God’s chosen people’ ... mak[es] them both unique and united before the rest of the world, much like the picture painted in John Winthrop’s classic *City upon a Hill*” (2001, 28). American exceptionalism, writes Ricento “was cultivated as an important *topoi* in popular and elite discourses about federalism and democracy, and this uniqueness was further constructed in the discourses of manifest destiny with its justification for American expansionism” (2003, 613). Ricento also points to the important role, discussed in Chapter 5, that the nation’s sacred pre-texts play in defining and expressing the nation’s understanding of itself:

Official documents of the U.S. ... such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and important commemorative speeches, such as the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, are source materials employed in the construction of an imagined nation.... Their status as “founding texts” has evolved as part of a national narrative. (ibid., 612)

As I have shown in Chapter 3, the notion of exceptionalism is often expressed in civil religious terms. Referring to Gunnar Myrdal’s (1944) concept of the American creed, Beasley states that ever since the beginning of the American republic, this “rhetoric of mission” (Bercovitch 1978, 8) has been part of the nation’s public and presidential discourse:

U.S. presidents were espousing a strikingly similar set of beliefs as the hallmark of American identity ... describe[ing] them by using civil religious themes to signify a higher, at times somewhat vague, purpose for the United States and its people. By tapping into these themes, presidents have promoted a strikingly ideational model of American identity – based not on biology, heredity, or other characteristics associated with the ancient regime – but one that is instead theoretically open to anyone willing to set aside old beliefs in favour of new ones. (2001, 24–25)

The notion of America as an ideational construct is also stressed by Nathan Glazer, who, quoting Lincoln, states: “We are a nation based not on a common ethnic stock linked by mystic chords of memory, connection, kinship, but rather by common universal ideas” (1993, 17). Concurring with Glazer, Stuckey stresses the contributions made by public discourse to the process of identity creation, saying that “a people’s identity, much like that of their nation, is largely imagined, based less on historical or geographical inevitability and more on the power of rhetoric to form and focus allegiances” (2004, 9). Similarly, Ricento states that “the imaginary complex of ideas that is America is constructed and conveyed in discourse” (2003, 612).

The inseparable link between the nation's image of itself and its political system has been famously described by historian Richard Hofstadter as follows: "It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies, but to be one" (quoted in Lipset 1996, 18). Following this thought, political sociologist Martin Seymour Lipset states: "Being an American ... is an ideological commitment. It is not a matter of birth. Those who reject American values are un-American" (ibid., 31). Like Stuckey, Hofstadter and Lipset see the United States as an example of what Anderson in his 1990 study of nationalism called imagined communities. Picking up Anderson's concept, Wodak et al. explain the prominent role of the public discourse of a nation's political elite in the construction of national unity and identity in the following way:

If a nation is an imagined community and at the same time a mental construct, an imaginary complex of ideas containing at least the defining elements of collective unity and equality, of boundaries and autonomy, then this image is real to the extent that one is convinced of it, believes in it and identifies with it emotionally. The question of how this imaginary community reaches the minds of those who are convinced of it is easy to answer: it is constructed and conveyed in discourse, pre-dominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity is thus the product of discourse. (1991, 22)

Wodak considers the discourse of the governing political elites to be constitutive of the identity of the governed. Murphy, in his study of George W. Bush's post-9/11 discourse, also highlights this aspect of presidential discourse, stating, "[w]ho we are as a collective evolves from the discourses we commonly experience" (2003, 620). Stuart Hall goes even further in saying that a nation is not only the product of political discourse but that the nation itself becomes a discourse. Hall states:

A national culture is a discourse – a way of constructing meaning which influences and organises both our actions and our conceptions of ourselves.... National cultures construct identities by producing meaning about "the nation" with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it. (Hall 1996, 613)

Stuckey, in her analysis of the identity creating nature of presidential discourse concurs, stating: "Nations are, in fact, brought about by specific sorts of political and rhetorical actions. Once invented, however, nations require certain elements for their sustenance and growth, and a certain sort of language with which to maintain perpetuate themselves (2005, 641). With regard to the locus of identity creating discourse, Wodak et al. stress the fact that "national narrations do not arise out of nothing.... Far more often they are brought forth, reproduced and

disseminated by actors in concrete (institutional) contexts” (1999, 23). In the case of the United States, the president, as Stuckey points out “ha[s] a disproportionate voice in the articulation of our national identity” (2005, 654).

As my analysis of the Us-vs.-Them hypertext in Chapter 4 has shown, definitions of identity depend heavily on contradistinction. Identity, Roland Hagenbüchle writes, is “a bifocal concept since all identity-formation is at the same time alterity-construction” (2000, 6). Any attempt at defining America’s identity, explains Hagenbüchle, thus also includes the analysis of value conflicts (see also the anti-values themes in Chapter 3 and the contradistinctive set of national characteristics discussed in Chapter 4). As Philip Schlesinger states, national identity is a process of both “inclusion that provides a boundary around ‘us’ and ... of exclusion that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them’” (1991, 301). Stuckey, as well, sees the construction of national identity as “dual processes of inclusion and exclusion.” She stresses the strong influence of the presidency on both these processes, stating that they “are enabled through the institution’s definitional power” (2004, 4). As I have shown in Chapter 4, “the invention of an ‘us’ requires the creation of a ‘them,’ a fact that has led leaders to define another group or set of groups as outside the nation, incapable of incorporation into it” (ibid., 9). Hart states the need for the opposing other more strongly, claiming that “in each community in existence, ... there is also an ‘uncommunity,’ an assembly of the befouled and besotted who have heard the Word and rejected it” (1998, xxv). Pointing to the strategic use of the evil other discussed in Chapter 4), Hart adds: “By invoking the un-community – graphically, athletically – society’s leaders get us to take risks we otherwise would not take. They make us see the Other in his full depravity, and they embolden us as a result” (ibid.).

