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STRATEGIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: A LEADER'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

Resumen: Este trabajo está destinado a divulgar en la población de las carreras de inglés como lengua extranjera un enfoque al estudio del discurso que reconoce su carácter situado tanto en sentido local como histórico. Su objetivo específico es revelar las características del género 'alocución inaugural' y la construcción discursiva de la nación estadounidense a través del análisis de un discurso público importante desde el punto de vista histórico pronunciado por el presidente de los EE.UU. George W. Bush. El examen de los datos muestra que la concurrencia de rasgos de actuación oral y eficaces recursos retóricos en un texto cuidadosamente elaborado que convoca ciertos aspectos de la identidad nacional se orienta a complejos fines políticos y se dirige a múltiples auditorios.

Palabras clave: discurso político – discurso en situación – retórica presidencial – identidad nacional – persuasión – ritual institucional

Abstract: This paper aims at disseminating among trainees at EFL programs an approach to the study of discourse which acknowledges its local and historical situatedness. Its specific objective is to reveal characteristics of the genre 'inaugural address' and the discursive construction of the American nation through the

analysis of a historically significant speech by U.S. President George W. Bush. The examination of the data shows the concurrence of oral performance features and powerful rhetorical resources in a carefully elaborated text that calls up selected aspects of national identity, serves complex political aims and addresses multiple audiences.

Key words: political discourse – situated discourse – presidential rhetoric – national identity – persuasion – institutional ritual

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is written having in mind college students in English as a Foreign Language programs in Argentina who tend to find, in separate compartments of their training, the potential for creativity in meaning and language form realized exclusively in literary texts on the one hand, and on the other, textbook accounts of the culture, history, and politics of English-speaking countries. The discourse analytical work carried out in this paper provides an example of the contribution of discourse analysis to revealing how carefully crafted and strategically designed non-literary texts can be, and shows the utility of findings in discourse analysis for getting insights into cultural, historical and political issues.

The texts produced by the elites have more significant material consequences than other texts on the domains to which they belong, and receive greater attention because they have privileged access to public forums and a wide distribution. The viewpoints expressed in them can thus have a strong impact on textual chains and even on other discourses. Because texts by the political elites have considerable influence on the resulting dominant discursive construction of reality, they have been a favorite object of study in the area of discourse analysis.

In the ritual oratory of American presidential politics, six public speeches stand out: the acceptance speech after the elections, the inaugural address, and the four State of the Union speeches delivered to the Congress and the nation at the beginning of each year of presidential mandate. The selected object of analysis is the speech that U.S. president George W. Bush produced on January 20, 2005, on the occasion of beginning his second term in

office. The choice of president and historical turning point is grounded on the contrast between the uncontested victory by George W. Bush at the 2004 elections and ominous consequences his presidency has brought to the American people and the world. The text, the audio-recording and photographs of the inaugural ceremony in which they were produced are available at the official website www.whitehouse.gov under the heading 'President sworn-in to second term.' The text to be discussed has been included in the Appendix at the end of this article with subheadings added by the researcher and paragraphs numbered for easy reference. In what follows, recent work with a similar research focus is reviewed.

2. ANTECEDENTS GUIDING THE CHOICE OF FOCUS AND DATA

We know that language can be a more or less salient part of any social practice, but in the social practice of government language is a large part of action. The communicative style of political leaders, the discourse associated with a particular political party, and the way language is used in the process of governing have been recognized as major objects of study for what they can reveal of contemporary politics and the salience of language in it. Fairclough's (2000) extensive work provides insights into British Prime Minister Tony Blair's style, the discourse of New Labour and the 'Third Way', and government texts belonging to the genres of consultation documents and press releases, particularly common in Blair's administration. Fairclough shows that New Labour has made language an even more important part of governing. Government communication through the new common genres is essentially monologic and promotional. In addition, the 'discourse of social inclusion,' part of 'Third Way' discourse, shifts attention away from conflicts and inequalities among those who are included in contemporary capitalist society. Finally, Blair's speeches and interviews indicate that "His

political persona is clearly a crafted one, based upon calculations of what will work, fed by focus group research" (Fairclough, 2000: 118).

With an interest in the act of promising as an index of an exemplary person, Hill (2000) analyzed the speech in which President George Herbert Walker Bush, the current American president's father, said 'Read my lips: No new taxes.' She explains that in the vernacular discourse of truth, truth is located in the utterances of an intentional individual who is the source of 'true' information. Intentions and the notion of 'character' are central to the discourse of truth and express its morality. In her analysis of Bush's campaign promise of not introducing new taxes, Hill argues that an intention to 'keep one's word' is an element of character. From a different perspective, which she calls 'theatrical', she adds that promising can be rendered as

a performance of prototypical masculinity that can be read as "straight talk," characterized by ramrod posture, decisive gesture and gaze, a strong, low-paced voice, and lexical material and sentence structure that model straightness by syllabic and syntactic simplicity, without any "fancy" or high-toned rhetorical frills that might be construed as feminine (Hill, 2000: 268)

The simplicity and straight-forwardness of the formulation is interpreted by Hill as associated to leadership and masculinity, and reproducing, in the political world, a personalist ideology of individual motives.

