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***Distancing and Showing Solidarity via Metaphor and Metonymy in Political Discourse: A critical study of American statements on Iraq during the years 2004-2005***

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**Abstract**

*Following in the tradition of Critical Discourse Analysis and the growing field of Critical Metaphor Analysis, this study explores the way in which the Bush administration attempts to create both distance and solidarity towards general social categories indexed by the terms Iraqi people and American people. The acts of distancing and solidarity are accomplished primarily via metaphorical and metonymical references to conceptualizations of us/them which in turn correspond to Lakoff's HERO and VILLAIN conceptual metaphors. Qualitative analysis of public statements on the Iraq conflict issued by the Bush administration during the years 2004-2005 present the following findings. The explicit identification of the enemy/other category of the Iraq conflict is supported by metaphorical and metonymic images that speak to the American cultural cognitive model. Furthermore, the study underscores the dynamic nature of categories by documenting a metaphorical transfer between the SADDAM and TERRORIST domains. Also identified in the study is the conceptual metaphor of IRAQ AS AMERICA which presents to the American audience an Iraqi version of themselves, completely outfitted with established positive characteristics of the American people category. Finally, the dynamic nature of social categories and metaphorical associations are specifically explored in terms of this emerging conceptual metaphor.*

**1. Theoretical background**

**1.1 The critical**

At the theoretical heart of this study is a firm footing in critical approaches to language as social interaction. This analysis will draw primarily from two important strands of critical social research. The first is Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1989; van Dijk 1984; Wodak 1989; see Wodak and Meyer 2001 for an informative overview). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) encompasses a range of academic disciplines, but there are some fundamental assumptions that all studies share in common, regardless of their respective academic discipline. There are many of such shared assumptions, but I will restrict their mention to only those most relevant to the current study. One common thread is the perspective that human social interaction (especially via linguistic discourse) is a site of political struggle for resources. Another common view reflects a heightened sensitivity to the ways political elites exploit language to construct and to reproduce asymmetrical and oppressive social hierarchies of power. Furthermore, CDA scholars aspire to make explicit in their analyses hidden political moves on the part of the political elite so that conventionalized hierarchies may be challenged and eventually dismantled. A final shared notion is the acknowledgement of the potential influential power of language to shape our society. Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 273) explain that discourse and society are locked in a dialectical relationship: 'Every instance of language use makes its own small contribution

to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations.'

An additional strand is the result of an insightful synthesis of CDA with Cognitive Metaphor Theory. That result is called Critical Metaphor Analysis. First, I will very briefly summarize Cognitive Metaphor Theory. According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Cognitive Metaphor Theory and the wealth of discussion that has followed, metaphor and metonymy are not just poetic expressions, but they actually play a primary role in shaping our understanding of the world around us. Furthermore, metaphoric thought delves deep into our conceptual level of consciousness and, in turn, influences our speech at the textual level. That is, although we may not be explicitly *speaking* in metaphor, we are most certainly *thinking* in terms of metaphor.

Given that both approaches (CDA and Cognitive Metaphor Theory) are concerned with surfaced evidence of implicit conceptualizations, Charteris-Black (2004) made the instinctive connection and brought the two approaches together, terming his approach Critical Metaphor Analysis. Charteris-Black (2004: 28) explains that metaphors 'constitute verbal evidence for an underlying system of ideas - or ideology - whose assumptions may be ignored if we are unaware of them.' In line with CDA discussed above, Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis aims to expose conventionalized social hierarchies as they appear in linguistic references to conceptual metaphors (Charteris-Black 2004: 34).

These approaches have helped us to understand the incredible potential of metaphor as a political tool. Because we are talking about critical approaches to social research, there is the assumption that political elites exploit the rhetorical power of metaphor for their own political ends. Some recent studies in this area include the following. The first study (Sandikcioglu 2000) features corpus-based studies of political discourse as it is replicated in major media channels. The second study, by Lakoff (1991, 2003), involves less empirical work, but nevertheless, an influential analysis of metaphorical thinking at the conceptual level.

With convincing authority, Sandikcioglu (2000) draws the insightful connection between political rhetoric on the First Gulf War in 1991 and broad, cultural cognitive models such as Orientalism (see Said 1979). Using close readings of metaphorical references in media discourse, Sandikcioglu locates evidence of colonial discourses in the following frames predicated on *us/them* relational pairs: *civilization vs. barbarianism*, *power vs. weakness*, *stability vs. instability*, and *immaturity vs. maturity*. In the discussion of cultural cognitive models, Sandikcioglu draws on José Martin's (1997) notion of cultural model which he defines as 'an intersubjectively-shared simplified schematic version of experience in the world' (Sandikcioglu 2000: 304). Sandikcioglu concludes that the Orientalist cultural cognitive model carries out two functions: (1) simplify down complex political realities to mutually-exclusive thinking such as *us/them*, (2) activate asymmetrical Orientalist concepts which place European worldviews in a superordinate position to non-European ones (Sandikcioglu 2000: 303).

