CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

Master's Thesis

2024   **Emma Mosser**

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(De)constructing the Noble Anvil: The 1999 NATO Bombing in Bill Clinton's Political Discourse

Master's Thesis

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Study programme: Security Studies

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Year of the defence: 2024

Declaration

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2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
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In Prague on July 30, 2024   Emma Mosser

References

MOSSER, Emma. *(De)constructing the Noble Anvil: The 1999 NATO Bombing in Bill Clinton's Political Discourse.* Praha, 2024. 94 p. Master's thesis (Mgr). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies, Department of Security Studies. Supervisor doc. PhDr. Vit Střítecký, M.Phil., Ph.D.

Length of the Thesis: 133,348 characters (with spaces)

Abstract

The power of discourse in shaping public opinion is not to be underestimated. Words have a distinct ability to demonstrate political might, establish a narrative status quo, and, in many cases, manipulate an audience into adopting a particular view. In the case of the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, U.S. President Bill Clinton was tasked not only with presenting the political situation to the American public but framing it in a certain way to justify and legitimize NATO's intervention in the Kosovo War. By spinning a narrative based around poignant historical linkages and Us vs. Them oppositions, Bill Clinton not only made his case for the bombing, but set the stage for similar rhetoric to be operationalized by future leaders for their own political gain. Investigating Clinton's own speeches from the period of NATO's intervention, this text employs van Dijk and Fairclough's methods of Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate exactly how Clinton constructed his narrative, and furthermore employs a poststructuralist framework to better understand the ways in which Bill Clinton used language to imbue a sense of truth or essential nature into his tale.

Abstrakt

Sílu diskurzu při utváření veřejného mínění nelze podceňovat. Slova mají výraznou schopnost demonstrovat politickou sílu, vytvářet narativní status quo a v mnoha případech manipulovat publikum, aby přijalo určitý názor. V případě bombardování Jugoslávie ze strany NATO v roce 1999 měl americký prezident Bill Clinton za úkol nejen prezentovat politickou situaci americké veřejnosti, ale také ji určitým způsobem zarámovat, aby ospravedlnil a legitimizoval zásah NATO ve válce v Kosovu. Tím, že Bill Clinton vytvořil narativ založený na dojemných historických souvislostech a protikladu My vs. Oni, nejenže podpořil bombardování, ale připravil půdu pro to, aby podobnou rétoriku mohli

budoucí vůdci používat pro svůj vlastní politický prospěch. Tento text zkoumá Clintonovy

vlastní projevy z období intervence NATO a využívá van Dijkovy a Faircloughovy metody

kritické analýzy diskurzu, aby přesně prozkoumal, jak Clinton konstruoval své vyprávění,

a dále využívá poststrukturalistický rámec, aby lépe porozuměl způsobům, jakými Bill

Clinton používal jazyk, aby svému příběhu vtiskl pocit pravdy nebo zásadní povahy.

Keywords

Clinton, discourse, NATO, Yugoslavia, Milošević, critical discourse analysis,

poststructuralism

Klíčová slova

Clinton, diskurz, NATO, Jugoslávie, Milošević, kritická analýza diskurzu,

poststrukturalismus

Název práce

(De)konstrukce vznešené kovadliny: Bombardování NATO v roce 1999 v politickém

diskurzu Billa Clintona

Acknowledgement

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OAF – Operation Allied Force

UN – United Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

U.S. – United States

WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction

WoT – War on Terror

Author's note on transliteration

Though the instances of Serbian Cyrillic transliteration within this text are limited, a note on spelling is helpful for consistency. When transliteration is needed, the Roman alphabet with diacritics will be used, as per the 2005 BGN/PCGN Agreement for romanization (Ministry of Defence, 2014).

The only exceptions are instances of transliteration within direct quotations, in which case the transliteration from the original text will be honored.

List of figures and tables

Introduction

Standing at an imposing 11-feet tall, a bronze statue of former U.S. president Bill Clinton overlooks a Prishtinë boulevard, serving as a larger-than-life reminder of the man whose efforts to end the Kosovo War also helped pave the way for Kosovo's declaration of independence. But as Kosovars honor their "hero" (The Associated Press, 2009), across the border in Serbia, Clinton and his North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies are condemned for their intervention in the war. "Aggression" (Ministry of Defence, n.d.) is the term often applied to NATO's action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and instead of appreciative tributes to President Clinton, the country has erected solemn memorials remembering those killed as a result of NATO's air campaign.

The difference in perception of NATO's military action against the FRY comes from individual ties to the war, of course, but also relies heavily on the power of language. Different words are selected to describe the same action based on various personal, social, and political contexts, and rhetoric can powerfully mold consensus on a subject or event. The difference in opinion between Kosovo and Serbia on the matter of NATO's intervention relates to their direct involvement in the conflict, which was the result of increasing violence in the face of FRY President Slobodan Milošević's systematic persecution and ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians (Haulman, 2015), but for a third party in this intervention, constructing a widely accepted opinion involved a more focused discursive effort. This task fell to President Bill Clinton, whose lead role in NATO's Operation Allied Force, nicknamed Operation Noble Anvil with regard to the U.S. portion of the mission (Haulman, 2015), meant a different group of individuals required their own narrative: the American public.

This was the first time NATO would undertake a combat operation against a sovereign nation, and though American involvement in finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict had been occurring for months via a Contact Group of foreign ministers, Clinton had to mindfully legitimize armed intervention involving American military forces to the public (Haulman, 2015). The task at hand was clear: construct a particular narrative surrounding the intervention by explaining what was at stake, thus legitimizing the action and reminding American society that for morality and ethics to prevail, NATO needed to act. Like in the diverging narratives of the intervention between Kosovo and Serbia, Clinton, too, needed to create an American narrative for the bombing that could broadly influence public opinion.

The immense strength of language in demonstrating power and manipulating cognition is often taken for granted with regard to everyday rhetoric, but for those in positions of political power that dictate to particular audiences, such as the role of President of the United States, there must be intention behind each word selected for a speech act. Whether directed toward a smaller assembly at a dinner for the Democratic National Committee or meant for the country's entire population, Bill Clinton had to carefully and discursively craft an image of devastation in a war-torn region in need of a final push from the United States and their allies toward a free, stable, democratic future. He had to frame this intervention in a specific light for the American public, in order to persuade public opinion, create a status quo narrative, and ideally, even set the stage for future foreign policy action.

This text looks to analyze exactly how Bill Clinton used language as a political tool to justify and legitimize Operation Allied Force, which lacked UNSC approval and involved

the use of force against a sovereign nation (Ronayne, 2004). By employing the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this paper approaches this (de)construction of language through a poststructuralist lens, employing theories of securitization, Balkanization, and evilization to highlight how Clinton's rhetoric created a moral Us (the United States and its NATO allies) against the Serbian Other (occasionally also the Balkan Other), and explores the various rhetorical techniques involved in this framing. The foundation of this research is Clinton's own rhetoric, represented by thirteen speech acts selected from the very beginnings of the Kosovo War until his victory remarks on June 10, 1999, the end of OAF. An in-depth qualitative analysis will highlight the main discursive techniques employed by President Clinton to build his case, and each technique will be discussed in detail to highlight demonstrations of power, manipulation, and superiority on the President's part.

This text in no way aims to take a stance on questions of morality and legitimacy of the bombing, nor does it intend to minimize the atrocities committed by Slobodan Milošević's regime. Instead, in keeping with the tradition of CDA and critical approaches to International Relations, this text endeavors to explore how discourse shapes a constructed reality and challenge notions of "truth" in the political. Specifically, this text asks the research question: how did Bill Clinton's political discourse use power, manipulation, and superiority to create legitimacy for NATO's Operation Allied Force, thereby establishing the status quo on the bombing of Yugoslavia within American society?

1. Literature Review

While an impressive body of work has covered the role of discourse in the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a poststructuralist approach inherently understands that no two interpretations of language are the same. Understanding is context dependent and based on personal comprehension, as will be more thoroughly explained in the theoretical chapter, so while others have investigated the use of metaphors in Bill Clinton's discourse, or the broader use of linguistic techniques, all authors represent different comprehensions and lived experiences, creating different, even if occasionally similar, interpretations of the power of language in forming social opinion.

Twenty-five years after the intervention, a robust body of literature surrounding the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has been established, including texts looking specifically at political rhetoric on the subject of the bombing. Roland Paris's (2002) *Kosovo and the Metaphor War* is an enlightening dive into the way metaphor imbued political speech from the era with an emotional power, strengthening the case for NATO's intervention. Metaphor, according to Paris, is not just a tool for adding dramatic flourish to one's speech, but is actually a way of shaping the manner "in which people apprehend and respond to a particular issue or event" (Paris, 2002, p.427). Metaphor allows the speaker to control the narrative, tying the issue at hand to historical events and certain phrases with already established meaning and implication, in order to instill within the audience a certain understanding that may even happen unconsciously. The audience is typically unaware that this is happening, but by linking current events with certain moments in history or important metaphorical phrases, the relationship locks into one's mind, creating the specific comprehension that the speaker hoped for.