The historical-discursive approach developed by Wodak to examine political discourse and national identities integrates in the analysis both the textual data and the historical background of the communicative events. In applying this approach, Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart (1999) observe what they call 'national identity narratives' – the term narrative should be understood figuratively to denote, in the field of ideas, an abstract configuration of a figure with a goal confronting trying circumstances. These authors argue that

national narratives are produced and disseminated by social actors in concrete institutional contexts and that their strategic reproduction can be aimed at calling up emotions to support political initiatives. An identity narrative may transform perceptions of the past and the present, stress certain national features, or distort their meaning and their logic.

Ricento (2003) applies Wodak's approach to texts which constructed the "Americanism" of the 1920's in the United States. Within the collective American narrative, he detected the ideology of exceptionalism expressed in arguments in popular and elite discourses. The idea of America's unique character was also present in the "manifest destiny" discourses which justified American expansionism in Hawaii, the Philippines and Cuba, among other places. Ricento identified three general tendencies in the conception of America at the time: one advocated Americanism as ideological assimilation to U.S. born Americans, another promoted turning the talents and cultures of the recently arrived immigrants to the benefit of the U.S., and another singled out democracy as the essence of national identity and associated with it, the elements of liberty, social justice, and respect for the individual. According to Ricento, all these elements surface current public discourse in various proportions, for instance, in regard to immigration, languages other than English, etc.

In the year 2000, through televised speeches, Al Gore, the defeated candidate, and George W. Bush, the elected candidate, accepted the controversial results of the presidential elections and closed a dispute which had lasted several weeks and had required a U. S. Supreme Court ruling. The analysis by Tolmach Lakoff (2001) of these two texts revealed significant similarities in the central meanings (e.g. patriotism) and underlying cultural assumptions (e.g. the importance given to political harmony and the defense of institutions) despite the fact that one of the text producers had to admit his defeat and the other, confirm his victory. With regard to the textual features employed, the main ones were the strategic use of 'inclusive we', metaphors, and quotations of revered figures in national history, e.g. Thomas Jefferson. The discursive entity 'American nation' was attributed the fundamental qualities of unity

and indivisibility, confidence in God, defense of democracy, and family values.

The association of event and language use is, on the one hand, a methodological criterion for selecting what texts to study because the uniqueness of the texts concomitant with landmark events allows for particularly illuminating case studies, and on the other hand, it is a theoretical perspective to understand textual phenomena because, seen from the point of view of habitual social practice, texts are conceived as instantiations of discourse genres. The genre we are concerned with in this paper, the inaugural address, is not the kind of presidential speech produced in a swift reaction to an emergency, but an integral part of an institutional ritual carried out every four years. Because it is part of a ritual and a public performance, the genre 'inaugural address' does not realize only one language function. There can be some parts of the speech where the referential function of language is likely to be predominant and other parts of speech where the poetic function of language may prevail.

A factor that makes the speech to be analysed here a worthy object of study is its historical significance. Authority discourses in a certain historical period may evoke elements of national identity in the process of defining the challenges of the time; for that reason, the thrust of the analysis will lie on the representation of the American nation. It can be speculated that the discursive construction of the American nation will be related to a general national narrative, and at the same time, will serve the text producer's objectives in the historical conjuncture. The chosen presidential address is expected to manifest its historical situatedness in allusions to, or relationships arising from, the events of September 11, 2001. The positioning of the Self inevitably implies a positioning of the Other; therefore, we are likely to find implicit or explicit representations of the nation's political antagonist.

3. DOING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The praxis of analysing discourse as will be illustrated below avoids a naïve treatment of texts, namely, one that consists in attributing the various explicit and variously implicit meanings in a text to the deliberate decisions by a subject ideally in control of all combinations of elements and layers of textual organization and expressing novel, personal, intended content. Analysts who uphold such a superficial view of text production, along with an inherent simplistic conception of the social subject, may report their findings in terms of active processes attributed to a single human agent (e.g. ‘the speaker creates an image of themselves as powerful’), including processes that are mental activities (e.g. ‘the speaker wants to draw the hearer’s attention’).

With regard to the concept of text producer, its complexity and multiplicity is known as the theoretical problem of ‘authorship.’ An individual’s involvement in the concrete production of a text may consist in one or more than one of these roles: being composer of the form, originator of the content, subject responsible for the action performed, ghost writer, mere transmitter, relay, etc. (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988). Given that these ways of participating in a text may not be carried out by a single individual, that is to say, someone’s idea may get expressed in terms decided upon by a different person, and a text can be delivered on someone else’s behalf, etc., it is not convenient to think of the ‘speaker’ as the downright ‘author’ of a text, but as the one who produces the oral delivery of a certain text. In addition, Mihail Bakhtin’s early work on the ‘authorship’ problem warns us that a text may incorporate, recreate, echo, allude to, or evoke other texts, here understood in its broadest sense, as prior texts or recognizable ‘ways of speaking’. Bakhtin’s insightful solution to the fact that acknowledging the existence of multiple texts leads to admit that there are multiple authors was the concept of ‘voice.’ This opened up the way for exploring various degrees and forms of heteroglossia in a text (Morson & Emerson, 1990).