Very influential is Lakoff's 1992 and 2003 discussion of the American administration's political discourse during the First and Second Gulf Wars. In these two writings, he gives us the conceptual metaphor WAR AS A FAIRY TALE where the source domain FAIRY TALE is mapped onto the target domain WAR. The WAR AS A FAIRY TALE framework presented to the American audience a hero (the U.S.), a villain (Saddam Hussein), and a victim (in 1992, Kuwait; in 2003, the Iraqi people). I concur with Lakoff's analysis and I believe his conclusions provide a helpful framework for understanding the motivations behind metaphor use in the corpus currently under investigation.

## 1.2 The categorical

Taylor (1995: 1) writes, 'both in its methodology and in its substance...linguistics is intimately concerned with categorization.' This important observation is fostered by the fact that language, as a semiotic system, is a system for making distinctions. To illustrate this, Taylor analyzed paradigms of colour categorization across world languages and reports rich variation. He attributes this variation to language, for the colour spectrum in reality constitutes a smooth continuum and not distinct categories. It is the power of language to categorize, Taylor explains, that compels us to 'see' categories of colours (Taylor 1995: 3).

The act of categorization naturally lends itself to hierarchical constructs. Pierre Bourdieu explains that language, also due to its status as a symbolic system, actually reinforces domination (Hanks 2005: 77). CDA recognizes that the political elite within any society regularly exploits this tendency to categorize and establishes binaries (e.g. prestige vs. non-prestige) that organize social activity in ways that best guarantee their continued grasp on political power. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the reinforcement of social hierarchies is a unidirectional affair. Quite the contrary, critically-minded scholars assert that the elites and non-elites both contribute to the continued existence of social asymmetries by their continued participation in them (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 273; Hanks 2005: 77). As we shall see shortly in Leudar, Marsland, and Nekvapil (2004), categorization in political discourse is a dynamic and dialectical process. Social categories of people are defined and re-defined as the disenfranchised regularly struggle with the elites for power and resources. Seen in this light, there is no doubt why CDA scholars perceive language as essentially political with tangible social consequences (Gee 2004). Bourdieu sums it up well in a metaphor: *language is symbolic violence* (Hanks 2005: 78).

Acknowledging social categorization founded in language, critical scholars have turned to an approach called Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA), first made popular by Harvey Sacks in the 1960s (see Sacks 1992). Central to the MCA approach is the assumption that we rely on categorization in order to digest the massive amount of social interaction available to us on any given day and that humans primarily interpret other humans not as individuals, but as members of a particular category of person. While conventional membership analysis focused on fixed categories related to biological sex or kinship relations, critical studies such as Leudar et al., (2004)

provide an innovative application of MCA to explore dynamic socially-constructed categories such as *us/them* in the political context. In their analysis, Leudar et al. remind us of two important insights. First, it is imperative to bear in mind that social categorization fulfils practical applications within social activity. Second, Leudar et al. (2004: 262) clearly demonstrate the manipulation of social categories to the political elite's own ends. They identify three general methods of category manipulation: (1) changing the predicates (characteristics, actions) attributed to a given category, (2) respecifying the criteria for membership in a given category, (3) altering, at an over-arching level, the super-category into which the category is subsumed. These two findings are helpful for framing the current analysis. I will consider social categories to be in fact social products of negotiated discourse which are first put forth by the political elite and are later manipulated to fulfil strategic political goals. Following Leudar et al.'s lead, the relational pair of *us/them* will be the primary social categories under investigation in the current analysis.

### 1.3 The Us/Them relational pair

Language as a distinction-making machine can create both distance and solidarity between two entities. This paradoxical ability is manifested in critical discussions of *us/them*. The most common term is *Appropriation of the Other* and refers to the way language is used to create exaggerated (often false) dichotomies which in turn force human beings to be categorized into one of two opposing poles (see Caldas-Coulthard 2003). Common dichotomies presented in terms of *us vs. them* include: evil/good, dirty/clean, irrational/rational. When taken out of context the contrasts can seem questionable, but it is precisely in the way that dichotomous thinking simplifies and compresses complex political realities into neat, easy-to-remember campaign slogans that we begin to see the political influence of *us vs. them* dichotomies (van Dijk 2001).