In the case of the Kosovo War, Paris (2002) argues, these historical linkages created a mental bond between the war and indirectly related but relevant horrors, namely both World Wars and Vietnam. By discursively establishing links between the Kosovo War and other well-known instances of massive bloodshed, the audience is then aware of how to feel about Kosovo. Triggers like "concentration camps", "genocide", and "never again" illustrate a new Holocaust of the 20th century, and there is no need to explicitly detail the horrors, as the comparison alone implies unmatched violence (Paris, 2002, p.436-438). Paris details how other top U.S. political figures such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright worked in tandem with President Clinton to not only use specific metaphors but to *repeat* them and establish a status quo for the broader societal understanding of the Kosovo War as a new Holocaust or new all-out war that American soldiers might be dragged into if the conflict is not contained.

The power of speech in creating a shared political understanding is echoed in Dimitrios Akrivoulis's *Metaphors Matter: The Ideological Functions of the Kosovo-Holocaust Analogy* (2015), but Akrivoulis steps beyond the idea of rhetoric as a tool of deception and propaganda into a space where an examination of rhetoric is needed to evaluate the "facts" surrounding the war and the United States' response. The Holocaust has been used to justify humanitarian intervention and argue the existence of a "just war", and Akrivoulis sees this as problematic (2015, p. 222). Not only does it oversimplify and water down the unbelievable horrors of the Holocaust, but it also shows questionable action on the part of politicians who employ this technique. There is no way to know whether they genuinely believe their intervention is preventing genocide, or whether it is a convenient tool of persuasion at their disposal (Akrivoulis, 2015, p.223). By using the Holocaust as an all-encompassing narrative, policy makers and leaders leave little room for critical examination

of their actions. Either you are against mass atrocity or you are not, and those in the latter camp are, understandably, ostracized. This is especially important to consider for the media and those tasked with reporting on the war. Their narratives should align with those of policy makers, otherwise they risk being deemed, in this case, a Serb-sympathizer or genocide denier, which can make critical journalism difficult, therefore allowing even problematic consensus to continue to spread. Authors such as Hammond (2014), Vincent (2000), and Wolfgram (2008) take a deeper dive into the role the media played in the construction of a coherent narrative surrounding the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and while they offer helpful insight, the media piece makes them beyond the immediate scope of this thesis.

Much like Paris and Akrivoulis, Benjamin Bates (2009) stresses the importance of metaphor in establishing public opinion on a political matter, going so far as to suggest that a "confluence of discourses" from Bill Clinton to other high-level politicians to the media was able to alter public opinion and raise support for American involvement in Kosovo (p.29). For Bates, metaphorically linking Kosovo to the Holocaust or World War II was a two-fold method, with step one establishing the familiar meaning of the situation and step two justifying intervention so as to prevent another World War. To make this metaphorical effort work properly, the speaker must play up similarities and downplay any differences, which is an effort that is seen in the discourse analyzed within Bates' text (2009). He, too, discusses the implications of genocide-adjacent lexicon and comparisons between the Serbs and the Nazis, connecting these discursive acts to the call for political action and the resulting impacts on foreign policy. In this way Bates' work links directly to that of Lene Hansen, whose text on security and discourse focuses on the Bosnian War, but offers tremendous insight into the relationship between discourse and foreign policy.

Lene Hansen (2006) shows not only how political identity is created through discourse, but how that identity is produced and reproduced through foreign policy, and tied to security action taken in the name of one's identity. One of Hansen's key themes is the construction of a Self in contrast to an Other, and this construction is intertwined with foreign policy action. In the case of the Bosnian War, the goal with discourse was to create a link between identity and policy so the two were consistent with one another, in order to legitimize and enforce foreign policy (Hansen, 2006). This theme is likely to also be relevant in this thesis' analysis chapter, and the connection between Bosnia and Kosovo and the respective rhetoric will be emphasized in a way that aims to credit and parallel Hansen's work.

Furthermore, Hansen's connections between the discursive construction of ethics, morality, and responsibility are important for consideration. Though this paper does not aim to defend or attack the ethical or moral responsibility behind the NATO bombing, it does hope to understand how this responsibility was created via Bill Clinton's discourse. Hansen sees the speech act as a conscious effort to articulate an international responsibility, moving the topic at hand (in this case, genocide) from a space of strategy or national interest into a space where morality is in question (Hansen, 2006). This takes the political and turns it personal, linking it to the identity of a group of people and asking a rhetorical question about what type of nation the United States wants to be; a nation that allows genocide to occur uninterrupted, or one that puts an end to it via whatever means are deemed—or discursively constructed—as necessary. This is a powerful tool for swaying political opinion and establishing the status quo.

Paul Chilton's (2004) in-depth analysis of Bill Clinton's speech acts surrounding the NATO bombing is of great value to this thesis, though his focus is quite precise, looking

only at Clinton's speech from the evening of March 24, 1999, when NATO dropped the first bombs. While his work may hover more in the realm of linguistics than international relations, authors such as Paris (2002), Akrivoulis (2015), Hansen (2006), and Bates (2009) have already suggested that the dividing line between the two fields is blurred, or perhaps even nonexistent. There is great overlap between words and action, but even as the practice of analyzing political discourse is hardly new, Chilton's works stress that there is still a lack of concrete theory behind the relationship between language and politics (Chilton, 2003; Chilton, 2004). His thorough analysis of Clinton's word choice from the day NATO's bombing campaign began includes figures which break down the linguistic techniques within the speech, which then serve as a detailed roadmap for conducting one's own analysis beyond the scope of only one speech.

Analyzing only one speech allows Chilton to conduct a precise investigation of language, diving into the linguistic breakdown word by word and sentence by sentence, though his work does still fall in line with the other texts in this chapter in stressing the importance of metaphor. Additionally, linking back to Bates' suggestion that metaphor works by disregarding irrelevant facts and playing up only those that are similar between the two situations or items, Chilton (2004) notes that Clinton used his language to establish a 1:1 comparison between Kosovo and World War II, which would provide the justification needed for NATO and the United States to act. In general, the majority of existing literature on the use of language in the justification of the NATO bombing highlights the same conclusions: tying Kosovo to the two World Wars and other historical atrocities, whether a direct comparison or not, is a poignant tool in constructing the basis for military action, and the role of language in leading to action is not to be underestimated.

Though the NATO bombing occurred in 1999, the events of the September 11, 2001 attacks—and the accompanying discourse research—are instrumental in gaining a more complete understanding of the power of political discourse. Though these instances of violence and massive loss of life are by no means mirror images of one another, the work that has been conducted analyzing George W. Bush's rhetoric surrounding 9/11 and the so-called War on Terror (WoT) was a helpful tool in gaining an exhaustive understanding of the power of discourse in creating the status quo, and establishing a mortal villain with a goal of destroying Us. Additionally, as the successor to the presidency, George W. Bush's own political speech easily exists in a comparative context with Bill Clinton's, and though it will not be covered extensively beyond this portion of the literature review, the similarities between the two constructions of evil in need of a special course of action are notable.

The poststructuralist critical discourse analysis (CDA) conducted by Pamir Sahill (2019) on U.S. War on Terror discourse followed a similar foundation that will be laid out within the following two chapters of this text, and worked to highlight the usefulness of CDA in scrutinizing elitist discourse. Of note, this article unpacks the theory of evilization, which is one of the foundational pillars of this thesis's theoretical framework and as such, will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter (Sahill, 2019). Sahill unpacks Bush's creation of a hegemonic discourse on the subject of terrorism, creating and elaborating upon the inherent evil of Osama bin Laden and discursively creating a need for action. Again, within Sahill's work the issue at hand is not to unpack whether Bush was right or wrong in pursuing an exceptional course of action – rather, he looks to understand the ways in which language worked to depoliticize the War on Terror.

In their book *Discourse, War and Terrorism,* Chad Nilep and Adam Hodges work with their contributors to paint a comprehensive image not only of terrorism discourse in the American 9/11 context, but broadly across the world, to highlight the spread of this behavior and its far-reaching impacts. Noting the transformative impact of the events of September 11th, their book combines expert knowledge from fields varying from communication and media studies to political science to illustrate the far-reaching power of language when it comes to terrorism (Nilep & Hodges, 2007). The authors note that across disciplines, researchers have employed the method of critical discourse analysis to observe the use of language in reacting to and discussing terrorist attacks. With an understanding of discourse as a vital tool for political influence—"to divide interest and dehumanize the Other as a prelude to violence"—Nilep and Hodges' (2007) work might focus specifically on terrorism, but their research and the contributions of the authors within their book provide a helpful basis on seeing language in action within the field of international relations.

A large part of what makes the post-9/11 discourse literature relevant in this thesis is that authors are clear in their condemnation of the initial violent act while continuing to remain critical about the responses and accompanying discourse. In the case of Jack Holland's (2021) work on 9/11 and Critical Terrorism Studies, he notes that while the devastating violence of 9/11 is undeniable, one must also consider the "restructuring of international security" that came after the attack (p. 441). This is in direct connection to the idea that while the violence on the ground in Kosovo was abhorrent, it does not preclude a questioning of NATO and the United States' response. Beyond that, NATO's intervention helped usher in a new era for the organization, much like 9/11 helped spark the War on Terror just two years later, so the broader global impacts of the two can be equally analyzed in terms of the precedent they have potentially set. The intervention reaffirmed the power of the United

States and NATO within the scheme of European security, according to Andrew Cottey's (2009) account of the Kosovo War, reflecting the broader changes in international policy and security toward the norm of humanitarian intervention and liberal peacebuilding. The response to 9/11 only corroborated this new world, says Cottey (2009), further linking the two world events and their accompanying discourse.