Once we avert the 'fallacy of the subject', we are ready to admit the fuzzy limits between behaviour that can be considered automatic and behaviour that can confidently be called strategic, i.e. part of an overall plan that underlies multiple linguistic realizations at a variety of levels in a text and is meant to forward the speaker's communicative and interactional ends. In addition, automatic and strategic choices of linguistic forms may combine and coexist in a single text. This issue has been problematized in theories of language use and should not be simply ignored in the examination of discourse. The genre chosen for the present case study is likely to display the realization of discourse strategies because it is the work of a team of political analysts and language specialists, and every layer of its textual organization as well as its oral delivery are the object of deliberate design and careful rehearsal.

A further complication in reporting analyses of discourse arises due to the metaphorical use of language in the social sciences, which may lead, for example, to describe a rhetorical effect with the grammatical structure called infinite of purpose, as in "*You* [...] is used to register solidarity and commonality of experience in working-class speech." (Fairclough, 1989:180). In contrast, the view advocated in this paper is that a discourse analyst is entitled to assert, for example, that "*you* is found in working class speech creating an effect of solidarity and commonality of experience, as in [...]" , but great caution must be exercised before validly interpreting that speakers consciously choose *you* in order to express solidarity. Discourse meanings and rhetorical effects are not necessarily teleologically oriented by the individual text producer.

The linguistic choices (like the singular or plural first person pronouns), the discursive mechanisms (like quotes and argumentative moves), and the rhetorical resources (like metaphor and hyperbole) deployed in a text are not a mere conduit to convey meaning. How something is said is part of what is said (Hymes, 1972), as a result, form and content are intricately related. Due to its elaborate, rhythmical, and aesthetic character, form in a presidential speech is always at the service of persuasion. The careful exploitation of textual form – resulting from a team effort by those in

charge of writing speeches for the president – makes it harder for actual addressees to question propositional content.

Analyzing discourse, however, cannot be equated to describing the stylistic dimension of a text; rather, if meaningful, the latter is a heuristic means to a hermeneutical end. Discourse analysis can offer an interpretation and a critique of the meanings of a text in its interplay with the local and broader contexts of production and reception. The extent to which the latter is achieved here is constrained by reasons of space and the dissemination aims of the paper.

4. THE FIRST ANALYTICAL STEPS

The analysis reported in this section will proceed on the basis of the examination of linguistic forms, rhetorical resources and textual patterns, the consideration of the ideational content, and the interplay of both in creating an image for the United States. The analysis is completed by dealing with the communicative situation and intertextual relationships in sections 5 and 6 respectively. It will be shown that characterization of the nation in terms that are well-known and accepted, as well as the allusions to national values, which, by definition, are shared and lasting, take part in discourse strategies designed to induce identification with the speaker and every co-national in a single united social body, legitimation of the president's policies, and political cohesion under his leadership.

As dictated by protocol, the first utterance in the speech presents it as an address to the co-present prominent officials, former presidents and the people. The rest of the text will be segmented into six parts for examination of their most significant aspects.

4.1. History and success in other lands

The first section of the speech (paragraphs 2 to 6) is identifiable on the basis of the development of an argumentative move, but before discussing it, the most outstanding aspects of the rhetorical dimension have to be noted. We will review the first person plural reference first, next the tropes based on content, and then, parallel structures.

The forms *we*, *us*, *our* and *ourselves* are used in almost all the speech, and in this segment too, with a broad meaning which includes the second person plural referent and comprises all Americans.¹ In this brief section, metaphors are abundant: *the shipwreck of communism*, *whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny*, *a day of fire*, and *the reign of hatred and resentment*. There is personalization in *ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder*. We find antithesis (years vs. a day) combined with a three-part coordinate structure of the type that will here be called triplet: *After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical - and then there came a day of fire*. The rhythmic quality of triplets is widely exploited in political oratory and can be observed again in *can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant*. Another syntactic feature which, like triplets, is particularly effective and memorable in the oral delivery of discourse is formal parallelism, here present in *The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands*, and *The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world*. Parallelism and a triplet concur in the main clause of *I am grateful for the honor of this*

¹ This basic and prevalent 'inclusive we' can be taken to be synonymous with *America* in this text. However, if reference to the entire American nation and the referent of the second person plural (i.e. the signified of the signifier *you*) are one and the same, then in the clause *America defended our own freedom* the rules of anaphora lead to interpret *America* and *we* as not coterminous. In other words, when we interpret the possessive adjective *our*, grammar forces us to reinterpret *America* as not identical to *we*.

hour, mindful of the consequential times in which we live, and determined to fulfill the oath that I have sworn and you have witnessed. Repetition and abstraction as in violence will gather, and multiply in destructive power, and cross the most defended borders, and raise a mortal threat enhance the persuasiveness of the texture and the acceptability of the content for the audience due to the absence of individualized agents of negative actions, which reduces the possibility of disagreement.