Metaphors are excellent indicators of *us/them* thinking. Santa Ana (1999) investigated politically-motivated metaphors as they are replicated through mass media channels. The particular context of his study was the debate leading up to anti-immigration legislation in the state of California (Proposition 187). After identifying all of the metaphorical references to immigrants, the data pointed to the conceptual metaphor of IMMIGRANT AS AN ANIMAL. He proposes that metaphor works in political discourse dialectically between speaker and audiences. That is, the nature of the metaphorical association is dynamic and subject to negotiation. In line with their dialogic nature, metaphors, once agreed upon, contribute to shared common ground and shared cultural frames (Santa Ana 1999: 195). The implication, thus, is that metaphors operate in the public discourse to assemble and reinforce racial stereotypes. Santa Ana's observations will help to inform our discussion as the present corpus under investigation features manipulation of social categories via metaphor and metonymy at both textual and conceptual levels.

## **2. Purpose and methodology**

Having situated myself in the tradition of critical approaches to social research, my aim in this article is to explore the way the Bush administration orchestrates distancing and solidarity moves via metaphoric and metonymic references in their statements to the general American public on the topic of Iraq during the years 2004-2005. The analysis will be heavily influenced by the four studies discussed above (Sandikcioglu 2000; Lakoff 1992, 2003; Leudar et al. 2004; Santa Ana 1999).

The data for this investigation originate from public statements on the American military campaign in Iraq issued by the U.S. administration during the years 2004-2005. The statements were collected from the government-run website, <http://www.whitehouse.gov>, and comprise transcripts of press conferences, presidential radio addresses, state of the union speeches, policy statements, and even election campaign speeches. All text is part of the public domain made available on the White House website. The complete corpus totalled 70 public statements and 131,400 words. To begin the analysis, the entire corpus was given a close-reading and specifically scrutinized for utterances which referenced three social categories: (a) *the enemy*, (b) *the American people*, and (c) *the Iraqi people*. Then, each of these highlighted utterances were further scrutinized for metaphorical / metonymic expression at the textual and conceptual level. Very quickly, strong evidence for *us/them* sentiment was found as each utterance was easily categorized between the *us* category and the *them* category. Major themes and over-arching metaphors also began to emerge from the data which will be discussed below. <sup>1</sup>

## **3. Context of corpus and introduction**

The primary author of the public statements found in the corpus is the current administration occupying the Executive Branch of the U.S. government commonly referred to as the Bush Administration.<sup>2</sup> I do recognize the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism which necessarily entails multiplicity of authorship and audience (Holquist 1981). However, such an issue would take me beyond the scope of this study. For this reason, I will resort to a simplified perspective on authorship and audience in this study. The Bush Administration will be identified as the primary author and the American English-speaking community with access to major media channels as the primary audience.

The corpus begins on 1 January 2004, roughly eight months into the American military occupation of Iraq and immediately following the capture of Saddam Hussein. The corpus traces important developments in many directions. Politically, the corpus witnesses the early organization of a political body that is friendly to American interests, an initial constitution, and general elections. In terms of violence, aggression against American and British interests assumes a guerrilla-type posture, manifested in daily attacks on European interests and the Iraqi citizens who actively support those interests. The constant aggression triggers a massive American military response in locations such as Fallujah and Ramadi. Two sensationalized

events which the corpus spans are the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal and the initiation of a criminal trial against Saddam Hussein.

## **4. General findings**

### **4.1 Establishing Us/Them dichotomies**

As mentioned above, the *us/them* relational pair indexes *solidarity/distance* and is characterized by positive characteristics attributed to *self* and negative characteristics attributed to the *other* (see Reisigl and Wodak 2001). I will begin by first looking at one representative statement from the corpus which draws the *us/them* distinction into clear focus. It is from a televised address to U.S. troops on 13 October 2005:

#### Excerpt 1

And we're facing an enemy that is ruthless and cold-blooded, an enemy that actually has a philosophy, and the philosophy is so opposite of ours, it is the exact opposite of what America stands for. (President Bush, 13 October 2005)

In the above excerpt, one can see the distinct lines of division between the *us* and *them* categories via the linguistic terms 'opposite' and 'exact opposite.' These two terms set up the contrast between *us* and *them* because the pejorative terms 'ruthless' and 'cold-blooded' had already been attributed to the enemy *other* in the opening clause. Thus, if the *other* is cold-blooded and ruthless, and if we are the opposite of *them*, then *we* must be warm and merciful. The phrase 'what America stands for' is a vague expression which takes advantage of the cultural cognitive model (Sandikcioglu 2000) shared between speaker and audience and invites audience members to 'fill-in-the-gaps.' In fact, I argue that this utterance serves a phatic function (as opposed to a communicative one) in this case. The purpose of the utterance is not to inform the audience of the measurable differences between Americans watching at home and the *enemy* outdoors. Instead, it is to draw solidarity between the Bush administration and viewers at home and to elaborate further distance from the enemy *other*. This is in line with Uwe Quasthoff's observation that 'stereotypes function socially as a unifying and cohesive means for phatic communication' (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Thus, even a comment meant to specifically comment on *them*, unavoidably simultaneously comments on the *us*. This is due to the dialectical nature of dichotomous thinking embodied in *us/them*. A further consideration in the above example is the vague term 'enemy.' Primarily used to index the larger category of *other*, the vagueness in the way the Administration uses the term allows them the negotiating room to reformulate the *enemy* category at any given time as it fits their immediate political goals. Consider Excerpt 2 spoken on 12 December 2005 by President Bush in an address to an invited audience in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