As shown in Chapter 4, the dramatic narrative of the Us-vs.-Them hypertext – combined with the high-value themes identified in Chapter 3 – provide American presidents with a flexible tool to “discursively construct[] [an] America which values cultural consensus through thought sharing.” This “has its utility in promoting a sense of national unity during times of crisis” (Ricento 2003, 632). Citing Benhabib, Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruth Wodak describe this type of identity politics as “atavistic” and “as constructing dichotomies and stereotypes, which lead to and have led over the centuries to conflicts between nations and ethnicities” (2003, 211).

The strategy of defining American identity through explicitly excluding (inferior) others, is also directly linked to unilateralist tendencies. In this context, a statement by George W. Bush, quoted in Bob Woodward’s book *Bush at War*, is enlightening: “At some point, we may be the only ones left,” he [Bush] said. “That’s OK with me. We are America” (2002, 81). Nevertheless, this seemingly simplistic, black-and-white approach aimed at creating unity through adversity serves the

important purpose of motivating the public and justifying political and/or military actions. As John Hutcheson et al. explain:

Claiming that culturally embedded symbols are threatened by another nation or international actor, U.S. leaders at times have been able to activate strong nationalist feelings that typically reside below the surface in the absence of international conflict.... U.S. government elites often strategically articulate a conception of American national identity that will engender public support and embed a strong sense of collective identity. (2004, 29)

The significance of presidential discourse in the construction of national identity and of politically powerful auto- and hetero-images does not automatically result from the dominant political position that the American chief executive holds within the nation's system of government. It is much rather a function of the cultural power of the presidency as a national icon. As Stuckey states: "The presidency is thus a single site where articulations of national identity consistently appear backed by sufficient social and political power to render those articulations as matters of custom and law" (2004, 10).

As I have shown in Chapter 2, this power has been cultivated and enhanced by American presidents throughout history through the strategic use of public discourse. As Stephen Skowronek explains:

What is crucial here, however, is that for most of American history, the cutting edge of the assault on the constitutional principle of checks and balances – and the most potent engine elevating the presidency in the American system – was not the exercise of war powers but political democratization. (2000, 156)

The bond between the American president and the people established through this dialectical process has led to an image of the presidency long removed from that of the mute tribune envisioned in the Constitution. The second main pragmatic dimension of presidential intertextuality is thus an institutional one.

6.2 Supporting the unilateral presidency

Closely linked to and dependent on public images of the presidency, presidential intertextuality stresses the timeless nature of the presidency as an institution of heroic and, preferably, unilateral leadership (but see my comments in Chapter 1 on the difficulty of measuring the success of presidential discourse).

As Gene Healy (2008) writes in his critical assessment of the U.S. presidency, entitled *The Cult of the Presidency*, these images have contributed to a cult-like reverence of the presidential office. Healy describes this "bi-partisan romance

with the Imperial Presidency” (ibid., 276) as follows: “Neither Left nor Right sees the president as the Framers saw him: a constitutionally constrained chief executive with an important, but limited job: to defend the country when attacked, check Congress when it violates the Constitution, enforce the law-and little else” (ibid., 2–3). Instead, according to Healy, “the Left and Right agree on the boundless nature of presidential responsibility” (ibid., 2). Healy continues: “Few Americans find anything amiss in the notion that it is the president’s duty to solve all large national problems and to unite all in the service of a higher calling. The vision of the president as national guardian and redeemer is so ubiquitous that it goes unnoticed” (ibid., 3). The general acceptance of these extra-constitutional roles, which American presidents (and American popular culture) have contributed to significantly, naturally favors a powerful and dominant executive. As Healy writes, “American political culture ... suffers from a romanticization of the presidency,” and “the imperial Presidency is the price of making the office the focus of our national hopes and dreams” (ibid.).

The auto- and hetero-images created through presidential discourse that I described in this study (above all in Chapters 2 and 4) help in the construction of powerful images (yet not necessarily the reality) of unilateral and even heroic presidential leadership and thus contribute to the cult of the president. This idea of an uncontrolled executive, an imperial presidency, is lamented by some, yet celebrated by others.

Robert Denton, a self-described “fan of the American presidency” (2005, 1) sees a “crisis of leadership in America today” (ibid., ix) and calls for a return of the “heroic presidency” (ibid., 1). Yet, Denton’s enthusiasm for a model of “heroic leadership” or “parental leadership,” which he positions against a managerial model of government (ibid., 11), is not shared by everyone. Michael Genovese and Lori Cox Han, for example, state that

with this powerful and heroic model of the presidency runs contrary to constitutional design. The presidency was invented as a limited institution, grounded by the rule of law or an embedded in the checks and balances of the separation of powers. Crises and wars have not changed the wording of the Constitution. But they have altered the scope of presidential power. (2006, viii)

Independent of whether scholars see this development as positive or negative, all seem to agree that the current interpretation of the presidency is far removed from the office’s constitutional origins. Unlike critics of an abundance of executive powers, however, the American and global public, and America’s popular culture seem to have an entirely different idea of Washington’s political hierarchy. As Denton and Woodward point out, public presidential discourse becomes a prerequisite for any claim to unilateral leadership, as “true leadership is granted

by people, comprised of their own unique perceptions, needs, and expectations” (1998, 194). This suggests that the American president becomes a canvas onto which Americans project their own individual and collective aspirations. For Denton, this aspect is crucial with regard to the “symbolic dimensions” of the presidency. “The office,” states Denton, “reflects the collective values, hopes, aspirations of the nation.” As a symbol for the nation, the president is often considered as being larger than and placed outside the government, rather than a part of it. “Presidents are more than managers or administrators. They are *leaders*.... In the eyes of Americans, “presidents do more than initiate policy. They inspire and motivate a nation” (2005, 299).