Regarding the attribution of qualities to the U.S., two are expressed in this section: unity in deep commitments and vulnerability, an element only recently introduced in American political discourse. There is a recognizable premises-conclusion relationship (paragraph 5) between the ideas that America's borders are secure enough because of tyranny elsewhere and that only freedom can beat the enemies, on the one hand, and on the other, the idea, which is explicitly called 'conclusion,' that the U.S. must take freedom to other lands.

4.2. Ending tyranny in the world

The second text segment (paragraphs 7 to 13) consists basically of simplistic generalizations, statements of national values bound to the historical origins of the country, and a vague formulation of policy. A few occurrences of *we* can be interpreted as referring to the speaker and his administration excluding the audience, *we will use it [America's influence] confidently, we will persistently clarify the choice, and we will encourage reform*. Tropes are present here too. These are metaphors, *the call of freedom* and *the soul of a nation finally speaks*, and antithesis in *The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right*, the latter containing a truism in each relative clause. Some of the extremely general statements found in this section are formulated with formal and semantic parallelism, such as *there is no justice without freedom, and there can be no human rights without*

human liberty, even resulting in the odd phrase *human liberty* produced here for the sake of parallelism and rhythm. There is also one general statement about what is seen as an inevitable state of affairs: *Liberty will come to those who love it*.

A common historical background is alluded to through expressions such as *our Founding*, *Across the generations*, *our fathers*, and *slavery*, and a religious overtone is added to national history by the word *mission*. Reference to history reminds the audience of the legitimacy of the traditional, core values of liberty, individual rights, and self-government, which here serve as the discursive basis to validate actions and to represent Americans as willing to stand up to defend them. The referential chain linking *the global appeal of liberty*, *never be surprised by the power of our ideals*, and *Eventually, the call of freedom comes to every mind and every soul*, and the predication in the two last utterances indicate that these values are defined as universal as well as American. The discursive function performed by this ideational content is that of support for a conclusion. What is presented as stemming directly from them is a proposed course of action. Thus, references to *our deepest beliefs* lay the basis for the following commitments: *America's belief in human dignity will guide our policies* and *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*. Put in these terms, no policy risks objections. Questions may arise about the feasibility of the bombastic goal, *ending tyranny in the world*, but objections are unlikely.

The President's pledge characteristic of the genre is rather untypical on this occasion because it concerns national security: *My most solemn duty is to protect this nation and its people against further attacks and emerging threats*. The U.S. is conceived in opposition to the identified enemy, tyranny, and the qualities assigned to it are at times explicit as in *America's resolve* and in the adherence to the universal values mentioned above, and at times inferred from the latter: since *freedom is eternally right*, righteousness is a distinguishing quality of the nation.

4.3. To friends and foes

The third section (paragraphs 14 to 19) is organized in the shape of five brief direct appeals to different addressees who are named in the introductory, cataphoric utterance by the hyperonym *peoples of the world*. The repetition of the syntactic structure Subject + *can know*, where the subject varies each time, serves as a mold for the direct address to each of the five sets of players in the international political stage. We can find metaphors, *Start on this journey of progress and justice, and America will walk at your side*, triplets, *we honor your friendship, we rely on your counsel, and we depend on your help*, and antithesis 'Division among free nations vs. The concerted effort of free nations.' But most importantly, there is an element that is typical of all presidential speeches delivered on occasions of national significance: a quote by a major figure in national history. In this speech, the direct quote belongs to Abraham Lincoln. It links the text being developed and the event in which it is produced to a shared national tradition and identity; as a consequence, this appeal to history facilitates the audience's identification with the speaker and their convergence onto a common point of view. In turn, the traditional values evoked contribute to legitimate the policies and courses of action that are proposed.

4.4. To fellow citizens

This part of the speech (paragraphs 20 to 23) contains an appeal to Americans concerning the military interventions in progress at the time. Major tropes and other stylistic elaborations can be detected. Metonymy is used in *we will always honor their names* and *the determined faces of our soldiers*, and antithesis in *deaths that honored their whole lives*, while metaphor occurs in *a cause larger than your wants, hope kindles hope*, and in the sequence ending

with a most contrived expression: *we have lit a fire as well – a fire in the minds of men, and this untamed fire of freedom*. The following is an instance of repetition and triplets: *in the quiet work of intelligence and diplomacy ... the idealistic work of helping raise up free governments ... the dangerous and necessary work of fighting our enemies*. The ideational content is carefully organized through the quantifiers which modify the nominal referring to Americans: All, a few and some. These are used, respectively, associated with those who have shown patience in these difficult times, served in the military and diplomatic efforts abroad, and fallen on the battlefield. What gets fronted in this sequential organization of content is reference to the success attained so far.