#### Excerpt 2

Once again America defended its own freedom by using liberty to transform nations from bitter foes to strong allies. (President Bush, 12 December 2005)

Although the synonym, 'foe,' is used in place of the 'enemy,' the reference is identical. Clearly in a statement of positive self-presentation (reinforcing *us*), Bush expresses that social categories are malleable, if not by informed diplomacy, then by American liberty itself. It is also pertinent to highlight the binary adjectives that precede the two contrasting nouns: *bitter* foes vs. *strong* allies. Reworded in terms of *us* vs. *them*, the above excerpt could also be read: 'transform nations from the *other* category (distance) to the *us* (solidarity) category.' Furthermore, the historical use of the term *enemy* over the course of time allows contemporary politicians to draw contiguities with past *enemy* category inhabitants. As we saw earlier, the audience is asked to 'fill-in-the-gaps' with entailments derived from a shared cultural cognitive model. Take for example, this statement which links the current enemy with America's communist Cold War rivals. On this occasion, Bush was speaking to the American Naval Academy on 30 November 2005:

Excerpt 3

And like fascism and communism before, the hateful ideologies that use terror will be defeated by the unstoppable power of freedom (applause). (President Bush, 30 November 2005)

What is also worthy of note is the fact that the Bush administration refers to past enemies in metonymical terms. That is, *fascism* is meant to indicate the entire German Nazi political establishment plus its military. Likewise, *communism* is used to indicate the political establishment of the Soviet Union and its military as well. Grouped together, Bush implies a metaphorical connection between the current enemy (*terrorists*) with past enemies (*fascism* and *communism*). The three concepts share similarity in that they are all contextualized as enemies of the Bush administration.

When Bush does speak of the *enemy* in concrete terms, he does so with heavy metonymic overtones. Taken from the same context in Excerpt 3 on 30 November 2005, Bush stated the following:

Excerpt 4

The enemy in Iraq is a combination of rejectionists, Saddamists and terrorists. (President Bush, November 30, 2005)

With this statement, the Bush administration provides some framework for the *enemy* category which did not exist prior. The first interesting characteristic of this excerpt is its use of metonymy to reduce one segment of the larger domain (Iraqi people) along strategically-chosen characteristics. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibañez and Díez Velasco (2002) refer to this as *domain reduction*, or *target-in-source metonymy*. The metonymies are difficult to miss: (1) *rejectionists* are those who reject the pending constitution in Iraq, (2) *Saddamists* are those who the Bush administration deems as supporting Saddam Hussein and, by mutually-exclusive implication, in opposition to American interests, (3) *terrorists* are those who incite terror. This move resembles racial stereotypes in that they take away human individuality and replace it with broad, impersonal group generalizations built on metonymy (Gibbs 1994; Reisigl and Wodak 2001).

These stereotyped terms accomplish two important political moves. First, the linking of the three terms to already-established conceptualizations of *enemy/other* compels the audience to map *enemy* concepts to the new terms—a classic metaphorical association. Second, when collocated together with some amount of frequency,<sup>3</sup> the three terms become synonymous and begin taking on the entailments that come with the *enemy/other* category. Such use of collocation (*rejectionists/Saddamists/terrorists*) is an illustrative example of metaphor creation at the textual level.<sup>4</sup> When two terms are used enough times to reference a single domain, the similarity relation between the two is first implicitly detected and then internalized within the audience. The three terms are not only equated with the *enemy* category, they are also equated to one another.

Bush relies on metonymic reference to construct a framework for conceptualizing the *enemy/other* category as it indexes human beings inside Iraq. Interestingly, we learn that *enemy* elements do not exist solely externally to the United States, but instead, they also exist internally:

Excerpt 5

Yet there is a difference between honest critics who recognize what is wrong, and defeatists who refuse to see anything right. (President Bush in a televised national address 18 December 2005)

As seen in the above excerpt, Bush responds to Congressional critics of his Iraq policies by providing them with their own label, *defeatists*. Again, identical to the way the metonymical *rejectionist* reduces a complex human being to a simplistic label, *defeatist* places opposition politicians at an extreme distance from the courageous metaphorical HERO. Also interesting is the suffix, *-ist*, which typically indicates a person who personifies a theory or belief. In the American political discourse of the past decade, the suffix has been successfully used by the Republican Party in a pejorative sense (e.g. *secularist*, *abortionist*) in order to create distance between the audience and the opposition party Democrats. The ultimate destination of this distancing is, of course, the enemy *other* category. Note the metaphorical associations created by the conscious linking of the suffix across contexts: *communists*, *terrorists*, *defeatists*, *secularists*, *rejectionists*, *abortionists*. When read together, one has a grocery list of the *enemy* category as constructed by the Bush administration and co-maintained with their American constituency.