The creation, dissemination, and affirmation of presidential self images and of presidential images of others does not take place in a vacuum. The breadth and depth of these images depend on both, contextual, short-term factors, such as current political and economic developments, and on more transient, long-term factors, above all general public expectations of the presidency. The process of generating a heroic image of presidential leadership is not a one-way street. Presidential discourse, as I have said before, enters into a dialectical relationship with public expectations, as it contributes to and at the same time reflects these expectations. As Denton points out, “public expectations and perceptions are created through presidents’ rhetoric, use of symbols, rituals, and a sense of history” (ibid., 299). The growth of the United States from 13 loosely allied states along America’s eastern seaboard into a global superpower (both in terms of hard and soft power), has also resulted in greater unilateral presidential power that, while constrained by constitutional considerations, ideology, and partisanship, depends significantly on the public’s appraisal of the presidential institution in general and the successes and failures, i.e., the job performance, of individual administrations in particular. The often irrational expectations attached by the American public to Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign and the savior-like image that both the media and the general public created of him, gives testimony to what Denton and Woodward refer to as America’s “heavy dependency for leadership” (1998, 181). They add, “Americans expect presidents to prod and unite as well as to provide direction and a sense of purpose. As such, the presidency fulfils the parental functions of supreme leader, guide, and teacher” (ibid., 194).

The image of the president as a teacher and/or father figure – epitomized by Franklin D. Roosevelt’s fireside chats of the 1930s – is still very much alive in the mind of the American public. On the eve of the 2008 election, Richard Haass, the President of the Council of Foreign Relations, gave the following advice to the next President: “I suggest you think of the Oval Office as a classroom, and explain to the American people what we need to accomplish and what it will require. Some twenty-first-century version of the fireside chat is called for” (2008). This

longing for a protective father figure in the White House – the parental model of leadership favored by Denton – is naturally most developed in times of crisis. The belief in presidential greatness does not only stem from reason but also from emotions. “As the president confronts a national problem, he also captures the emotions of citizens. Many Americans rely on the president to reassure their fears or to assuage their society in times of national turmoil” (Crawley 2006, 11).

The notion of crisis goes beyond a mere military threat to the nation’s security and also includes economic emergencies (see, for example, the Great Depression or the financial and economic crisis of the late 2000s), and other national disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, the swine flu epidemic, etc.). In all of these cases the president becomes the focal point of the hopes of an increasingly dependent nation. That dependency has, of course, been cultivated by presidential discourse.

The nation’s collective insecurity, combined with the cultural and informal roles of the president, finds its expression in a child-like psychological disposition among the populace:

In times of national emergency, we discard skepticism and return to childhood images of the presidency. As adults, we still desire to see the president as a combination of Washington and Lincoln, making wise decisions and working harder than the average citizen to preserve the quality of life.

(Denton and Woodward 1998, 191)

This point of view is supported by Hinckley, who states: “When it comes to our relationship with our presidents, we are too often the children” (1990, 9). Hinckley explains this attitude with the political socialization of the American people. Confirming one of the main images created in presidential discourse discussed above, Hinckley writes: “For the young child, the president *is* the government, with other figures viewed in relation to that basic orientation point. Congress becomes the group of people who ‘help the president’” (ibid., 10; emphasis in the original). This statement, which Hinckley supports with survey data, again highlights the dialectical nature of presidential discourse and presidential image creation. On the one hand, presidential discourse is designed to establish an idea of heroic presidential leadership, while on the other hand this type of leadership discourse is a reaction to the public’s wide-held beliefs in the power and benevolence of the president. As Hinckley writes:

In a study published after Watergate, most persons agreed that the president “stands for our country” and that they sleep better when a president they trust is watching over the country. As children sleep better when a trusted parent is watching over them, adults, in childlike fashion, place the president in a parental role.

(ibid.)

This image of the protective president was an essential element of the 2008 presidential campaign, symbolized by the so-called 3 a.m. phone call ad (see Chillizza 2008). The masculinity of presidential leadership expressed in these fear-based campaign ads – ironically launched by the campaign of a female candidate – is directly linked to the president's constitutional role as commander-in-chief and the closely related cultural role of protector of the people. As Han points out, "Americans expect their presidents to be the epitome of political leadership. They are, after all, the steward of the people, the commander in chief, and the body of American strength and national unity both at home and abroad" (2006, 120). The importance of displaying presidential leadership was especially great in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In his analysis of George W. Bush's public response to the attacks, Fred Greenstein points out that after 9/11, Bush began "presiding over a teaching and preaching presidency, addressing the public regularly and with force, effectiveness, and even eloquence" (2003, 15).

American expectations of the presidency arising from the office's constitutional roles and its larger iconic dimension are extremely high, and often time undoubtedly unrealistic. As Carter once put it: "When things go bad you get entirely too much blame. And I have to admit that when things go good, you get entirely too much credit" (quoted in Hodgson 1980, 25). The fact remains, though, that "Presidents are icons, ... symbolic representation of something sacred or magical, stylized symbols ... of our nation's deepest commitments and ideals" (Nelson 1997, xi).

Denton also stresses the symbolic element embedded in the office of the president by underlining the intangible roles of the chief executive: "Presidents do more than initiate policy. They inspire and motivate a nation" (2005, 299). For Denton, "political leadership refers to the relationship that exists with the public." The notion of presidential leadership is a construct, determined in great parts by the public interaction between the president and the American nation. As I have shown above, the construction of the modern presidential office becomes the core of a dramatic narrative of presidential agency. Given that "every situation in which the president is part becomes an elaborate drama" and that "all drama is powerful in the sense that it influences cognition, perceptions, and hence expectations of presidential performance or behavior," discursive attempts at establishing an image of heroic presidential leadership will have long-lasting consequences for the political psyche of the people (*ibid.*, 303). The fact that within the intertextual framework of presidential discourse these images are kept alive and stable across temporal and political divides makes them even more sustainable.