The exhortation to the youngest to become part of the national cause as laid out in relation to the evil in the world contains the noun phrase *this idealism* with an anaphoric demonstrative *this* whereby the war engagement referred to immediately before gets defined as idealism. That noun phrase is part of a chain, together with the preceding *idealistic* and the repetition *idealism* further on in the presidential address. The force of direct address (i.e. *you*) is favoured in *I ask our youngest citizens to believe the evidence of your eyes even to the detriment of consistency of reference between your and our youngest citizens*.

The most significant element for the focus of this paper is the fact that honor is a quality that gets attributed to the U.S. by implication on condition that war efforts not be abandoned (paragraph 21) and that patience, a quality required in times of war, also be mentioned. Clearly, far from being a reiteration of trite ideas, a presidential speech is firmly anchored in the historical and political context even though it transcends the minutia of the conjuncture.

4.5. The domestic agenda

The beginning of a new section of the speech (paragraphs 24 to 28) is recognizable due to the announcement of a subtopic (*essential*

work at home), and for the repeated introductory phrase in each of its three subparts. Both of them are used as the environment for the remarkably abundant occurrence of the noun *freedom*, even when the result is to make the referent elusive as in *American freedom*, or the propositional content rather abstract and put in highly metaphorical terms as in *In a world moving toward liberty, we are determined to show the meaning and promise of liberty*, or when the introductory phrase *In America's ideal of freedom* is not coherent with the content of the subsection which it initiates. Some metaphors are familiar ones: *a heart for the weak* and *surround the lost with love*. The phrase or clause structures organized in sets of threes like *make our society more prosperous and just and equal*, a tautological but mirror-structured statement, *Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self*, and formally parallel but semantically contrasting direct objects in *we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time* all share the pleasing qualities of formal balance, prosodic rhythm and propositional value that is desirable or intuitively true. We find few instances of *we* which can be interpreted restrictedly to mean 'the administration,' *we will extend this vision, we will bring the highest standards, we will widen (...) ownership* and *we will give* (paragraph 25); however, this exclusive *we* is used simultaneously with the first person plural adjective to refer to all Americans in the same clause, *we will bring the highest standards to our schools*.

In this part of the speech we find reference to economic prosperity, the private property of pension funds and health insurance, family values, faith, and respect for life. A link is established between individual morals and public policy. The private domain, which includes family and religion, is the origin of the values that characterize collective public life. This conception is made explicit in *the public interest depends on private character - on integrity, and tolerance toward others, and the rule of conscience in our own lives*, and can easily be found in the discourse of previous presidents, John F. Kennedy for one. The appeal to the private morality of individuals draws from the Christian education of most of the population, which underscores individual responsibility along with charity and solidarity. Conduct at the scale of the individual surfaces

again in *Americans, at our best, value the life we see in one another, and must always remember that even the unwanted have worth*, which at the time of the Inaugural Ceremony resonated with elements of anti-abortion public discourse about the defense of life and with George W. Bush's opposition in 2004 to the lawsuit to authorize the euthanasia of Terry Schiavo, a woman artificially kept alive for 15 years.

Given the nature of American politics, talk of reform is cast in statements that stress the continuity of tradition; therefore, it is no surprise to find this respect for the historical foundations of the nation expressed in *reaffirming all that is good and true that came before, and [ideals] that are the same yesterday, today, and forever*. It is interesting to notice that lexical choice, for example, *service, and mercy, and a heart for the weak*, reveals a certain ideological perspective, in this case tinted with the religious connotations of 'mercy'. Reality could potentially be differently constructed had the referent been named 'solidarity' for instance, evoking a different discourse and a different ideological load. Similarly, a proposed overhaul of the national health care plan is positively and figuratively formulated as *making every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny* which contributes to represent public health in terms of individuals' choice rather than social planning. These cases indicate once again that, in a text with the political importance of this one, language is far from factual or ideologically neutral, and the functions of language in such a text cannot be reduced to the referential one.

4.6. Unity and the triumph of freedom

The rhetorical devices which are pervasive in the previous sections are used in this one as well (paragraphs 29 to 32). Thus, metaphors are innovative, for example, *freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul*, and contrasts, for example *many vs. few* [questions], also occur in emotionally charged images in *And we can feel that same unity and*

*pride whenever America acts for good, and the victims of disaster are given hope, and the unjust encounter justice, and the captives are set free, along with the alliteration achieved by the repeated and. Negation always performs the argumentative function of incorporating an opponent's voice and opening a space for expressing the proponent's view. Here it takes the form of paratactic clauses linked with a colon in the written version, but understood as if there was a tacit 'because'. This contrast between negation and assertion is built twice in subsequent paired utterances, *Not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability; it is human choices that move events. Not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation; God moves and chooses as He wills*, as part of a four-part structure which begins with the assertion of confidence and closes with the climatic, affirmative statement, *We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul*, which is thus given the most prominent location in an argumentative sequence: the end.*