#### 4.2 Saddam → Terrorist transfer

As has been discussed so far, social categories are entirely malleable and subject to political manipulation. One striking example of this fact is found in the metaphorical transfer between the two domains of SADDAM and TERRORIST. Leading up to and immediately following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration seemed to afford Saddam Hussein the brunt of the *other* category. Lakoff takes note that this demonization of Saddam Hussein occurred first in 1991 and was then regurgitated for the 2003 military action. Relegated to the greatest distance from *us*, Saddam Hussein was characterized as an irrational villain (Lakoff 1992, 2003). Following his



capture, however, the Bush administration needed to regroup the *enemy/other* category. Their metaphorical VILLAIN was now in custody. The solution was to map the already existing source domain, VILLAIN, on to a new target domain, TERRORIST. I will provide two examples to illustrate this actor transfer:

Excerpt 6: The irrational, unreasonable enemy villain

You can't reason with these people. There's no need to negotiate with them. Therapy is not going to work (laughter). To win this war, we will stay on the offensive and bring them to justice. (President Bush speaking to an audience of U.S. soldiers 18 June 2004)

Excerpt 7: The sadistic killer

And so long as I'm the president, we will be determined, steadfast, and strong as we pursue those people who kill innocent lives because they hate freedom. (President Bush speaking to Al-Arabiya TV network in a televised interview 5 May 2004)

Both examples respectively echo the earlier Saddam Hussein VILLAIN character who was irrational and a sadistic killer of innocents (See Lakoff 1992, 2003). This actor transfer, I believe, is predicated on metaphorical transfer across the two target domains, SADDAM and TERRORIST. The metaphorical jump is advanced further by the deliberate collocation of *Saddamists* with *terrorists* seen numerous times in the 2005 half of the corpus.<sup>5</sup> Here is one example of the collocation which makes the association explicit:

Excerpt 8

And when the terrorists and Saddamists infiltrated the city, the Iraqi police were not up to the task of stopping them. These thugs intimidated residents, and overwhelmed the police. (President Bush speaking to an invited audience in Washington D.C. 7 December 2005)

### **4.3 The Iraq-America construct (IAC)**

By far the most striking finding of the analysis is the deliberate metaphorical connections the Bush administration makes between the categories of the *American people* and the *Iraqi people*. I must stress that by employing the term *Iraqi people* as a social category, I am specifically referring to an imagined construct of a community that is rooted in a culturally-specific worldview that is informed by nation-state narratives. Whether or not such social categories actually correspond to realities of communities is not of primary concern. Instead, I am primarily concerned with the imagined conceptual constructs that are presented to the American public and then negotiated in the public discourse.<sup>6</sup> In their treatment of the *Iraqi people*, we find a fascinating balancing act between distance and solidarity expressed via language.

Contrary to Bush Administration assertions prior to the 2003 invasion, the American military was not welcomed as liberators complete with ticket-tape

parades. During the years 2004-2005, public perception of the American military within Iraq did not improve. Clearly, the Bush Administration faced a situation contradictory to the FAIRY TALE WAR narrative which operates in mutual exclusive terminologies such as *good/evil* and *hero/villain*. The Bush administration was faced with a serious question during the years 2004-2005: How to maintain the WAR AS A FAIRY TALE narrative while explaining the complex response on the part of the Iraqi civilian population to the extended American occupation? The solution was to - via discourse - conceptually fragment the *Iraqi people* category into subcategories each of which is either *us* or *them*. We shall look at the construction of both halves (solidarity and distance). First we will begin with the solidarity side.

In many public statements located in the corpus, I have found deliberate statements that imply a similarity connection between the United States and Iraq. For there is no better way to show solidarity with another than to share an identity. I term this conceptual metaphor, which emerges from the discourse, the *Iraq-America Construct* (IAC). In simplest terms, it is the conceptual metaphor of IRAQ AS AMERICA. Analysis has determined that the similarity relations between the United States and Iraq coalesce into three general categories: the IAC enemy, the IAC freedom, the IAC government. I will provide examples of each.