6.3 Creating a critical dialog

While the support of the unilateral presidency represents a bi-partisan, ideology-transcendent phenomenon, visible in the discourse of almost all twentieth-century presidents (and in the discourse of many of their nineteenth-century predecessors), instances of material intertextuality, or allusions, discussed in Chapter 5 point to a more political and more personal dimension of the presidential use of intertextual references. Here, we can identify two pragmatic strands: one positive, aimed at presidential self-definition and alignments with personal and often partisan role models, and one critical, subversive strand, driven by competing ideologies and political philosophies.

Within the context of the two major functions of presidential discourse – the standardized representation of America’s national identity and the one-sided description of the presidency as the dominant political institution in the United States – the various types and levels of intertextuality identified in this study, take on a decidedly affirmative picture, one that is aimed at supporting and perpetuating the general cultural and systemic status quo. A deviation from the identity and institution affirming use of intertextual references is significantly limited by the corpus of acceptable pre-texts.

Criticism, especially the public identification of the nation’s shortcomings, is not generally part of the repertoire of American presidential inaugural addresses. Such a critical approach would undermine the genre’s primary discursive function of creating national unity through a public celebration of the national’s tradition values (see Campbell and Jamieson 1990). A critical reflection of the policies of presidential predecessors would also contradict the image of continuity that presidential inaugurations aim to project (see Fields 1996).

However, in cases where inaugural addresses contain criticism of existent conditions (see, for example, Johnson’s or Reagan’s first inaugural speeches on social and economic woes, respectively), this will, as mentioned, generally be implemented in the form of a modernized version of the puritan jeremiad, a genre usually found in presidential election campaigns and policy speeches that primarily deal with domestic issues. In the logic of the jeremiad, the blame for the nation’s tribulations is loaded onto selected scapegoats (e.g., the presidential predecessor, the oppositional party, or unsympathetic, faceless entities such as Wall Street) and sent away, and the nation’s well being is restored. As such, the jeremiad is essentially a system-affirming device. The jeremiad, as I have discussed elsewhere (see Austerlühl 2014), is itself also an intertextual phenomenon. More precisely, it represents a hypertext and is particularly prominent in campaign rhetoric but has at times also been used with significant success by presidential incumbents as well. The jeremiad’s power as a “litany of hope” (Bercovitch 1978, 11), which

criticizes existing conditions but, at the same time, offers a clear path to redemption, has been employed, amongst others, by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Johnson, Reagan, and Obama.

A second intertextual device for identifying shortcomings of the American political and social system can be found in presidential allusions to other presidents and/or figures of moral authority as discussed in the previous chapter. The use of (mostly onomastic and quotational) allusions creates a virtual dialog between the speaker, i.e., the sitting president, and his predecessors. In this context, the dialogic dimension of intertextuality regains its subversive function through the introduction of critical voices into presidential speeches, which are missing from the predominantly monologic instances of intertextual references discussed above.

In the following, I will take a closer look at the subversive force of dialogism described in Chapter 1 in the context of the development of the intertextuality concept. To do so, I will analyze the manifold forms in which Bill Clinton, in his second inaugural address, employed intertextual references to create a political dialog with, amongst others, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, the Founding Fathers, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan to address the politically sensitive notion of racial inequality. In particular, I will focus on both the critical and dramatic potential that such a virtual dialog offers in political discourse in general.

Addressing the highly sensitive topic of race and critically discussing the living conditions of American minorities is a surprisingly rare phenomenon in the public discourse of American presidents. In twentieth-century inaugural addresses, only those of Taft (1909) and Clinton (1997) have more detailed, critical passages about the current state emancipation of African Americans. Except for Clinton's speech, the concept of slavery is only referred to in the context to the Cold War and here with regard to the Communist suppression of free nations and people (see Chapters 3 and 4). A self-critical analysis of the "peculiar institution" is missing entirely. With the exception of the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, the central civil rights questions of the late 1950s and 1960s are also rare topics for a major presidential address. Eisenhower, for example, discusses the topic of civil rights and equality of African Americans only in one of his sixteen major speeches.¹⁰² Kennedy focuses on the topic of racial inequalities in three of his eighteen best-known speeches. With regard to the most visible of these speeches, the Civil Rights Message of June 11, 1963, Steven Goldzwig and George Dionisopoulos state: "And while it may be the case that John F. Kennedy finally did throw down the moral gauntlet and

102. The exception was his speech on the events in Little Rock on September 24, 1959 (see Goldzwig and Dionisopoulos 1994).

perform the expected ritual of moral educator... , there were, arguably, two long years of inaction on his part with respect to black civil rights" (1994, 213).

After Johnson, whose presidency was to a large extent dominated by the idea of the Great Society, equality for African Americans became very much a non-topic again. While George H. W. Bush, in the aftermath of the Rodney-King-riots in Los Angeles in 1992, felt obliged to speak about "the great cause of equality that all Americans must uphold," ("Civil Disturbances" 685) the presidential "dialogue on race relations" (Murphy 1997, 71) was not reopened until the presidency of Clinton. As John Murphy points out, Clinton's 1993 speech in the *Mason Temple Church of God in Christ* in Memphis, Tennessee, the church where Martin Luther King gave his last sermon the night before his assassination, must be regarded as the core speech in this political re-alignment. Yet, in both his 1993 inaugural address and especially in his second inaugural address in 1997, Clinton had turned to the question of racial equality in a manner that goes far beyond a rhetorical kowtow to a monolithic, pro-Democratic voting block. The degree of thematization of this topic in the second inaugural and the unusual intensity of the analysis are, however, not easily noticeable as the relevant passages are spread widely across the entire text. A useful tool in identifying relevant passages is a study of Clinton's use of partly non-explicit intertextual allusions as a means of focusing the audience's attention as well as a means for the implementation of political criticism through inserting previous texts and their belief systems into his speech (see Schulte-Middelich 1985, 224).