The reviewed literature shows that while several scholars have analyzed Bill Clinton's discourse surrounding the NATO bombing, heavy focus has been paid to the role of metaphors, especially those linking Kosovo to the Holocaust and World Wars, and much of the existing literature is focused on a small pool of speeches—in a few cases only one speech—or includes the role of the media in reinforcing this narrative status quo. In this sense, this thesis will aim to fit into and contribute to the existing literature by taking an in-depth approach involving multiple speeches, remarks, and addresses from Bill Clinton during the period surrounding the intervention, looking at the work of one speaker in constructing an opinion for the American people.

Furthermore, this contribution has the benefit of being produced at a time when the academic catalog on 9/11 discourse has become quite robust, meaning that work can be taken into consideration when analyzing Bill Clinton's discourse on the NATO bombing. Specifically, the theory of evilization, noted in this section and to be further conceptualized in the following chapter, will be applied to Clinton's speech acts discussing Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević, which is a perspective that appears to be lacking from the literature. This text's effort to demonstrate how political leaders create a villain out of their opponent benefited immensely from the analyses conducted on Osama bin Laden, and though it would

arguably be a stretch to consider the two leaders in tandem, the words used to paint an image

of unmatched evil will likely demonstrate considerable overlap.

2. Theory: Poststructuralist Thought and International Relations

This research aims to understand the ways in which Bill Clinton's political rhetoric created legitimacy for NATO's operation and established a status quo on the bombing within the United States. As such, it is necessary to establish an appropriate framework to support this work and serve as the basis for the forthcoming analysis. This chapter will develop the relevant theories, offering an exploration of poststructuralist thought as the foundation for the questioning of "natural truth" within our world, before moving on to subchapters for each supporting theory, namely the theories of securitization, Balkanization, and evilization.

This discussion of the role of discourse in shaping political reality stems from critical international relations theories, and the idea that many assumptions within our world are often social constructions that have come to be taken as "fact." These critical approaches emerged in response to traditional, positivist theories which presupposed the existence of eternal political truth(s) within our world and which assumed that reality could be objectively analyzed and uncovered (Baumann, 2022). As such, the primary critical perspective for this body of work is poststructuralism, which does not follow traditional attempts to establish causation, but instead looks to illustrate *how* these structures of our world have been socially constructed, challenging notions of "truth" and "nature" and highlighting the role of language in subjective perception.

Poststructuralism evolved, unsurprisingly, from structuralist concepts, and much of the basis of structuralist thought comes from the linguistic work of Ferdinand de Saussure (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002). Saussure viewed language as a system of differences, and those differences allow us to apply meaning to our reality in order to understand ourselves and the world. The main points of Saussure's theory center around two linguistic signs: the signifier

(French: *signifiant*) and the signified (French: *signifié*). The former relates to the material sign (a spoken or written word) itself, while the latter is the concept to which the sign refers (Newman, 2005). Meaning in our world is established through this process of labeling, which is an arbitrary, conscious, subjective act, rather than something inherent or natural, and from that labeling a fixed system is created, according to structuralists.

This system is the point from which poststructuralism evolved, serving as a jumping off point for theories of language and discourse. Signs still acquire meaning based on their relationship to other signs, but the meanings themselves are context-dependent and malleable for poststructuralists, thus imbuing discourse with a tremendous power in creating understanding. Discourse, defined as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p.1), does not (and cannot) take a neutral stance, but instead involves active efforts to construct (and change) meaning. It is central to the framing of certain things in our world as "natural", including our own identity, and works not only for purposes of creating an understanding of ourselves, our morals, and our values, but also to create an identity that will be perceived by others.

Poststructuralism is especially helpful in understanding the construction of a *state's* identity in relation to others, and how the state is able to create that identity—its own Self— which works in direct opposition to a created Other (Baumann, 2022). The creation of both is done through discourse, and, linking back to Saussure's ideas, it is done especially in consideration of the Self as being differentiated from the Other, with both identities assumed to be "natural." Further inspired by Jacques Derrida's ideas of binary opposition, this Self vs. Other creation extends into the realm of the political by laying the foundations for political domination and power politics (Newman, 2005). As one group builds up the notion

of their in-group, establishing and showing off their power, it becomes necessary to also enhance the notions of the out-group, in order to demonstrate the in-group's righteousness as opposed to the others' negative characterization.

Taking it a step further, once the in-group is established, the out-group or Other may be constructed to be more than just a minor foe—they may become an existential threat to the existence of the in-group. In this case, they must be handled in a certain way and, importantly for this thesis, *discussed* in a certain way, which brings the notion of various theories of othering and villain creation into this text, to better understand how this discourse works to lay the groundwork for action against the out-group.

2.1 Securitization

Discourse can be utilized in a way that constructs certain people or issues as being a threat to one's existence, or the existence of a pre-established in-group, and this is considered under the broad umbrella of constructivist thought as the idea of securitization. Securitization, as conceptualized by the Copenhagen School, and more specifically Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde (1998), relies entirely on the discursive act, which is responsible for establishing something as an existential threat. There are certain conditions that must be met in order for discourse to properly securitize, including the labeling of something as that existential threat, the call for emergency action, and an implication that this action will be outside of the regular rule of law, but more importantly, something can only truly be securitized when the audience believes or accepts that this threat really calls for special action out of the norm (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998). This might come from the speaker's position of authority; a president, for example, is often able to successfully securitize because their position of power means they are, in theory, meant to be trusted. It

requires a combination of linguistic and social components, as the threat must be qualified within a specific context to make it relevant to the given audience, and furthermore, for it to be deemed realistic or plausible.

Within the case at hand, securitization will be examined through Clinton's discourse on Serbia as a threat not only to European security, but American security and American futures as well. Given the geographic distance between the United States and Serbia (then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), as well as the differing material military and hard power capabilities between the two countries, the theory of securitization is expected to play a large role in the analysis of Clinton's discourse, to better understand how he frames this turbulent country in southern Europe as an existential threat to the United States. Additionally, the theory of securitization will require consideration when it comes to NATO's air campaign, which, as noted, was conducted without UNSC approval (Ronayne, 2004). Due to that fact, Clinton's justification for OAF with disregard for UN approval will link to the need to handle this extraordinary threat, thus bringing securitization into the mix when analyzing his discourse.

2.2 Balkanization

Maria Todorova's (1994) conceptualization of Balkanization is also a vital piece to this thesis, as it connects to Bill Clinton's discursive creation of the Serb/Balkan Other, and is likely to have implications for the considerations of Serbia and Kosovo as European or non-European. Todorova's work emerged at a time when the Balkan region was firmly on the world stage (but before the specific events that are to be analyzed within this text occurred), and the most poignant bit of Todorova's work on Balkanization is that while various other

derogatory concepts such as racism and misogyny have found their repudiations, this negative framing of the Balkans continues to exist without its antithesis (Todorova, 1994).

While her text is now thirty years old, and looking at whether this view of the Balkans is still the case in 2024 is beyond the scope of this paper, at the time of Bill Clinton's presidency it was quite applicable. Part of what makes Balkanization important for this thesis is the idea that Balkan self-identities were created to be opposed to "oriental others" as well as Western others, placing the Balkans somewhere in a non-European, non-"Oriental" purgatory, which is relevant for Clinton's explanations of the bloodshed in the region during the 1990s (Todorova, 1994, p.455). It offers a way to discursively construct the Balkans in whatever vague terms Clinton may deem fit, and it has implications for considering the aftermath of the intervention and plans for post-conflict resolution. Balkanization as a concept helps cover various distinct othering that occurs both within and *to* the Balkans, such as a geographic distinction from both Europe and the Middle East, and claims of barbarism vs. civility. Themes such as non-Europeaning of the Balkans will be exhibited within Bill Clinton's rhetoric around the NATO intervention, and other ideas of a non-civilized, untrustworthy people as discussed by Todorova (1994) will be highlighted in the forthcoming analysis as well.

2.3 Evilization

While securitizing something or someone is a major factor in the establishment of an enemy, and this concept has been highlighted in international relations theory for several decades, a newer idea of evilization further contextualizes securitization in constructing an enemy out of a person or group of people, allowing the speech act to go a step further and label someone as an inherent evil that must be destroyed.

Evilization, at its core, is a more drastic version of securitization, typically involving an actor representing an autocratic society whose behavior is at odds with international law, thus sparking concerns about inhumane treatment of certain groups of people (Sahill, 2019, p.479). The concept works in a similar manner to securitization in that it aims to construct someone as being an existential threat to another group or individual's existence, but it differs in three key ways (Müller, 2014).

Firstly, evilization requires an intentionally acting agent behind the threat. In the case to be analyzed in this thesis that person is Slobodan Milošević, and this differs from securitization in the sense that something/someone can be securitized without an intentional actor behind the scenes, but someone cannot be properly evilized if there is no independent actor working with agency to cause or push the action. The next difference is the specific profile being assigned to this evil actor. With Milošević, certain terms and descriptors were employed by Bill Clinton to paint the image of a dangerous madman whose evil acts were beyond the pale. This will be further investigated in the analysis chapter, and as such will not be detailed in this section. Lastly, evilization calls for the linkage of this profile with their domestic system or practice of rule. This actor is not only evil, but they are a special brand of evil, and their evil acts are part of their soul, thus suggesting that they exist outside of moral character and humanity.