Excerpt 9: *IAC Enemy*

[B]ecause Iraqis and Americans share a common enemy, and when that enemy is defeated in Iraq, Americans will be safer here at home. (President Bush speaking to the American Naval Academy 30 November 2005)

This statement suggests a metaphorical connection between Iraq and the United States in two veins. The opening clause mentions a 'common enemy' which, when thinking in terms of dichotomous *us/them*, indicates that the *Iraqi* and *American* social categories are both on the *us* side. Additionally, Excerpt 9 asserts that victory in Iraq means safety at home. The explicit reference to 'safety' then suggests that Americans and Iraqis inhabit similar spatial dimensions at a conceptual level where both entities are either *in* or *out* of danger.

Excerpt 10: *IAC Freedom*

I believe freedom is universal. I believe the Iraqi citizen cares just as much about freedom and living a free life as the American citizen does. (President Bush speaking to reporters 15 December 2005)

Similar to Excerpt 9, the Administration's words draw a clear similarity relation between the *Iraqi* and *American* social categories. The implied metaphor begins with a simile: the *Iraqi* category wishes to live a free life just as the *American* category does. This metaphorical connection is tied together by the term 'freedom', which carries high value within the American cultural model. The Administration capitalizes on that in order to efficiently instill feelings of solidarity between the American audience and the *Iraqi people* social category. The metaphorical references at the conceptual level are

further developed at the textual level in the paralleled reference to *Iraqi citizen* and *American citizen*.

Excerpt 11: IAC Government

After much tough debate, representatives of Iraq's diverse communities drafted a bold constitution that guarantees the rule of law, freedom of assembly, property rights, freedom of speech and the press, women's rights, and the right to vote. (President Bush speaking to an invited audience in Philadelphia 12 December 2005)

The Bush Administration further extends the conceptual IAC metaphor with strategically-selected terms (e.g. *constitution*, *freedom of assembly*, *women's rights*, etc.) that draw metonymic connections between the American system of government and the new one being established in Iraq. To the American audience, these terms are very familiar. They incorporate two elements of the American political cultural model which carry high prestige—the Bill of Rights (freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and the press) and the 1960 Civil Rights Act (women's rights, the right to vote). They are terms often cited when American politicians wish to applaud their form of government—especially in contrastive terms with some *other* foreign government. Similar to the term 'freedom', these terms immediately instil a sense of familiarity and, subsequently, a strengthened sense of solidarity to the *Iraqi people* category.

Together, these three metaphorical mappings contribute to the IAC located at the conceptual level. The IAC is an effective rhetorical tool to bring together two social categories which, at first glance, seem completely different. Among many other things, languages differ, majority religions differ, and national historical narratives differ. Yet, through language, the Bush administration devises a link between the two social categories along metaphoric and metonymic lines.

#### 4.4 Role transfer

One logical entailment of the conceptual IAC is that the *Iraqi people* will too adopt the HERO persona in emulation of their American counterparts. Indeed, the corpus does provide us with evidence of role transfer. In Excerpt 12 the American audience is introduced to an *Iraqi people* social category which exerts *bravery* and accepts *sacrifice* — two terms commonly associated with the HERO American military and their families at home.

Excerpt 12

And when the history of modern Iraq is written, the people of Iraq will know their freedom was finally secured by the courage and sacrifice of Iraqi patriots (applause). (President Bush speaking to U.S. soldiers at Fort Lewis, Washington 18 June 2004)

A second example makes much more explicit the metaphoric and metonymic connections between the *Iraqi* and *American* social categories.

Excerpt 13

Iraqi soldiers are sacrificing to defeat al Qaeda in their own country. These brave citizens know the stakes -- the survival of their own liberty, the future of their own region, the justice and humanity of their own tradition -- and that United States of America is proud to stand beside them (applause). (President Bush speaking to an invited audience in Washington D.C. 6 October 2005)

Excerpt 13 contains a rich complex of metaphors intended to elevate the *Iraqi people* to HERO status. First, the metaphorical connections designed to draw solidarity with the *Iraqi people* category are easy to spot. Al-Qaeda, the established enemy of the American government, is now the enemy of the Iraqi soldiers and the political system that they represent. Furthermore, the Iraqi soldiers are being attacked at home by Al-Qaeda, a statement that draws immediate reference to the 9-11 attacks on New York City and Washington. Next, Bush attaches high-stakes to the ongoing violence in Iraq with language such as ‘*survival...future...justice and humanity.*’ These terms will sound very familiar to American audiences because they make up the same frame Bush constructed immediately following the 9-11 attacks.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the audience is enticed to conceptualize the current enemy in metaphoric terms as the instigators of the 9-11 attacks. Finally, the metaphorical ‘stand beside them’ cements the co-HERO status for the *Iraqi people* because within the mainstream American cultural model, to stand beside someone indicates extreme solidarity. The primary intention behind Excerpt 13 is to draw solidarity between the *Iraqi* and *American* categories. However, the phrase, ‘of their own’, which is repeated four times in this short excerpt does suggest some amount of distance between the two categories. Most likely, the move was in response to the Administration’s critics who claim that the Bush administration is conducting a military occupation, and not a liberation. This slight contradiction very clearly illustrates the fact that even within a strong sense of solidarity, there always exists some element of distance. That is, nothing is as simple as the *us/them* dichotomy would lead us to believe.