The central pre-texts in Clinton's intertextual strategy are the speeches and writings of Martin Luther King, to whom Clinton alludes to in the concluding sentence of his first inaugural address, speaking of the "joyful mountaintop of celebration" ("First Inaugural" 3), thereby recalling King's "I've been to the mountaintop." In this his final speech, King states: "I just want to do God's will, and He's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised land" (King, "Mountaintop" 321).

In his second inaugural speech Clinton reintroduces the topos of the promised land mentioned by King as a leitmotif in the form of a chiasm, saying:¹⁰³ "Guided by the ancient vision of a promised land, let us set our sights upon a land of new promise" (43). Clinton links this reference to King to a call to fulfill happiness for all Americans as expressed in the promise of the Declaration of Independence's. "The preeminent mission of our new government," so Clinton, "is to give all Americans an opportunity – not a guarantee, but a real opportunity to

103. Clinton's speechwriter Michael Waldman calls this stylistic device, often overused by Clinton, "reversible raincoat sentences" (Waldman and Robinson 2001).

build better lives" (44). Clinton considers the fulfillment of the American Dream for all Americans as a central goal of his administration. At the same time, and in line with his strategy of partisan triangulation, he stresses that this fulfillment is not guaranteed and depends on individual responsibility.

Clinton adopts an argumentative structure typical of the African-American jeremiad – and perfected by Martin Luther King in "I Have a Dream" – that manifests itself in three development stages – promise, failure, prophecy – to highlight both the unfinished nature of the American dream and its potential achievability for the nation's minorities. In Clinton's speech, the constitutive elements of this three-step strategy are implemented in the form of intertextual allusions, in which "I Have a Dream" becomes the dominant pre-text. In addition, Clinton refers to the U.S. Constitution and the speeches of Abraham Lincoln to enhance the dramatic effect of his appeal.

The first obvious indicator for a particular attention to the issue of racial equality can be found in the speech's second paragraph when Clinton talks about "the awful scourge of slavery" (43). He is the only president in inaugural history to allude to Lincoln's "mighty scourge of war" (from Lincoln's second inaugural speech) and the only one who explicitly refers to slavery as an element of American history. In doing so, he breaks with the tradition of the Cold War rhetoric where the devil term "slavery" only occurred in the semantic context of the Soviet Union, representing the conceptual antipode to the American monopolized term "freedom."

Not much later in his speech, Clinton refers to the successes – in particular those achieved by Democratic presidents – in the struggle for civil rights, stating, "[we] deepened the wellspring of justice by making a revolution in civil rights for African Americans" (44). However, referring to the preamble of the Constitution, Clinton acknowledges that the process of gaining equal rights for the nation's minorities was not yet complete: "At the dawn of the 21st century a free people must now choose ... to form a more perfect union". Clinton uses a path metaphor – "our march to this new future" (44) – to illustrate the incompleteness of the undertaking. In doing so, he recalls the *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* on August 28, 1963, which was organized by King as a protest against ongoing racism in the America of the 1960s. The highlight of this "ceremonial protest" (Lei and Miller 1999, 85) is King's famous speech "I Have a Dream." Clinton refers to this "touchstone of American memory of the struggle for civil rights" (ibid., 83) numerous times throughout his speech.

Echoing King's morally charged critique of the political system of the 1960s, Clinton refers to the ethnic rift in the nation's social fabric – "The divide of race has been America's constant curse" (44) – and emphasizes the continuing national tensions and their destructive powers: "And each new wave of immigrants gives

new targets to old prejudices. Prejudice and contempt, cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction are no different. These forces have nearly destroyed our nation in the past. They plague us still" (44). Looking ahead, Clinton calls on Americans to overcome the national divide: "We cannot, we will not, succumb to the dark impulses that lurk in the far regions of the soul everywhere. We shall overcome them" (44). The adoption of the title from the famous black gospel and the allusion to the powerful right-to-vote speech, in which Lyndon B. Johnson repeatedly used the phrase "We shall overcome," enhance the prophetic and missionary force of Clinton's words.¹⁰⁴

Taking up the central topic of his inaugural address – the metaphoric "Building a Bridge to the 21st Century" – Clinton portrays the nation's ethnic diversity not as a national shortcoming but rather as a source of American strength: "Our rich texture of racial, religious and political diversity will be a Godsend in the 21st century" (45).¹⁰⁵ The use of the texture metaphor recalls Robert Kennedy's image of a "national fabric," which the former attorney general employed in his discourse to emphasize the interdependency of black and white Americans (see Murphy 1990, 407). The reference to Robert Kennedy is strategically motivated: "As the last white politician to pull together working class blacks and whites in serious numbers ..., Kennedy served as a kind of role model to Clinton" (Murphy 1997, 83). Parallels to Robert Kennedy, especially the emphasis on work ethics and personal responsibilities, are also noticeable in Clinton's speech in front of 5,000 African-American clergymen in Memphis in November 1993 mentioned above and in his second inaugural address. Focusing on the question of individual responsibility, Clinton states: "Everyone who can work, will work, with today's permanent under class part of tomorrow's growing middle class" ("Second Inaugural" 45). Consistent with his role as a New Democrat and his distancing from the traditional Democratic tax-and-spend policies, Clinton rejects the liberal concept of a racially sanctioned free ride. The most obvious allusion to King's "I have a dream" speech and the clearest adoption of his social criticism occurs near the end of the second inaugural address, when Clinton uses the context of King's speech as a structuring device. Integrating the capital's memorial architecture into his speech, Clinton says:

104. Johnson commenced his speech, which is also known under the title "American Promise," in front of both houses of Congress on March 15, 1965, with the following words: "I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy" ("The American Promise" 281).