Evilization relies on a dichotomy that demonizes an Other against the Self, no matter the type of contradictory, paradoxical, and inconsistent behavior that is exhibited by the Self (Sahill, 2017). It is a drastic form of othering, and it works well to establish an Us versus Them binary conceptualization where those doing the securitizing or evilizing must act as a

collective against this evil other, no matter what it takes. In this, the Self has an implied higher moral ground, and it is up to them to put an end to this evilized Other. Bill Clinton instrumentalized this in order to construct such a villain in Slobodan Milošević that U.S. involvement in this conflict was necessary, and the frame of evilization allowed him to justify intervention out of the normal course of action, implicating the entire country of Serbia in his rhetoric as a guilty party in Milošević's terror.

2.4 A final note on theory

Before continuing to this paper's methodology chapter, it becomes important to include something of a disclaimer regarding poststructural theory within this framework and text. Critics of poststructuralism often tout the theory as being linked to a nihilistic worldview, wherein there is no ability to distinguish between right and wrong and nothing truly exists (Baumann, 2022). This presupposition comes from a misguided place, and approaching this thesis with an attitude suggesting that it questions the material existence of *anything*, such as the campaign of violence led by Milošević's forces, or is somehow suggesting that this NATO intervention is unimportant, would be doing this work a disservice. Instead, this thesis uses poststructuralist theory to examine the ways in which discourse worked to construct a certain image and attitude toward the bombing, and specifically, how Bill Clinton used discourse to create a narrative for American opinion around this intervention. This thesis does not concern itself with questions about whether the bombing was morally justified, but instead intends only to unpack the discursive techniques involved with creating a certain construction of the bombing within American political discourse and American society.

3. Methodology

As the selected theoretical underpinning for this text, the poststructuralist perspective on the construction of identity will be further aided by a methodology that allows for the thorough investigation of these discursive acts through a lens of power and ideology. A poststructuralist view of the world lends itself to the techniques of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which will be used to guide this work's data collection and the subsequent analysis. CDA is a social constructivist approach to discourse analysis, where theory and method work in close cooperation to better understand ways that meaning within our world is constructed and understood via speech acts (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). More specifically, poststructuralist CDA is focused on unpacking and questioning our discursively constructed world in an effort to identify holes in the social and political fabric and understand how dominance, discrimination, and control are empowered through language. CDA is to be understood as a method for understanding and explaining dominant discourse and its effects on power structures and systems of oppression (Sahill, 2017). Additionally, CDA allows a detailed look into the ways language and social processes work together, and how language functions in power structures (Graham, 2005).

In general, CDA is not a perfectly defined system of analysis, meaning it lacks a widely agreed-upon scientific method and should instead be considered as a cluster of similar approaches and theoretical bases that work together to analyze language. To further complicate matters, various practitioners of critical discourse analysis do not even specify data collection processes or research methods, suggesting instead that new data and new questions can always be pulled into the research fold (Meyer, 2001). Given how diverse and broad CDA can be, this thesis will employ Norman Fairclough's CDA methods in

conjunction with Teun A. van Dijk's, with the goal of establishing a firmer scientific base to guide this analysis by combining two methods and understandings.

3.1 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

As a method, Norman Fairclough's (1995) conceptualization of CDA focuses primarily on the ways in which discourse is used in the relationship between ideology and power, and works to understand how language is used as a form of domination. This, according to Fairclough, is done via both implicit and explicit content, involving presuppositions and implications within the speech act to show what a speaker wants to construct as given, or common sense (Fairclough, 1995). Within this text's analysis chapter, such methods of enforcing power and domination will be investigated to better understand how President Bill Clinton's speech acts during the aforementioned period worked to reinforce Western supremacy in the face of Balkan violence. Furthermore, in Fairclough's CDA, language is considered to be a form of social practice, and one that oscillates between the structure surrounding that social practice and the action that results from it, therefore offering helpful implications within this text for understanding how President Clinton's discursive acts created this shared majority opinion in the United States on the subject of the Kosovo War and legitimized the subsequent action taken in defense of that opinion (Fairclough, 1995).

The starting point for conducting a critical discourse analysis using the guidelines of Fairclough's technique is identifying the social problem that is to be analyzed (Meyer, 2001). The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is the broader social issue for this text, but more specifically, it will analyze the ways in which U.S. president Bill Clinton's speech acts worked to justify the United States' role in this intervention and establish legitimacy for action.

31

Next, according to Fairclough, it is necessary to identify the dominant styles, genres, and techniques of the discourse, which is an endeavor that will be completed within this text's analysis chapter, as well as identifying resistance to the colonization processes executed by the dominant discourse (Meyer, 2001, p. 12). In terms of the former, the lack of diversity within President Clinton's discourse will be analyzed to highlight the hegemony within his speeches on the subject of this military intervention.

The resistance to colonialism with regard to this discourse is more difficult to conceptualize. Defined in the simplest terms as the "domination of a people or area by a foreign state or nation" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), and influenced by this author's interpretation of that definition within the context of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, it is not a stretch to consider that colonial practices could be considered as having taken place. The framing of this intervention through a colonial lens will be visible through the analysis of Clinton's rhetoric, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to thoroughly consider responses on the Serbian side to this colonialism-adjacent discourse. Various works have been published on the subject, including Mihaljinac, N., & Vujošević, A (2021) and Radanović Felberg, T. (2015), which offer examples of the alternative perspective of the discourse surrounding NATO's intervention, though it must be noted that, again, due to the subjective nature of this type of analysis, "objectivity" within each of these texts is based on the authors' personal interpretations, and may not be considered entirely unbiased scholarship.

3.2 Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis

Returning to the methodology of CDA, the other author whose works offer structure and guidance for this paper's forthcoming analysis is Teun A. van Dijk. Having written several texts on CDA, van Dijk's methods will be used in this paper not only due to his overarching

contributions to the field, but because he focuses on the role of discourse in reproducing, legitimizing, confirming, and eventually challenging dominance and power abuse (van Dijk, 1993; van Dijk, 2015). Specifically, linking his own work to the work of Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, van Dijk highlights the primary tenets of CDA as (van Dijk, 2015, p.467):

1. Addressing social problems.

2. Showing how power relations are discursive.

3. Highlighting how discourse constitutes society and culture.

4. Doing ideological work through discourse.

5. Linking discourse to history.

6. Mediating the link between text and society.

7. Interpreting and explaining reality through discourse.

8. Showing how discourse is a form of social action.

Much like Norman Fairclough, van Dijk notes that there is not a unitary structure to guide the theory or method behind critical discourse analysis, but there are instead typical approaches to analyzing language use and communication to see the power structures at play. Van Dijk suggests that discourse works to bridge the gap between micro and macro level societal structures, wherein group members use their own language and verbal interaction to reflect the power of their broader group/organization/institution (van Dijk, 2015). To this end, the discourse then acts as a political tool for the group to influence others, exhibit their power, and, ideally, control the actions and opinions of other groups (van Dijk, 2015).

Offering a bit more concrete structure than Fairclough, van Dijk's CDA takes a look at the act of repeating certain discourse about events and the impact this repetition can have on mental models, thus leading to a manipulation of beliefs (van Dijk, 2015). The specific discursive techniques for analysis via van Dijk's CDA include implications and

presuppositions, metaphors, lexical expression, and passive sentence structures (van Dijk, 2015, p.473-474). Additionally, van Dijk suggests that a researcher consider morphology, pronouns, syntax, and discursive tools like storytelling in order to capture the methods of dominance present within a discourse (van Dijk, 2015, p.475). Van Dijk's schema of the discursive reproduction of power is below, which will be considered in conjunction with the aforementioned techniques to highlight Clinton's work in shaping the narrative and enforcing U.S. power in relation to the NATO bombing.
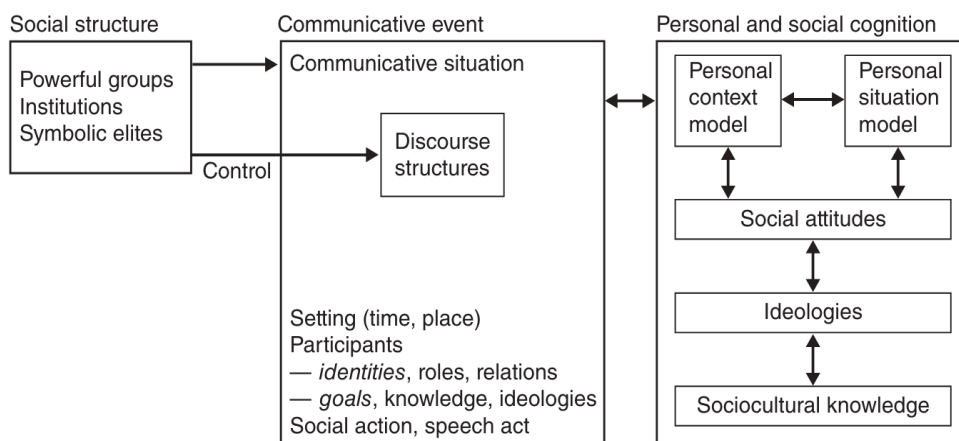
Figure 22.1   Schema of the discursive reproduction of power.