#### 4.5 The ‘Other’ Iraqi people

Previously I mentioned that the Bush Administration was operating a balancing act in their handling of the *Iraqi people* social category. We have seen so far rhetorical strategies that bring the *Iraqi* and *American* categories into close solidarity with one another. I have called the resulting metaphorical entity the Iraq-America Construct (IAC). This was one half of the balancing act. The other half involves distancing segments of the *Iraqi people* category from the *American* one. Next, we will turn to distancing moves made possible by metaphorical and metonymic means.

The purpose behind the distancing seems to be to make sense for American audiences the persistent resistance to American activity inside Iraq. This is because any resistance to the American occupation eats away at the credibility of the WAR AS A FAIRY TALE conceptual metaphor. For within the fairy tale narrative, heroes (U.S.) are not attacked — and victims (Iraqi people) do not do the attacking. The solution was for the Bush administration to begin distancing certain segments of the imagined *Iraqi people* category. In effect,

the Administration is pruning from the larger *Iraqi people* category a series of subcategories which could safely be *othered* and placed at an extreme distance from the *American* and *Iraqi people* categories (or IAC).

Bush began this distancing process in 2004 with the following excerpt, a reference to the generic terrorist figure which is positioned in direct opposition to the *Iraqi people* category:

Excerpt 14

Terrorists who attack a self-governing Iraq are showing who they really are. They're not fighting foreign forces. They're fighting the Iraqi people. They're the enemies of democracy and hope. They are the enemies of a peaceful future for Iraq. (President Bush speaking to U.S. soldiers at Fort Lewis, Washington 18 June 2004)

I first bring attention to the ambiguous nature of the term *terrorist* which allows the American audience member to conjure a mental image in concordance with the much larger cultural cognitive model. However, they are not completely free to choose any definition. The term *terrorist* implicitly triggers metaphorical connections to the events of 11 September 2001. Thus, the audience member is constrained to draw similarity connections between the current enemy *terrorist* and the previously established *terrorist* character who instigated the 11 September attacks. To further accentuate the rhetorical effect, Bush launches into dichotomous framing with the terms *enemies of democracy and hope*, triggering logic based on mutual exclusivity; If one is the enemy of *good*, one must be the friend of *bad*. More importantly for our purposes, it is interesting that the geographic origin of these terrorists is not made clear. Are they from inside the country of Iraq? Or are they from outside? Statistically speaking, at least some percentage of the actual individuals physically resisting the American military presence in Iraq must be of Iraqi origin. Bush avoids making this statement, lest he help deconstruct the WAR AS A FAIRY TALE conceptual metaphor.

On other occasions, the Bush administration is clear when they are drawing distance from some segments of the *Iraqi people* category. In the two excerpts that follow, Bush entices the American audience to extract from their conceptualization of the *Iraqi people* category two specific segments of the Iraqi community: the Shi'a cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and the so-called Sunni rejectionists.

Excerpt 15

And we are very respectful for the holy sites in Iraq, we understand their importance to the Iraqi citizens. Mr. Sadr is occupying those sites as if they're his, and I think the Iraqi citizens are getting tired of that. (President Bush speaking in an interview with Al-Arabiya television 5 May 2004)

The intention to distance al-Sadr from the IAC is obvious, but the logic behind it is perplexing. The notion that an influential Shi'a cleric is to be distanced from sites revered by Shi'a Muslims is, I suspect, very similar to publicly claiming that a Catholic priest is not welcome in the Vatican. Regardless, when speaking to an American audience who share a cultural model (one

largely interlaced with Christian ideology), the Bush administration undoubtedly find persuasive influence in their statements. Additionally, this excerpt also is a reminder of the dialectical nature of expressing distance and solidarity. In the above example, we find the Bush administration expressing solidarity with the *Iraqi people* category in the way that they are respectful to Shi'a holy sites which actually belong to the Iraqi people. Moreover, the American military and political structure understands Islam, the religion of the *Iraqi people*, better than Muqtada al-Sadr. Such logic, again, feeds into the metaphorical connection of comradeship that is embodied in the IAC.