105. Notions such as "diversity" or "multiculturalism" have rarely been found in presidential discourse prior to the presidency of Bill Clinton. While mostly focusing of relations between Blacks and Whites, Clinton might nevertheless be considered a trailblazer for the integrative rhetoric of Barack Obama.

Thirty-four years ago, the man whose life we celebrate today spoke to us down there, at the other end of this Mall, in words that moved the conscience of a nation. Like a prophet of old, he told of his dream that one day America would rise up and treat all its citizens as equals before the law and in the heart. Martin Luther King's dream was the American Dream. His quest is our quest: the ceaseless striving to live out our true creed. Our history has been built on such dreams and labors. And by our dreams and labors we will redeem the promise of America in the 21st century. ("Second Inaugural" 45)

In his speech, and standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King had himself co-opted the great emancipator in his criticism of the social ills of the country, referring numerous times to Lincoln through allusions and deictic devices.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition. ("I Have a Dream")

King uses a finance economic metaphor to point to the unfulfilled promises of the past: "In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check." In this context, the Proclamation of Emancipation, the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence represent the nation's unconditional obligation for payment – "a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir." At the core of this obligation is the Declaration of Independence, which King quotes explicitly: "This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Retaining the financial metaphor King explains that the "check" – at least as far as the nation's black population is concerned – has bounced: "It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'" Lei and Miller identify the strategy used by King when alluding to the sacred documents of American history: "King argued from the authority of the Bible and the Declaration – touchstones of the abolitionists – and from the authority of the Emancipation Proclamation, another touchstone that speakers added after the Civil War" (1999, 97).

Clinton also implements this strategy of “borrowing of texts [as] a way of arguing from authority” (K. Miller 1998). By establishing himself rhetorically as King’s ally and to some extent as the executor of his will – “His quest is our quest: the ceaseless striving to live out our true creed” – Clinton emphasizes his plea for racial equality made in the speech’s preceding parts. Resorting to King’s voice, he also emphasizes his appeal for greater self-responsibility on the part of African Americans. Clinton had already employed this strategy in his 1993-speech in King’s old church in Memphis, Tennessee, where he issued the African-American community a report card for its the achievements in the 25 years since King’s death:

If Martin Luther King, who said, “Like Moses, I am on the mountaintop, and I can see the promised land, but I’m not going to be able to get there with you, but we will get there” – if he were to reappear by my side today and give us a report card on the last 25 years, what would he say? You did a good job, he would say.... But he would say, I did not live and die to see the American family destroyed. I did not live and die to see 13-year-old boys get automatic weapons and gun down 9-year-olds just for the kick of it. I did not live and die to see young people destroy their own lives with drugs and then build fortunes destroying the lives of others.... My fellow Americans, he would say, I fought to stop white people from being so filled with hate that they would wreak violence on black people. I did not fight for the right of black people to murder other black people with reckless abandon. (“Church of God in Christ” 1984)

This open and at first sight surprising criticism – after all Clinton’s audience consisted of 5,000 African-American clergymen – was only successful as Clinton arranged the entire speech in the rhetorical tradition of the African-American church and Martin Luther King in particular. As Murphy explains: “The President is not a white outsider speaker self-righteously of ‘family values.’ He speaks as a community member, he holds that community to its own standard of love and justice, and he displays his credentials by moving easily through the aesthetic resources of the tradition” (Murphy 1997, 82).

While Clinton’s second inaugural address does not reach the intensity of his Memphis speech, the numerous allusions to King and Lincoln and to the unfulfilled promises of the founding fathers for national minorities represent an unusual form of criticism leveled against the American political and social system. Clinton’s speech, like Lyndon B. Johnson’s address, represents an exception to the culture-affirming discourse of the inaugural genre. Conscious of these generic limitations, Clinton softens his criticism in two ways. First, instead of expressing central points of criticism in his own voice, he uses intertextual allusions to do so. Second, like Johnson, he offers his audience the prospect of seeing King’s dream

fulfilled: “And by our dreams and labors we will redeem the promise of America in the 21st century” (“Second Inaugural” 45).

While the analysis of the intertextual allusions and the analysis of their functions in Clinton’s second inaugural address clearly show the importance of the topic social justice, it is not the dominant topic of the speech. Making his inaugural entirely about race, Clinton would have excluded a large part of the population. After all, Clinton had worked hard to establish himself as the president of all Americans or rather as president of the most American of all social classes, the middle class. Singling out one particular class would contradict this intention. In addition, Clinton, whose election campaign and inaugural topic was the so-called bridge into the twenty-first century, needed to project a forward-oriented course for his second term in office.

Regarding the function of intertextual allusion one also needs to be taken into consideration that the re-elected president had to govern with or rather against a Republican-dominated Congress. Clinton explicitly recognizes this in his speech, saying: “The American people returned to office a President of one party and a Congress of another” (45–46). However, using the bi-partisan appeal of Lincoln and King, he calls on the opposition to fulfill their joint legacy: “Surely, [the American people] did not do this to advance the politics of petty bickering and extreme partisanship they plainly deplore. No, they call on us instead to be repairers of the breach, and to move on with America’s mission” (46).

In the context of a divided government, embedding the voices of the nation’s dead heroes in his second inaugural address serve as a multifaceted political tool aimed at strengthening the position of the executive branch and emphasizing the bi-partisan nature of the office as well as establishing Clinton himself as a worthy successor of Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King.

Studying presidential discourse through an intertextual lens carries the inherent risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy – in this case of finding in one’s analysis what one expects to find – while ignoring or manipulating instances of presidential discourse that do not fit into the intertextual model. Also, it would have been possible to analyze the different intertextual phenomena identified as separate objects of study – as has indeed been done excellently by Campbell and Jamieson with regard to the generic aspects of presidential discourse. Yet, an isolated approach to the manifold intertextual phenomena present in presidential discourse would not be able to account fully for the multidimensional nature of the discourse universe formed by individual instances of presidential utterances and other culturally significant American texts. Starting from the assumption that presidential utterances represents a global intertext stresses the high degree of interconnectedness of presidential discourse, highlighting in particular the stability of the nation’s images of itself and others and the institutional dimension of

presidential discourse, above all with regard to the centrality and continuity of the presidential office.