Figure 1 van Dijk's schema of the discursive reproduction of power (van Dijk, 2015, p.474)

Earlier work from van Dijk on discourse's role in manipulation will offer additional guidance on CDA methods for considering the construction of a narrative with potent political influence. Manipulation in this sense is considered by van Dijk to be a discursive method of elite power production, which works against certain groups in favor of the elites who are responsible for the discourse (van Dijk, 2006, p. 264). By playing on two mnemonic methods – short term memory (STM) and long term memory (LTM) – the political elites are able to focus on catchy phrases and descriptors in the former, and use historic knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies in the latter, all with the goal of manipulating opinion on some

greater societal level (van Dijk, 2006, p. 365-367). These techniques coincide with certain language use—as will be examined within Clinton's lexicon—and the mention of historical memories to show the audience how they are meant to feel about a separate event.

Manipulation can furthermore be discursively conducted via techniques like blaming the victim, which involves re-attributing responsibility to a certain individual or collective, or a manipulation of social cognition, which is done on a broader social level than the memory techniques mentioned above, which are more personal (van Dijk, 2006). It is to be noted, however, that for van Dijk, "most interaction and discourse is thus produced and understood in terms of mental models that combine personal and social beliefs", meaning that all aspects of this cognitive manipulation, whether personal or collective, are to be considered (van Dijk, 2006, p.39).

For the purposes of this text, the manipulation of society is of tremendous interest, and van Dijk's methods through which an actor is able to discursively shape the cognition of society must be discussed. Techniques like rhetoric that invokes a highly emotional event or repeated messages and exploitation of related events will be discussed within this text's analysis section (van Dijk, 2006). It is in the manipulator's best interest, he suggests, to also offer only "partial, biased, or misguided" information to one's audience, and an exploration of this technique within president Clinton's rhetoric will be conducted within this paper's analysis chapter, along with a look into how Clinton employed certain passive sentence constructions to minimize responsibility and either downplay or over-exaggerate NATO/the U.S.'s actions, which is sure to impact the audience's cognition of a given event (van Dijk, 2006, p.371). Various other methods highlighted by van Dijk that will be considered alongside those already noted in this section include positive self-presentation vs. negative

other-presentation, certain lexical choices to establish a status quo about the intervention, and overly general or vague descriptions within Clinton's political rhetoric (van Dijk, 2006).

3.3 Case Selection and Data Gathering

As noted, neither Fairclough nor van Dijk's techniques include overly rigid data collection instructions, but given their methodologies as detailed above, this paper will employ a technique that incorporates the fundamental approaches of both. This means the primary analytical method to be employed within this text is a detailed qualitative analysis of the various rhetorical devices and discursive techniques employed by Bill Clinton to ensure he could meet his political goals vis-a-vis the NATO bombing, which will be conducted based on his political speeches during the timeframe of the event. Van Dijk (2015) emphasizes the ability of speakers from powerful groups to "indirectly control the minds and actions of others" (p. 470), and as such, the decision to analyze Bill Clinton's speeches stems from his role as U.S. head of state, and as a steadfast NATO leader, making him a key player in the decision to intervene and giving him a special platform for justifying this action to the American people and influencing opinion.

While the explanation of choosing Clinton as the focus of this data may be clear, the exclusion of political speeches or rhetoric from various other elite American political figures close to the conflict may benefit from further explanation or justification. Firstly, when it comes to rhetorically establishing domination, Bill Clinton's status as president would be more powerful for the audience (the American people) than a figure such as Secretary of State or Congressman. Being the president of the United States is a role inherently associated with the constructed authority awarded to the head political leader of the country, even if the audience does not agree politically, so Clinton has a stronger ability to influence with his

rhetoric through just his status alone. Additionally, with certain expectations placed on the president to hold recurring "check ins" with the American people (Clinton's frequent radio addresses to American citizens, for example), there is a more robust and dependable collection of speeches to choose from.

This leads to the next point, which is that Clinton's audience is often full of lay people to whom he must justify his political activity, meaning it offers a tremendous foundation for the creation of his narrative about the bombing and the stance that the American people were meant to take on this intervention. Some of the rhetoric considered comes from Democratic National Committee dinners or White House Correspondents' dinners, but these were included for analysis on the grounds that numerous members of the public would be in the audience, and after-the-fact reporting on Clinton's activities would likely occur, meaning they are still considered speech acts directed toward the general public rather than other politicians in a setting such as a congressional meeting. For other political figures, such as Madeleine Albright, the audiences were occasionally the American public but were more often constituted entirely of other politicians, meaning the intention behind the rhetoric may be different or may lack that domination that would be clear from speech directed toward society, hence the exclusion from this analysis.

Another consideration that had been made within this text was whether to include media reports as relevant data for analysis, but given the argument that justification for intervention was discursively constructed by Bill Clinton's political speeches, it does not feel necessary to back up the claims with reporting from the mainstream media. It would, of course, offer further insight into the ways in which this rhetoric spread to become mainstream not only within political circles, but that remains beyond the scope of this work.

Returning to the details of data collection, Fairclough's method suggests an initial data pull and analysis before then adding additional sources into the mix, since data collection and analysis within CDA is an ongoing process, so this is the approach that was undertaken within this thesis (Meyer, 2001). The initial gathering of data was conducted via The American Presidency Project website, where, regardless of the document title, subject matter, or length, all of Bill Clinton's speeches, addresses, and associated presidential documents that pulled into a search from the timeframe of the event (March 24, 1999 – June 10, 1999) were reviewed to find any possible mentions of Kosovo or Yugoslavia (Woolley & Peters, n.d.). Of the 470 documents that pulled into the search, those which mentioned the terms Kosovo, Serbia, Yugoslavia, and/or Slobodan Milošević were properly examined for an initial consideration of the themes present and the rhetorical devices employed by Bill Clinton that aligned with Fairclough and van Dijk's techniques as described in the above sections.

From there, an additional data collection was completed, capturing speeches from an expanded date range of January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1999. Though the conflict was not under way as early as the beginning of 1998, nor still active after the bombing through the end of 1999, this method was employed in an attempt to create a catch all for stray discourse that may have come from Clinton to the American public and would therefore need to be considered for this analysis. Based on this data, the speeches that offered more extensive discourse on Kosovo or the war were selected, and a more thorough reading of each was conducted. This led to 13 speeches and interviews being selected due to their thematic association with Kosovo, Serbia, Yugoslavia, and/or Slobodan Milošević, as well as their offering of poignant discourse on the subject matter. From this point, an initial analysis of the themes and discursive techniques present within the discourse was conducted, in order

to separate out recurring themes, linguistic devices, and rhetorical constructs, and establish the several categories that appeared to capture the most important rhetoric to be considered for Bill Clinton's construction of the narrative to justify the U.S.'s involvement in this bombing.

These categories, which will guide the forthcoming analysis, are illustrated below:

Discursive Technique	Objective
Passive Sentences & Minimization	Downplay actions; minimize responsibility; normalize behavior
Reattribution of responsibility	Return focus to the "real" villain; play the blame game
Manipulating social cognition via generalization	Utilize sociocultural knowledge as a tool to generalize a specific issue
Positive self-presentation vs. negative other-presentation	Establish the good, moral Us against an evil, inhumane Other; focus on our values
Vagueness, imprecision, and lack of detail	Dance around the truth; guarantee plausible deniability
Emphasizing authority	Maximize trust and legitimacy
Storytelling	Play on emotions; leave a visual mark in the mind's eye
Lexicon	Mold the narrative as one sees fit; set the status quo for terminology

Table 1 Identified discursive techniques and their corresponding objectives

The left side of the table indicates the primary strategies identified within President Bill Clinton's discursive acts to frame the NATO bombing and the United States' involvement in a way that would be palatable to U.S. citizens and therefore justify action. The right-hand column indicates the intentions that are paired with each technique to meet a certain goal or

end. While the content of the speeches will be taken into consideration, the analysis will look primarily at the ways in which Clinton employed the discursive methods themselves for his political ends, which cannot be separated from the content but are also broadly applicable to all forms of political speech, thus situating the research of this thesis in the broader fields of politics and international relations outside of the realm of just this intervention.

Within this research there are limitations to consider, one of which stems from Fairclough's own guidelines for critical discourse analysis. This limitation comes from a form of CDA that takes into consideration broader institutional and discursive practices, in order to properly analyze how language might change from regular daily discourse to that which aims to manipulate or demonstrate power (Fairclough, 2010). My research focuses solely on Clinton's discourse during this specific period, rather than his entire backlog of presidential speeches or addresses, therefore setting a limitation on how comprehensive this text can be with regard to the way he structures his discourse and uses language. However, that would create an enormous body of work that goes beyond the limits of a master's thesis, and therefore, while it is a limitation, it does not exclude this work from contributing to the scholarship.

Further limitations coincide with data gathering techniques and access, or lack thereof, to databases to aid in information collection. The database chosen for this work, The American Presidency Project, launched in 1999 and boasts a strong method for collecting data, distinguishing between various categories of presidential speech such as remarks versus official addresses, but this research must operate under the assumption that every political speech from the earlier addressed period was properly labeled and included in the search conducted on the site. With no access to paid search engine services like LexisNexis,

this is one limitation to consider, and it also contributed to the choice of only analyzing Clinton's speeches, rather than the speeches of his cabinet or fellow politicians. This database was a comprehensive way to gather the necessary data from one leader, whereas broadening the scope of politicians would have presented challenges when attempting to read all speeches during this time frame to select the most appropriate for analysis.