#### Excerpt 16

Not all Sunnis fall into the rejectionist camp. Of those that do, most are not actively fighting us—but some give aid and comfort to the enemy; We believe that, over time, most rejectionists will be persuaded to support a democratic Iraq led by a federal government that is a strong enough government to protect minority rights. (President Bush speaking to an American Naval Academy audience 30 November 2005)

The term *rejectionists* was discussed earlier, but, to review, it is in reference to those members of the *Iraqi people* category who openly voice opposition to the formal constitution that was being formulated at that time. Also mentioned previously, the term derives from a metonymical association and features the *-ist* suffix which is commonly employed in American political discourse to form a pejorative. In this statement, Bush is attempting a dual-layered segmentation of the *Iraqi people* category. At a broader level, he is continuing the general strategy of dividing the *Iraqi people* category into mutually exclusive *us* and *them* sectors. At a narrower level, Bush is applying the same strategy of establishing distance within some segments of the Sunni population. However, he does so very carefully. He notes that not all Sunnis support the *enemy* category, but some do. Thus, he qualifies his statement with the most likely intention of alienating as few Sunni listeners as possible. Finally, references like 'over time' and 'will be persuaded' underscore the dynamic nature of these social categories. Given the right situation, Bush says, the Sunni *other* could be recontextualized as the Sunni *us*.

## **5. Discussion and conclusions**

As the data have shown, metaphorical and metonymic thought pervade political discourse. They are incredibly valuable tools to political elite systems because of the efficiency of their work. It only takes planned lexical choices to trigger powerful connections in the minds of listeners. Power structures at the national level are aware of the potential power of metaphorical discourse, and thus make every effort to influence the discourse circulating among the electorate. A strategic target within the public discourse is that of imagined social categories. If the power structure can dictate how we categorize each other, they can mobilize large numbers of individuals to act on behalf of their ideologies. One efficient method of achieving this is to contextualize the world's population into stark polarities, synthesized to the dichotomy *us/them*. As was the case in the studies featured in the introduction (Sandikcioglu 2000; Lakoff 1992, 2003; Leudar et al. 2004; Santa Ana 1999),

this analysis documented the management of social categories by relegating - via metaphor and metonymy - imagined groups of people into one of two slots, *us* or *them*.

In this analysis, we found the Bush administration utilizing metaphor and metonymy to sculpt an *enemy/other* category that fits with the pre-existing American cultural cognitive model. Using metaphor and metonymy, the Bush administration has explicitly identified the *enemy/other* category. At the same time, however, the data showed that the *enemy* category is indeed dynamic and subject to Administration influence. An important finding from the study was the actor transfer between the concepts of *Saddam* and *terrorist* instigated by a conscious use of metaphor. Perhaps the most surprising finding from the study is the conceptual metaphor of IRAQ AS AMERICA, or the Iraq-America Construct (IAC). The IAC was found to be linked along three themes (a shared enemy, a shared political system, and a shared notion of freedom). The data suggested that IAC necessarily entails a transfer for the Iraqi people from the metaphorical VICTIM to HERO. Finally, the analysis detected the Bush administration's efforts to fragment the *Iraqi people* category by distancing certain segments while showing solidarity to others.

This study contributes further supporting evidence of the persuasive utility of metaphor and metonymy to political discourse. In addition, it provides a close consideration of dynamic social categories and the role metaphor and metonymy play in their articulation. While this study and others draw on empirical evidence to support its claims, continued study of metaphor and metonymy in political discourse would do well to apply the same empirical rigor to the study of public consumption of metaphorical and metonymic thought introduced into the general discourse by the power elite. With the continual expansion of blog-style discursal interaction on the World Wide Web, a wealth of textual evidence is out there and ready for critical analysis.

As we found with the IAC, dichotomous approaches to human society are deceptively appealing. Categorization does simplify a very complex world into smaller, comprehensible units. However, in that simplification process, we lose track of human complexities which do not go away once we ignore them. They remain, despite how much we wish to overlook them. Political discourse that presents the world in stark contrasts does for us an informational disservice.

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<sup>1</sup> Also, my findings were presented to my colleagues in research who then provided me with invaluable feedback and suggestions on numerous occasions. The qualitative analysis I present shortly has benefited greatly from their supportive, and at the same time, critical input.

<sup>2</sup> I will use *Bush administration* interchangeably with the terms *Bush* and *the Administration* throughout this analysis.

<sup>3</sup> This phrase was repeated numerous times during the later part of 2005 to multiple audiences and at multiple venues.

<sup>4</sup> My gratitude to Jonathan Charteris-Black for this insight (12 April 2006, Personal communication).

<sup>5</sup> Collocation frequency counts (terrorist + Saddamist / Saddamist + terrorist) are the following: 2004 (n=1), 2005 (n=20).

<sup>6</sup> For insightful discussions on the negotiation of national identities, see De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., and Wodak, R. (1999); Philips, S. (1998); Wodak, R., de Cillia, R., Reisigl, M., and Liebhart, K. (1999).

<sup>7</sup> See 'Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People' (20 September 2001), President Bush's first major speech following the 11 September attacks and his declaration of war on terror. The speech's text may be viewed in its entirety from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

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