In the closing of the speech, an essential unity is attributed to the nation and one ultimate goal for the nation is singled out, which is presented not as a goal for the new term in office, but as a drive that defines America throughout history: advancing the cause of freedom. The success in that cause is given a certainty that exceeds that of the label assigned to it, *hope*, and is achieved by means of complex, cautious formulations that inscribe it in various episodes of national history, but deny determinism as well as fundamentalism. This last section displays typical components of American presidential discourse such as reference to God, a direct quote incorporating a text from an event in national history, and the traditional final blessing. At the same time, other elements unequivocally bind this speech to its historical moment. One of them is the strategic reminder of 9/11, *We felt the unity and fellowship of our nation when freedom came under attack, and our response came like a single hand over a single heart*, and [We are] *tested, but not weary*. 'Freedom' becomes a substitute for concrete referents in *freedom came under attack* and a ubiquitous leitmotiv in the representation of all discourse entities, including God, *the Author of Liberty*, and history, *the history of freedom*.

5. THE ENVISIONED RECEPTION

Many of the elements that we have observed in this presidential address – including the future expressed in terms of a mission, the bombastic goals, the elegiac description of the national character, and the dichotomic definition of the international political panorama – are familiar to the envisaged addressees either because they are typical features of American presidential discourse, or because they are part of the shared cultural background. For example, having the thematic axis on the foundational myth of liberty, which is a defining cultural feature, this text builds upon a meaning that fits the cultural model (Quinn & Holland, 1987) shared by the community. This meaning can also be found in material icons, like the Statue of Liberty and Freedom's Bell, treasured throughout the socialization of citizens since primary school.

Given that the present of the nation and the proposals for the future are explicitly bound in this speech with the nation's origin and past instead of, for example, having a distinctly partisan character, no addressee is excluded from the call to proceed on a path that seems already plotted. The outlined policies of the new government become imbued with meanings which transcend government and politics. They are intertwined with the national destiny. As is usual in political discourse, the national destiny is presented as one of greatness, and in this presidential speech, it is mainly laid out in relation to all the countries of the world.

6. THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

In a related discipline, the field of communication theory, we find available descriptions of elements of the discursive history shared by the addresser and addressees of the inaugural address examined.

Research on American presidential rhetoric in public messages about foreign crises has shown that presidents often shift the public's attention to the issue of American character and typically portray the United States as taking action against others only in retaliation or "for the defense of other goodwilled nations that are under siege" (Bostdorff, 1994:11). Both moves are found in George W. Bush's inaugural address. The former is present, for example, in *Some have unwisely chosen to test America's resolve, and have found it firm* (paragraph 10) and in *did our character bring credit to that cause [the cause of freedom]?* (paragraph 28). The latter is present, for example, in *we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary* (paragraph 8).

A comprehensive study carried within the theoretical framework of communication theory provides the following synthetic account of a common feature in several previous presidents' crisis communication style:

Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan and Bush especially incorporated the myths of mission and manifest destiny in their stylistic depictions of "we" and the United States. According to Kennedy, for example, Americans willingly sacrificed whenever freedom was at stake. Likewise, Johnson portrayed the nation as the protector of global freedom, and Nixon described the United States as the country that must act to prevent "the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy" from threatening "free nations and free institutions throughout the world." In his discourse about Panama, Bush spoke of "the mission of our nation" and how the "sacrifice" of servicemen who had been wounded or killed had been for "a noble cause and will never be forgotten. A free and prosperous Panama will be an enduring tribute." None of these presidents, however, described the nation more romantically than Ronald Reagan, who claimed the United States was the world's "force for freedom" and its "most brilliant star of hope." He said that America had no other goal than to rescue others from oppression and pointed

to Grenada as evidence that "the quest for freedom continues to build. (Bostdorff, 1994:220)

The quote above gives us a concise overview of the trajectory of key meanings across decades of presidential discourse. The text examined in this paper has proven to contain remarkably similar meanings, and inevitably, it is intertextually related to preceding presidential speeches in spite of the fact that it is a ritual address, not a crisis announcement.

The most direct intertextual relationship that will be discussed here is that between the presidential speech just analysed and the 2001 inaugural address by the same president. Though in varying proportions, similar rhetorical features can be found in the 2001 text, such as a biblical allusion, a direct quote from a figure of national history, and metaphors: *America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations.* There are also similarities in other components. The explicit oath typical of all presidential addresses that punctuate the initiation of a four-year period is present, but it displays an interesting contrast with the 2005 oath: *And this is my solemn pledge: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity.* Also, the connection between the country's political life and the morality of the individual is expressed: *Our public interest depends on private character, on civic duty and family bonds and basic fairness, on uncounted, unhonored acts of decency which give direction to our freedom.* However, major themes are civility, courage, compassion and character, and get developed in terms of policies in the domestic agenda, from the economy, to the reform of Social Security and Medicare, to faith-based social programs. Another difference is that liberty is not selected as the single omnipresent meaning that subsumes all other content although it is frequent and associated with leadership. Constitutive features of the nation other than unity are formulated like this: *The grandest of these ideals is an unfolding American promise that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born.* Considering the 2005 speech under the light of the 2001

inaugural address indicates that each instantiation of the genre in a particular text displays both continuity and strategic exploitation of discourse traditions and generic conventions, builds on national identity, and serves specific political ends in its historical context.