An additional limitation considered by this author relates to the actual interaction with these speeches during the research process. As noted, the data was all gathered via The American Presidency Project website, meaning speeches were analyzed exclusively via the act of reading transcripts. This means there are limitations to the perception of the various speech acts, since certain emphasis, pauses, stress, or even the speed at which President Clinton was speaking is likely to be lost in the reading (van Dijk, 2006). By not witnessing video footage of all included speeches, addresses, and remarks, it is possible that some rhetorical devices may be lost, but since the categories indicated for analysis do not take into consideration such verbal acts, it should not impact the findings. The only case in which video footage of a speech act is taken into consideration within this text is during Clinton's address on the day the NATO bombing began, as his reference to a specific map called for further research into what the audience of that televised speech would have witnessed, in order to understand the full impact of the discursive act.

A final limitation to be considered connects to this text's poststructuralist framework but is more abstract than the above limitations. The entire theoretical approach supposes that there is no such thing as a material truth in our world, and that meanings are assigned based on perception, personal experiences, and the arbitrary association between signifier and signified, and this cannot be taken for granted within this text. All arguments made within

these pages are based on the author's interpretation, and even seemingly insignificant details like definitions are subject to various other understandings depending on who is performing the analysis. To that end, meaning remains, as ever, unfixed, which is an important note when considering that this analysis is being conducted twenty-five years after the NATO bombing. Within this 25-year time span, other authors have conducted research on the role of discourse surrounding the NATO bombing, but identical interpretations are impossible within a poststructuralist critical discourse analysis. Different signs have different meanings for each researcher, different items have different importance, and more importantly, a quarter of a century has passed, meaning new experiences and occurrences—such as the events of September 11, 2001—can offer new levels of insight and influence into the understanding of the effects of political discourse in ways that were not possible at the time of the bombing or the years in between the two events.

4. Empirical Findings: Critical Discourse Analysis

"I have a responsibility as President to deal with problems such as this before they do permanent harm to our national interests. America has a responsibility to stand with our allies when they are trying to save innocent lives and preserve peace, freedom, and stability in Europe. That is what we are doing in Kosovo."

– Clinton, 1999e

Discursively creating a need for U.S./NATO intervention in the Kosovo War did not take long. Having only publicly discussed Kosovo three times before the eve of the bombing, President Clinton was quick to employ specific rhetoric and discursive techniques to make his case (Bates, 2009). President Clinton, however, also had the distinct advantage of the American public being familiar with Slobodan Milošević due to his role in the Bosnian War, which meant much of the heavy narrative lifting was already done when it came to illustrating the villainous behavior of the Serbian leader.

Linking Milošević's campaign in Kosovo with his atrocities of the recent past was a vital tool in Bill Clinton's discursive arsenal, and by indelibly connecting the horrors of Kosovo to those of Bosnia, both guilt and recency bias helped in his case for action. It also worked to establish the American/Western Us in contrast to the Serb/Yugoslav Them, using the regional violence of the decade to paint the image of a warmongering people who are determined to shake up the stability that the West has worked tirelessly to provide. Much of the rhetoric, as will be 43ighlyghted in this chapter and the next, works to paint an image of American assistance in Kosovo as once and for all ending violence in the Balkans, and the continent of Europe in general.

This analysis does not mean to oversimplify the complexity of language and therefore notes an inability to place Clinton's discursive techniques into cut and dry categories. This means that among the eight techniques to be analyzed (see Figure 1), there is often overlap between each. As such, while this text might consider certain lexical choices as resting within one category, this does not preclude them from overlapping with additional categories (e.g. a term within the *Lexicon* subchapter could also theoretically fall within *Manipulating Social Cognition via Generalization* if it evokes emotion from the World Wars or the Holocaust). The eight techniques for analysis should be considered as working in tandem—the moving parts of one whole machine—rather than as separate instances of unrelated discourse. Additionally, much of this relies on the author's interpretation, per the implications of a poststructuralist framework, so these linkages are always able to change and adapt. As such, the categories are necessary for analysis but must not be viewed as existing exclusively from one another.

Furthermore, there were various inconsistencies discovered between President Clinton's constructed narratives in each given speech act. For example, in some cases, the analysis will show that Clinton pitted Milošević as an individual against the United States' collective might, but in some, he implicated the Serbs as a general population representing evil. Other instances of contradiction and incoherence will be addressed in the analysis, but in general, the techniques all point back to the primary research focus of this text: how Bill Clinton's political discourse used power, manipulation, and superiority to create legitimacy for NATO's Operation Allied Force, thereby establishing the status quo on the bombing of Yugoslavia within American society.

The following critical discourse analysis will use those eight categories to deconstruct Bill Clinton's speech acts and thoroughly analyze his use of language and rhetorical devices. This chapter employs the CDA guidelines presented within the methodological chapter, selecting the most poignant instances of each technique from the thirteen selected political speech acts for deeper investigation. Within the appendix the full table of cited speeches can be found, but for the purposes of concise analysis, this chapter will only directly quote the most important, telling discourse. The analysis is divided into sections for each discursive technique, gathered from both van Dijk and Fairclough's methodologies and working toward the end goal of showing how these discourse structures emphasize Clinton's power, focus on the beliefs he wants the American public to accept, discredit alternative viewpoints, and in the end, create a narrative of the Kosovo War as a natural sociocultural "truth" (van Dijk, 2006; Fairclough, 1995).

4.1 Passive sentences & minimization

Passive sentence constructions downplay agency and involvement. This works in everyday language, where passive speech can remove responsibility (e.g. I threw the ball → the ball was thrown) and suggest that an action occurred without directly implicating the actor who actually caused it. Taken to the level of the NATO intervention and bombing, this makes a difference. This rhetorical device is seen most tellingly in the instance of the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, in which NATO bombs killed three and wounded twenty (Haulman, 2015).

> *"Unfortunately the Chinese Embassy was inadvertently damaged, and people lost their lives, and others have been injured."* (Clinton, 1999g)

> *"...I send my regrets and my profound condolences to the leaders and the people of China, and to the innocent people in Serbia who have perished."* (Clinton, 1999g)

Particular attention should be paid to the phrasing "people lost their lives" and "who have perished" (Clinton, 1999g), both of which remove the responsibility from those who actually ended those lives, as if their deaths were simply something that happened—almost as if they were a *natural* phenomenon. The sentences are constructed in a way that disconnects the deaths from the NATO campaign, leaving room for ambiguity in the comprehension of the impact of the bombing. Even as Clinton sends his condolences to the people of China, he keeps it vague, implying that something went wrong without admitting any specific guilt, and in the first quotation, use of the term "inadvertently" further clarifies that this was a tragic accident, removing the responsibility and trivializing the action.

Bill Clinton's speech acts regarding Operation Allied Freedom feature another specific technique that keeps responsibility off of his conscience: he creates something of an omniscient being out of NATO—one that was linked to the action that occurred, but not the one who directly caused the action. It is not exactly a passive construction, but it works in a similar way, shielding the individual actors (Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Javier Solana, etc.) from obvious participation in the operation and keeping responsibility less explicitly defined.

> *"NATO has agreed to delay action for 96 hours."* (Clinton, 1998c)
>
> *"NATO has authorized airstrikes if Serbia fails to comply…"* (Clinton, 1999a)
>
> *"NATO has warned President Milosevic to end his intransigence and repression or face military action."* (Clinton, 1999b)
>
> *"…I'm convinced that NATO should continue its mission."* (Clinton, 1999g)

These quotations suggest that NATO is an independent actor with the ability to lead this intervention without coordination between various member states. At the time of the bombing, nineteen individual nations were members of NATO (NATO, 2024), but Bill Clinton's rhetoric constructs an image of the organization as a single entity acting of its own volition, rather than under the influence of leaders and representatives from the various member states. The final quote above is especially poignant, as it implies that NATO's mission is separate from the United States, with Clinton choosing to refer to it as "its" mission rather than "our" mission, even as the U.S. was an active participant.

Minimization is another technique observed in Bill Clinton's rhetoric that works toward a similar goal. This categorization came into consideration after frequent instances of Clinton downplaying the United States and NATO's involvement in the conflict, as well as instances of general minimization of the seriousness of the Kosovo War itself or intervention.

In some cases, this was done by overgeneralization of the conflict:

"Now, that's what this Kosovo thing is all about." (Clinton, 1999c)

"Now, let me tell you that this is like any other military action." (Clinton, 1999c)

"...had a big battle in Kosovo, and we've hated you all ever since." (Clinton 1999h)

The presence of such minimizations in Clinton's rhetoric was surprising, given his simultaneous attempts to phrase this conflict, Milošević's evil, and NATO's eventual intervention as being completely extraordinary circumstances (more on this later), but sure enough, at times it worked in his benefit to act as if this was business as usual. The

first two included quotations generalized the conflict so intensely in order to downplay the severity and danger involved, and even the repetitive nature of the syntax of both shows an effort on Clinton's part to use repetition as a form of eventual normalization.

The phrase "this Kosovo thing" (Clinton, 1999c) is extremely telling, as the lack of details with regard to this conceptualization works in two ways: one, it suggests that the conflict is such common knowledge that Clinton need not explain details of warring factions, the situation on the ground, etc., and two, it implies that this conflict is, again, something of a natural occurrence. "This Kosovo thing" (Clinton, 1999c) — we all know about this constant, natural violence, so there is no need to explain further. This works in tandem with much of the ideas of poststructuralist thought, where language implicates those features of our world that we consider natural, leaving no room to question why we feel that way, and this is no exception.