As I hope to have shown, the speeches of American presidents do indeed represent a cultural intertext. Each new presidential utterance contributes to the growth of this intertext, strengthening its existing links, or struts, and thus contributes to the stability of the discursive scaffolding that controls the creating and shape of the nation's identity. This, in turn, not only consolidates the nation's understanding of itself but also supports the combined identities of the presidency as an institution and individual presidents themselves. At the same time, each new instance of presidential discourse is itself determined and controlled by the fact that at the very moment that it is uttered it immediately becomes part of the great presidential *bibliothèque*. The intertextual nature of presidential discourse thus can also become a rhetorical straitjacket, significantly limiting the discursive options of the nation's chief executive.

An intertextual perspective of American presidential discourse does of course carry the danger of prioritizing similarities over differences, introducing a bias towards sameness into the equation. Thus, my approach neglects, among other things, the horizontal axis of Kristeva's intertextuality concept, i.e., the relationship between individual presidential speeches and their immediate social, economic, and political contexts. Nevertheless, I think that an analysis of the manifold ways in which individual instances of presidential discourse are linked to one another and to other culturally significant texts does not only allow us to better understand what American presidents do what they do with words but that it can also serve as a window into the pertinent elements of American culture.

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APPENDIX

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Search clusters employed in the theme analysis in Chapter 3

Anti-values

aggression, anarchy, bad, bitter, communism, corruption, criminal, dangerous, dark, depression, despotism, destructive, discord, distrust, doubt, evil, evils, extravagance, false, hate, hatred, hostile, ignorance, ignorant, illegal, indulgence, injustice, jealous, lies, misery, ruin, selfish, treason, tyranny, vice, vicious, weak, weakness, wrong

Belief and faith

almighty, belief, believed, believes, bible, bless, blessed, blessing, blessings, church, covenant, creed, destined, devotion, divine, exalted, fact, faith, faithful, faithfully, fate, god, god's, guidance, heaven, hope, idealism, lord, pray, prayer, prayers, principle, providence, purity, redemption, religion, religious, reverence, reverently, righteousness, sacred, sacredly, solemn, soul, spirit, spiritual, supreme, temple, veneration

Burden

bear, borne, bulwark, burden, burdens, duties, duty, necessity, obligation, problems, required, responsibilities, sacrifice, sacrifices, serve, struggle, task, tasks, toil, work

Change

adopt, adopted, adoption, advancing, altered, amendment, amendments, anew, arise, arisen, began, begin, beginning, begun, birth, born, briefly, build, building, change, changed, commence, commencement, conceive, conception, create, created, creating, creation, decline, end, ended, ends, enlarge, enlarged, establish, expanded, expansion, extinguished, fall, fallen, final, formation, foundation, founded, founders, founding, grow, growing, grown, improve, improved, inauguration, increased, increasing, instituted, introduced, past, predecessor, predecessors, produced, reduce, reduced, reduction, reform, reforms, remain, remaining, removal, remove, removed, renew, renewal, renewed, restoration, restore, restored, resumption, retirement, reverse, revived, revolution, revolutionary, short, shrink, stop, stopped, successors, temporary, transferred, turn, turned, turning, vicissitudes

Continuity

abiding, ancient, built, consistent, constant, constantly, continuance, continue, continued, continues, continuing, enduring, established, establishment, existing, fixed, forever, formed, foundations, habits, heritage, historic, history, inheritance, invariably, keeping, lasting, long,

maintained, maintaining, maintenance, onward, original, permanent, perpetual, perpetuate, preservation, preserve, preserved, preserving, steadily, steady, sustain, sustained, tradition, traditions

Economic success

advanced, advancement, agriculture, banking, benefit, budget, business, commerce, commercial, construction, corporations, cost, currency, debt, debts, developed, developing, development, disbursement, dollar, economic, economical, economy, employed, employees, employment, enterprise, enterprises, expenditure, expenditures, expense, expenses, factories, factory, financial, fortunes, funds, growth, health, improvement, improvements, income, increase, industrial, industries, industry, loans, manufacturers, manufactures, manufacturing, market, markets, material, modern, monetary, money, pay, pecuniary, poor, poverty, price, prices, production, productive, productivity, products, profit, progress, prosperity, prosperous, resource, resources, revenue, revenues, rich, savings, science, scientific, sell, spend, tariff, tax, taxation, taxes, trade, transactions, treasury, valuable, wealth

Government

administer, administered, administration, administrations, administrative, agencies, agency, assembled, assembly, authorities, authority, authorized, ballot, bill, bills, branch, chief, clause, command, commission, confederacy, congress, constituents, constitution, constitutional, councils, court, courts, democracy, democratic, department, departments, elect, elected, election, elections, elective, enforce, enforcement, execute, executive, federal, federative, govern, governed, governing, government, governmental, governments, government's, institution, institutions, judicial, judiciary, jurisdiction, law, laws, leaders, leadership, legal, legislation, legislative, legislature, magistrate, management, office, officer, officers, offices, official, parties, partisan, partisanship, party, policies, policy, political, politics, powers, presidency, president, presidential, representative, representatives, republic, republican, republicans, republics, rule, ruler, self-government, senate, senator, sovereign, sovereignty, state, statesmen, statutes, suffrages, system, treaties, treaty, tribunal, veto, vote, votes, washington

Military and war

armaments, armed, armies, arms, army, battle, conquered, defend, defense, fight, force, forces, fortifications, fought, front, inflict, invasion, military, militia, naval, navy, neutral, neutrality, nuclear, operation, operations, retreat, shield, soldiers, surrender, sword, war, warfare, wars, weapons, in