A corpus of New York Times (NYT) opinion columns published in 2005 provides further contextual background for the presidential text and contains its own representations of the American nation. In the collected NYT texts there are indications of a shared idea that the country's behavior in the international setting is imbued with morality or at least the aspiration that it may still be so. Even in the development of the topics about which columnists disagree with the government, as is the case with the presence of American troops in Iraq, we find the attribution of morality to the U.S.. The utterance below exemplifies this. The meaning the 'U.S. have moral authority' is expressed via presupposition.

*I'd add that the war is destroying **America's moral authority**.* (Paul Krugman, Nov. 11, 2005).

In the course of 2005, the moral quality associated with the U.S. was often referred to, predicated about and thematized due to the debate about whether to authorize the use of torture against war prisoners. This can be illustrated with a passage from a column with a direct quote by Senator McCain who expresses the idea that moral behavior is inherent to Americans. Although the columnist, Bob Herbert, uses a neutral verb of speaking (*say*) to incorporate the text of the quote whose view he endorses, in the cotext the journalist expresses the same belief that military conduct by the U.S. will be morally correct even when their enemies' is not.

*We should take a moment, however this debate turns out, to applaud the effort by three Republican senators to stand up to the White House and insist that the United States not just fight harder than its enemies, but also stand **taller**. [...] If the United States fails to get its act together with regard to the **humane** treatment of detainees, he [Senator McCain] said,*

we will "have changed the DNA of what it means to be an American. (Bob Herbert, Aug. 1, 2005)

Despite the distance between the political positions occupied by President G.W. Bush and the publishing company of the NYT which came out in open opposition to the government in the presidential elections of November 2, 2004, they coincide in this moral standard component in their idea of America.

The conception described so far is not the only one present in contemporary public discourse in the U.S. A dissenting voice regarding moral legitimacy is that of Klein (2005), who argues that there is no such moral superiority on the basis of the treatment to enemies in wars far back in time, like the Korean and Vietnam wars. When political discourse in general is examined, what is often presented as quintessentially American is a shared core of beliefs in liberty and opportunity. Thus, there is more diversity in present political discourse than in the journalistic discourse manifested in the NYT. At any rate, it is significant that the NYT columns identify a basic American core, moral integrity, in agreement with Bush's discourse. This is compatible with the profile of a newspaper meant to appeal to a large number of readers.

7. FINAL REMARKS

By examining George W. Bush's address to the nation on initiating his second term in office on January 20, 2005, we have been able to describe choices of linguistic means and to observe the careful control of their rhetorical effects in the service of persuasion and a convenient discursive construction of reality. The discourse genre of 'inaugural address' is important in the national politics of any country. In the American context, texts in this genre contain significant cultural elements, reproduce traditional features of presidential oratory, and express interested political meanings.

We have seen that ideological content already available in American political history is taken up, combined and adapted strategically to pursue the communicative goals at stake. Identification of the president and all Americans, legitimation of his view of the country's needs and obligations, and internal political cohesion summoned by invoking universal values take on new historical meanings with the benefit of hindsight. Today we know how the G. W. Bush's presidency has developed since then.

It is clear that texts produced in historical turning points manifest basic cultural assumptions; therefore, they constitute a site for fruitful scrutiny. The analytical effort revealed the centrality of the nation's moral standing in the world vision constructed in the text in question. The conception of social life that is expressed results from an extension of the individual's morality, character and values.

On the other hand, analysts are also historically situated and interpretations are based on observable phenomena, but are produced under the influence of sociopolitical conditions. Our interest in realities constructed in discourse does not lead to losing sight of material dimensions of reality which affect the social, spiritual, and physical existence of concrete people. The co-referentiality of *the dangerous and necessary work of fighting our enemies* (paragraph 22) and *this idealism* (paragraph 23) contributes to constitute a reality which does not override the materiality of thousands of war casualties. The course of past and recent U.S. foreign policy and words in the presidential address analysed, such as *a heart for the weak*, or *our relations will require the decent treatment of their own*, stand in stark contrast, much like other more familiar mismatches between political discourse and the world created through politics. As a result, we are reminded that reality is only in part constituted in discourse.

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APPENDIX

January 20, 2005. President Sworn-In to Second Term

[1] Vice President Cheney, Mr. Chief Justice, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, reverend clergy, distinguished guests, fellow citizens:

[HISTORY AND SUCCESS ON OTHER LANDS]

[2] 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. I am grateful for the honor of this hour, mindful of the consequential times in which we live, and determined to fulfill the oath that I have sworn and you have witnessed.

[3] At this second gathering, our duties are defined not by the words I use, but by the history we have seen together. For a half century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant borders. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical - and then there came a day of fire.

[4] We have seen our vulnerability - and we have seen its deepest source. 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. There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment, and expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom.

[5] We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

[6] 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.

[ENDING TYRANNY IN THE WORLD]

[7] 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.