The other minimization that must be discussed is the "big battle in Kosovo" (Clinton 1999h), which is an effort to downplay one of the sources of tension between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs. Referencing the 1389 battle between the Serbs and the Ottoman Turks in the Kosovo Polje, which is typically cited by Serbs as the basis for their claims to Kosovo, Clinton minimizes the importance of this battle in collective memory (Judah, 1999). Of course, his American audience would almost certainly be unaware of this significance, but his rhetorical minimization is of greater interest for this analysis.

It has been suggested (Judah, 1999) that emphasizing the importance of the Battle of Kosovo was a manipulation tactic exploited by Milošević as a tool for political gain rather than an actual point of genuine interest, and it has since been played upon by later

politicians, including current Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. It is telling to then compare Clinton's constructed narrative, used for his own political gain, against that of Milošević's, as, in the grand scheme of things, both actors are seen adding a flourish to historical events for their own advantage, further demonstrating the potency of language in the political arena across all varieties of regimes.

4.2 Reattribution of responsibility

In some cases, rather than minimize responsibility, President Clinton opted to redirect the focus back toward Milošević or Serbia, so the conversation would move from questions of his wrongdoing back to the "real" enemy. This worked primarily in the speech acts analyzed from news conferences or remarks where the press was involved, where Clinton could not control the entire narrative and would need to instead redirect.

> *"Now, he says here that this is not like what happened last fall, that this threatens Serbia's sovereignty to have a multinational force on the ground in Kosovo. But he has put that at risk by his decade—and I want to reemphasize that—his decade of denial of the autonomy to which the Kosovars are legally entitled as a part of Serbia."* (Clinton, 1999b)

> "Q. *'So you would act first then? I mean—'*
> The President. *'I don't think it's accurate to say we're acting first. I think they have acted first.'"* (Clinton, 1999b)

The second quote should be additionally analyzed to take into consideration Clinton's interruption. Arguably, this indicates Clinton's comprehension of the power of language. He did not want the reporter to put forth his own narrative, lest it leave its mark and introduce doubt into the narrative Clinton was creating. His interruption served to redirect

and maintain the specific status quo, and a similar technique is seen in the rebuttal he offers when a reporter points to Russia's labeling of the bombing as barbaric:

"Well, it wasn't barbaric. What is barbaric is what Mr. Milošević has done." (Clinton, 1999g)

Leaving no room for doubt or questioning, Clinton immediately shuts down the suggestion and returns the blame to Milošević, the true villain in this situation. Earlier in the same set of remarks, which serve as his official statement following the accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy, Clinton quickly offers his condolences (discussed within the previous subchapter), before immediately reminding the public of what is really at stake in this campaign.

"And I think it's important to remember why these airstrikes are necessary. Many thousands of Kosovars have been killed. There have been rapes; they have been burned out of their homes; their records have been destroyed; and hundreds of thousands have been turned into refugees." (Clinton, 1999g)

Even while offering his albeit weak apologies for the deaths of civilians, Clinton takes this opportunity to highlight the violence at the center of this bombing campaign. These deaths are not pointless, he seems to imply, reminding them that a few civilian casualties are nothing in the face of this ethnically motivated violence, which urges the American people to stick by him even in the face of future collateral damage.

A final illustrative instance of this reattribution of responsibility comes when Clinton addressed the nation after securing NATO's victory over Milošević.

"You should know that your leaders could have kept Kosovo as a part of your country without driving a single Kosovar family from its home, without killing a single adult or child, without inviting a single NATO bomb to fall on your country. You endured 79 days of bombing not to keep Kosovo a province of Serbia but simply because Mr. Milosevic was determined to eliminate Kosovar Albanians from Kosovo, dead or alive." (Clinton, 1999i)

In particular, this speech act serves as an indication of how Bill Clinton viewed responsibility for the violence in the Kosovo War. Certainly, Milošević was at the helm, but there is a clear implication that average Serbs were not entirely innocent in this war. "You should know" and "your leaders" (Clinton, 1999i) both carry a patronizing weight, with the latter implying that the Serb citizens chose this fate by choosing their leaders—though in the following section Clinton's labeling of Milošević as a dictator would imply little agency on the part of the Serb citizens in electing their officials. Of course, "inviting a single NATO bomb" (Clinton, 1999i) also carries weight with it, and the association that Milošević asked for this fate, which further transfers responsibility from the United States and their NATO allies back to Serbia.

4.3 Manipulating social cognition via generalization

Linking directly to van Dijk's methods of manipulation and generalization, this category of discursive devices can be considered as those which influence social shared beliefs, using emotional events and exploitation of related events to create a mental model for the public at large (van Dijk, 2006). This section, therefore, recalls the reviewed literature on the role of historical metaphors in conjuring a certain image of the Kosovo War in relation to other instances of historical atrocity, and will also include consideration of a generalization

technique witnessed in Clinton's discourse that involves manipulating American public opinion of Serbian civilians as synonymous with Milošević and the Serb army.

4.3.1 World Wars and the Bosnian War

Clinton's discourse instrumentalizes World War I, World War II, and the Bosnian War to create an understanding of the Kosovo War. By illustrating Kosovo as having the potential to spread into a new World War, he forces the American public to listen. He paints an image of genocide, not only by linking Kosovo to the genocide in Bosnia just four years earlier, but by using certain terms to evoke memories of the Holocaust. This is a powerful tool, one that plays on emotions to impact mental models and change the broader social opinion (van Dijk, 2006). The ultimate goal of creating these associations is justifying action, linking the United States' role in the previous conflicts to a contemporary need for action in Kosovo.

"As we approach the next century, we must never forget one of the most indelible lessons of this one we're about to leave, that America has a direct stake in keeping the peace in Europe before isolated acts of violence turn into large-scale wars." (Clinton, 1998c)

"World War II taught us that America could never be secure if Europe's future was in doubt." (Clinton, 1999a)

"Because the whole 20th century is, in large measure, the story of slaughter that started in Europe." (Clinton, 1999c)

"Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia, is where World War I began. World War II and the Holocaust engulfed this region." (Clinton, 1999e)

"...the Kosovar people, the victims of some of the most vicious atrocities in Europe since the Second World War..." (Clinton, 1999i)

These are just a handful of the explicit comparisons that framed Kosovo as a budding World War, somewhat muddling the individual world wars into one to imply a handful of negative consequences if the U.S. and NATO fail to act. There are very few implications involved, really, as Clinton explicitly states what he considers to be at stake. He references a violent, unstable Europe in need of U.S. leadership and support, reminds the audience that the first World War started in this region (though Sarajevo is several hundred kilometers from the Kosovo border), and connects American security to that of Europe. President Clinton took things a step further in his remarks delivered just one day before the bombing campaign began.

> *"What if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolph* [*sic*] *Hitler earlier? How many people's lives might have been saved? And how many American lives might have been saved?"* (Clinton, 1999c)

Clinton has already suggested that American security is at risk based on European instability, and by mentioning Hitler by name, he reminds the audience of one man being at the helm of the unparalleled destruction that ended so many American lives. The President is creating a parallel, in which he is the same voice of reason as Winston Churchill, standing in front of a crowd, warning against the death and destruction that awaits from inaction against the decade's genocidal dictator. His mentions of massive loss of life begin to work to unite American deaths and Kosovar deaths, establishing an emotional connection between the audience and the citizens of a faraway land.

The phrase "never forget" (Clinton, 1998c) also plays on strong emotions, and should be considered a trigger phrase within American consciousness. On one hand, globally, this relates to the memory of the Holocaust, which is the connection Clinton was implying

with his use of the phrase, conjuring a certain emotion within the audience by using this phrase that is forever linked to genocide in Europe, but the other implication of using this phrase comes from the link between "never forget" (Clinton, 1998c) and the post-9/11 United States.

Of course, Clinton had no way of knowing that phrase would become synonymous with the memory of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, but this indicates the value of establishing these connections via trigger words. Hearing *never again* from a political leader immediately elicits attention, concern, and visceral emotion. It creates a never-ending chain of impact: the Holocaust becomes Kosovo becomes September 11, and so on and so forth. It becomes, and remains, a powerful tool for garnering support, and beyond that, for legitimizing action.

The Bosnian War was another important tool for Clinton's case of American/NATO intervention in Kosovo. The war was still fresh in public memory, though that did not keep the President from vividly recounting the violence and genocide from the first half of the 1990s.

> *"We should remember the horror of the war in Bosnia, the sounds of sniper fire aimed at children, the faces of young men behind barbed wire, the despairing voices of those who thought nothing could be done."* (Clinton, 1999b)
>
> *"Let's don't forget what happened: Innocent people were herded into concentration camps."* (Clinton, 1999c)
>
> *"A quarter of a million people, in a country with only 6 million population—were killed, and a couple of million refugees were created—not because of anything they*

had done but because of who they were and because of the thirst of Mr. Milosevic and his allies to dominate, indeed, to crush people who were of different ethnic and religious affiliations." (Clinton, 1999c)

"Now, this was a genocide in the heart of Europe. It did not happen in 1945; it was going on in 1995." (Clinton, 1999c)

Bill Clinton's mentions of Bosnia have a similar impact as the previously discussed idea of *never forget.* The links between Bosnia and Kosovo have been established, and his discourse then links both of them back to the Holocaust. Clinton suggests that Kosovo is a new Bosnia, then reminds the audience what Bosnia was: "young men behind barbed wire", "people herded into concentration camps", and "genocide in the heart of Europe" (Clinton, 1999b; Clinton, 1999c). These all conjure images of the Holocaust. Furthermore, it is telling for Bill Clinton to indicate that the population of Bosnia was six million, since that number immediately triggers an emotional connection to the Holocaust and the number of Jewish victims killed by the violence of the Third Reich (United Nations, 2024). Clinton's number appears to be about two million citizens higher than census records from the start of the war, which could argue a stretching of the truth for his own narrative, but regardless, it leaves a tremendous impact in one's mental model about the war and the accompanying need for action (Agence France-Presse, 2016).