Mission

aid, ambition, aspirations, chosen, committed, conquest, defended, defending, defenses, destinies, destiny, devote, devoted, direction, dream, endeavor, goal, goals, maintain, mission, passion, protect, protection, purpose, purposes, quest, safeguard, safeguards, seek, service, strive, support, vigor

Prevail

accomplish, accomplished, achieve, achieved, achievement, achievements, advance, advantage, attain, attained, attainment, attainments, bold, boldly, challenge, challenges, danger, dangers, determined, difficult, dreams, effort, efforts, encourage, encouragement, endure, fail, fear, formidable, opposition, overcome, power, powerful, prevail, strength, strengthen, strengthened, strong, stronger, strongest, succeed, suffered, trial, triumph, triumphs, victory

Sites

abroad, age, ages, ago, agricultural, air, ancestors, anniversary, annual, atlantic, borders, boundaries, brethren, british, bush, canal, central, centuries, century, child, children, cities, citizens, city, class, close, coast, colonies, columbia, continent, continents, countries, country, country's, cuba, culture, daily, dawn, day, days, decades, delay, delayed, distance, distant, district, domain, domestic, dominions, duration, earliest, early, earth, east, eastern, edge, enlightened, environment, era, europe, european, family, farm, farmers, farms, father, fathers, finally, follow, foreign, frontiers, future, generation, generations, geographical, globe, hearts, hemisphere, her, heretofore, heroes, him, himself, his, hitherto, homes, hour, house, houses, human, humanity, i, immediately, indian, individual, individuals, inhabitants, interior, internal, international, interstate, islands, isthmus, land, lands, late, lifetime, live, lives, living, local, longer, man, mankind, man's, me, meantime, men, men's, middle, minorities, mississippi, moment, months, mountains, myself, nationality, nations, nation's, nature, navigation, negro, negroes, neighbor, neighbors, night, north, occasion, occasionally, ocean, outset, pacific, parent, passage, passed, passing, people, peoples, people's, period, person, personal, persons, philippines, places, popular, population, ports, posterity, precedent, preceding, present, prompt, promptly, public, race, races, railroads, rapid, rapidly, recent, recently, regions, river, rivers, road, roman, schools, sea, seas, seldom, servant, servants, ships, shores, slaves, slow, social, society, soil, sons, south, southern, space, spain, speedily, speedy, sphere, stars, strangers, streets, swift, territorial, territories, territory, texas, them, they, time, times, today, to-day, tomorrow, transportation, west, western, whilst, women, world, world's, year, years, you, young, your

Union

accord, accordance, agree, agreement, alliance, alliances, allies, altogether, america, american, americans, america's, belong, belongs, bind, bonds, brotherhood, citizen, citizenship, civil, common, communities, community, confederated, confederation, countrymen, families, fellow, fellow-citizens, forefathers, fraternal, freemen, friend, friends, friendship, group, harmony, home, inseparable, jefferson, join, joint, member, members, nation, national, our, ours, ourselves, patriot, patriotic, patriotism, patriots, share, shared, states, ties, union, unite, united, unity, universal, us, we

Values

accountability, affection, amity, aspect, attitude, basic, beautiful, beauty, beloved, beneficent, brave, broad, calm, candid, candor, care, careful, carefully, character, charity, cheerfully, cherish, cherished, civility, civilization, civilized, climate, colored, compact, compassion,

completed, complex, concluded, conscience, conscientious, control, conviction, convictions, cordial, correct, courage, current, dear, decency, decent, deep, deeper, deepest, deeply, delicate, dependent, deserve, determination, dignity, discipline, discretion, diversity, earnest, earnestly, education, enjoy, enjoyed, equal, equality, equally, essential, essentially, eternal, exclusive, exclusively, extraordinary, fair, fairly, fairness, fearless, fervent, fidelity, fitness, flag, forbearance, free, freedom, freely, friendly, full, fullness, fully, fundamental, generally, generosity, generous, glorious, glory, gold, good, goodness, gracious, grand, gratitude, great, greater, greatest, greatly, greatness, happiness, happy, heavy, heroic, high, higher, highly, honest, honestly, honesty, honor, honorable, honorably, honored, humane, humble, humbly, humility, ideal, ideals, illustrious, impartial, important, independence, independent, inestimable, inspiration, inspire, inspired, inspires, inspiring, integrity, judgment, justice, justly, key, kind, kindly, kindness, labor, large, largely, law-abiding, lawful, lawfully, legitimate, length, level, liberal, liberties, liberty, light, limited, love, loyal, loyalty, major, manifest, mercy, mere, mighty, moderate, momentous, moral, morality, morals, narrow, native, natural, necessarily, noble, noblest, normal, oath, obedience, obligations, order, orderly, ordinary, organized, peace, peaceful, perfect, perfection, perfectly, physical, plain, plainly, pledge, practicable, practical, precious, pride, principles, private, profound, prominent, proper, protected, protecting, protective, proud, prudence, pure, purely, quality, quiet, ready, real, reason, reasonable, regular, respect, respecting, responsibility, responsible, rightful, rightfully, rightly, rights, safe, safely, safer, safety, satisfaction, scarcely, secure, security, servitude, simple, sincere, special, splendid, stability, stable, standard, standards, strict, strictly, striking, strongly, structure, subordinate, success, successful, sufficient, sufficiently, suffrage, surplus, sympathies, sympathy, thrift, tolerance, tranquillity, tremendous, true, trust, trusting, truth, truths, understanding, unimpaired, unlimited, unprecedented, urgent, values, vast, vigorous, virtue, virtues, virtuous, vision, vital, voluntary, welfare, well-being, white, wholesome, wide, willingness, wisdom, wise, wisely, wisest, worth, worthy, zeal, zealous, zealously

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