[8] This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen, and defended by citizens, and sustained by the rule of law

and the protection of minorities. And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.

[9] The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable, and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause.

[10] My most solemn duty is to protect this nation and its people against further attacks and emerging threats. Some have unwisely chosen to test America's resolve, and have found it firm.

[11] We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right. America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains, or that women welcome humiliation and servitude, or that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies.

[12] We will encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people. America's belief in human dignity will guide our policies, yet rights must be more than the grudging concessions of dictators; they are secured by free dissent and the participation of the governed. In the long run, there is no justice without freedom, and there can be no human rights without human liberty.

[13] Some, I know, have questioned the global appeal of liberty - though this time in history, four decades defined by the swiftest advance of freedom ever seen, is an odd time for doubt. Americans, of all people, should never be surprised by the power of our ideals. Eventually, the call of freedom comes to every mind and every soul. We do not accept the existence of permanent tyranny because we do not accept the possibility of permanent slavery. Liberty will come to those who love it.

[TO FRIENDS AND FOES]

[14] Today, America speaks anew to the peoples of the world:

[15] 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.

[16] Democratic reformers facing repression, prison, or exile can know: America sees you for who you are: the future leaders of your free country.

[17] The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it."

[18] 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.

[19] And all the allies of the United States can know: we honor your friendship, we rely on your counsel, and we depend on your help. Division among free nations is a primary goal of freedom's enemies. The concerted effort of free nations to promote democracy is a prelude to our enemies' defeat.

[TO FELLOW CITIZENS]

[20] Today, I also speak anew to my fellow citizens:

[21] From all of you, I have asked patience in the hard task of securing America, which you have granted in good measure. Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill, and would be dishonorable to abandon. Yet because we have acted in the great liberating tradition of this nation, tens of millions have achieved their freedom. And as hope kindles hope, millions more will find it. By our efforts, we have lit a fire as well - a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power, it burns those who fight its progress, and one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world.

[22] A few Americans have accepted the hardest duties in this cause - in the quiet work of intelligence and diplomacy ... the idealistic work of helping raise up free governments ... the dangerous and necessary work of fighting our enemies. Some have shown their devotion to our country in deaths that

honored their whole lives - and we will always honor their names and their sacrifice.

[23] All Americans have witnessed this idealism, and some for the first time. I ask our youngest citizens to believe the evidence of your eyes. You have seen duty and allegiance in the determined faces of our soldiers. You have seen that life is fragile, and evil is real, and courage triumphs. Make the choice to serve in a cause larger than your wants, larger than yourself - and in your days you will add not just to the wealth of our country, but to its character.

[THE DOMESTIC AGENDA]

[24] America has need of idealism and courage, because we have essential work at home - the unfinished work of American freedom. In a world moving toward liberty, we are determined to show the meaning and promise of liberty.

[25] In America's ideal of freedom, citizens find the dignity and security of economic independence, instead of laboring on the edge of subsistence. This is the broader definition of liberty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act, and the G.I. Bill of Rights. And now we will extend this vision by reforming great institutions to serve the needs of our time. To give every American a stake in the promise and future of our country, we will bring the highest standards to our schools, and build an ownership society. We will widen the ownership of homes and businesses, retirement savings and health insurance - preparing our people for the challenges of life in a free society. By making every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny, we will give our fellow Americans greater freedom from want and fear, and make our society more prosperous and just and equal.

[26] In America's ideal of freedom, the public interest depends on private character - on integrity, and tolerance toward others, and the rule of conscience in our own lives. Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self. That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people. Americans move forward in every generation by reaffirming all that is good and true that came before - ideals of justice and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

[27] In America's ideal of freedom, the exercise of rights is ennobled by service, and mercy, and a heart for the weak. Liberty for all does not mean independence from one another. Our nation relies on men and women who look after a neighbor and surround the lost with love. Americans, at our best, value the life we see in one another, and must always remember that even the unwanted have worth. And our country must abandon all the habits of racism, because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time.

[28] From the perspective of a single day, including this day of dedication, the issues and questions before our country are many. From the viewpoint of centuries, the questions that come to us are narrowed and few. Did our generation advance the cause of freedom? And did our character bring credit to that cause?

[UNITY AND THE TRIUMPH OF FREEDOM]

[29] These questions that judge us also unite us, because Americans of every party and background, Americans by choice and by birth, are bound to one another in the cause of freedom. We have known divisions, which must be healed to move forward in great purposes - and I will strive in good faith to heal them. Yet those divisions do not define America. We felt the unity and fellowship of our nation when freedom came under attack, and our response came like a single hand over a single heart. And we can feel that same unity and pride whenever America acts for good, and the victims of disaster are given hope, and the unjust encounter justice, and the captives are set free.

[30] We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom. Not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability; it is human choices that move events. Not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation; God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul. When our Founders declared a new order of the ages; when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty; when citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner "Freedom Now" - they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled. History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.

[31] 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. America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world, and to all the inhabitants thereof. Renewed in our strength - tested, but not weary - we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom.

[32] May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America.