Relatedly, these quotes prompted a more thorough exploration of the term "genocide" (Clinton, 1999c) within this context. It would be unfair to consider this term as being used by Bill Clinton lightly—it is only seen within these thirteen speeches four times—but emphasizing genocide in Bosnia while discussing the case of Kosovo is controversial. An active genocide is vital to the construction of Clinton's case for legitimacy of the

55

bombing, but in contrast to Bosnia, efforts to internationally recognize the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians as genocide fell short. A week into the bombing, the U.S. State Department noted that a proper evaluation of war crimes committed against Kosovars would be needed, but in 2001 a UN-run supreme court in Kosovo ruled it was not a genocide (Bureau of European Affairs, 1999; L.A. Times Archives, 2001). In this way, it did not matter that the label of genocide did not stick. Clinton carefully refrained from outright labeling Kosovo a confirmed genocide, but the mental connection was made, thus supporting his case for action.

The connections between Kosovo, the world wars, and Bosnia have been covered quite extensively within the texts in the literature review chapter, but seeing the direct impact of Clinton's words in manipulating mental models of the American public regarding the war is quite telling. It can be harmful to overuse the Holocaust or World War comparison with regard to world events, as it eventually may serve to dilute the potency of the original event. Noting the similarities worked in Clinton's favor to create a case for the bombing, and failing to consider how the situations differ left little room for nuance within his narrative, setting Kosovo up as a new Holocaust, Bosnia, and World War all rolled into one, aiding his call for action in the face of this simmering, extraordinary situation.

4.3.2 Generalization of Serbs

The related technique noticed within Clinton's rhetoric that plays on dangerous, long-lasting linkages relates to the way he overgeneralizes about Serb complicity or action. This refers to the efforts on Clinton's part to use overly general descriptions in discussing

the actions of the actual warring factions, labeling them as Serbian or Serb rather than specifically indicating who they are, and their role in the war.

"NATO has authorized airstrikes if Serbia fails to comply with its previous commitments…" (Clinton, 1999a)

"I believe also, as I have said publicly to Mr. Milošević and to the Serbs…" (Clinton, 1999b)

"…they're afraid that the Serbs will never honor their autonomy." (Clinton, 1999c)

"The Kosovars said yes to peace; Serbia put 40,000 troops and 300 tanks in and around Kosovo." (Clinton, 1999c)

By discursively creating a 1:1 comparison between the entire country of Serbia and President Slobodan Milošević, President Clinton implies guilt on the part of all Serbs in this war. Especially in his suggestion that "Serbs will never honor their autonomy", which moves beyond the immediate war into suggestions that the population of Serbia will become a problem in the future. Choosing such general terminology equates the acts of one person to the larger population, leaving a long-lasting mark and, potentially, leaving the door open for future discursive acts should trouble again rise within or near Serbia. He has done the work to paint a certain picture of the Serbs, and it can remain a tool in his (or any future American leaders') rhetorical arsenal should the opportunity present itself.

The final usage of this generalization technique, which will set up the following discursive technique for analysis, aims to not only implicate all Serbs in this violence, but to sow the seeds of doubt regarding their character.

"It is not formally terminated, and Secretary General Solana retains the authority to resume strikes if Serbia violates its commitments." (Clinton, 1999j)

The blanket term of Serbia in this instance suggests that the country on the whole is likely to act against international status quo, rather than just Milošević himself. It would not have been difficult for President Clinton to specify Milošević or even the Serb/Yugoslav forces, but by hinting at future commitment violation on the part of all of Serbia, he creates a much more prominent narrative of a troubled people rather than violence as the by-product of a tyrannical leader's rule. This supports Clinton's narrative efforts to establish the violent Serbian Other in opposition to the moral West, which will be analyzed in the following section.

4.4 Positive self-presentation vs. negative other-presentation

Much of the focus of Clinton's constructed narrative surrounds the creation and subsequent emphasis of an in-group and out-group. It works through the intention usage of "us" versus "them", but goes beyond that as well. As noted within the theoretical portion of this text, speech acts work to construct a certain reality, and in many cases, this depends on constructing an Other as so different, so threatening that their existence is a danger to the in-group. This can be seen in this case as Clinton's construction of Serbia as the Other, and occasionally, the entire Balkan region as being different from the U.S., from NATO, and from the West, and only their intervention and help can set the Other on a path toward good.

The easiest way to establish the Other is by emphasizing their atrocities, implying that they behave in inhumane ways, vastly different from our own behavior. In the case of Milošević, Bill Clinton had a decade of activity to choose from:

"Balkan graveyards are filled with President Milosevic's broken promises." (Clinton, 1998c)

"Now only President Milosevic stands in the way of peace." (Clinton, 1999b)

"In dealing with aggressors in the Balkans, hesitation is a license to kill." (Clinton, 1999b)

"But President Milosevic, who over the past decade started the terrible wars against Croatia and Bosnia, has again chosen aggression over peace." (Clinton, 1999d)

Of course, these quotes work in tandem with many of the others already analyzed, namely those comparing Milošević's violence to that of the Third Reich, so these are not independent constructions that fulfill Clinton's purposes on their own. It is quite revealing that Clinton chooses to villainize the entire region with his quote about a "license to kill" (Clinton, 1999b) which is another notable instance of contradictory or incoherent rhetoric leading to confusion about whether Serbia is the concern or the broader region. It is clear that Milošević and the Serbs are public enemy number one, but with causal mentions of the entire region as violence provokers, it does beg the question of Clinton's overall view of the Balkans, linking the construction of Us vs. Them to questions of Balkanization.

Clinton also makes a point to frame the righteousness of the West in contrast to Others across the world: aggressors who focus on their differences and turn to savagery. He constructs this with an implication that this is the antithesis to behavior in the West.

"Because I am telling you, you look all over the world—that's what Kosovo's about—look all over the world. People are still killing each other out of primitive urges because they think what is different about them is more important than what they have

in common. So I wanted a country where opportunity was real for every possible

citizen" (Clinton, 1999c)

Clinton's construction of the in-group in this passage focuses on the United States as the Us, but many other instances of this rhetoric indicate his perceived differences in behavior and morality between the Self in opposition to the Other, showing that while it is important to focus on the flaws of the outgroup, it also becomes vital to highlight the good of the in-group as their anthesis; as being the key to peace in the world and the path toward a perfect future.

"We talked about the true partnership for security our nations have forged, our

desire to build a world with greater tolerance, greater respect for human rights, to

build a united, democratic, peaceful Europe." (Clinton, 1998b)

It was important to include this particular speech in this analysis due to Clinton's NATO expansion efforts of the same period, and because it works well in highlighting the creation and extension of the in-group. Clinton detailing his efforts to forge a partnership with Czech President Havel toward a world with "greater tolerance, greater respect for human rights", and a "democratic, peaceful Europe" (Clinton, 1998b) is a subtle criticism of those who do *not* share their vision for the future, in this case Milošević. Of note, the NATO bombing began the same month that the Czech Republic, along with Hungary and Poland, joined the alliance, which would have only been further evidence to an expansion of this strong in-group against the non-democratic, violent Others, and would have indicated to Milošević that the countries within close geographic proximity to the FRY were slowly but surely aligning themselves with the West (NATO, 2024).

Repetitions of the *goodness* of the United States and their NATO allies are commonplace in Clinton's rhetoric. In the following quote, his notion of bipartisan support is especially important, framing this as an *American* issue, rather than a pet project of the Democrats.

"Peace in Kosovo clearly is important to the United States, and with bipartisan support in Congress and the backing of the American people, we can make a difference." (Clinton, 1999a)

In very few of these analyzed speeches did Clinton actually specify what kind of political support was present for the intervention within the U.S., instead opting to focus on NATO support and approval for the airstrikes and intervention, which could be considered as an attempt to keep the operation above party lines, lest he risk alienating one side's voters when it came to constructing his wider narrative. He does make it clear that this is not an effort he is leading alone; that this is an effort for the greater United States, and then, in the following quotes, it becomes evident how he ties in the country's allies as part of the collective good.

"We said if they would do it, we would stick by them—not we the United States, we 19 countries in NATO. We cannot run away from that commitment now." (Clinton, 1999c)

"What is at stake there, what was at stake in Bosnia, and what will doubtless be at stake elsewhere in the world in the years ahead is whether Mr. Milosevic's vision of ethnic cleansing, with its uprooting, its raping, its killing, its destroying every record and remnant of culture and history—or our democratic vision of ethnic tolerance and political pluralism, of affirming our common humanity—whether his vision or ours

will define the beginning of the 21st century. On this there can be no compromise. And therefore, our determination must be unwavering." (Clinton, 1999f)

"But as I have said from the beginning, we would prefer to resolve this crisis peacefully rather than through military action." (Clinton, 1998c)

Clinton works diligently to remind his audiences that the United States and their allies are the only solution to this problem, and while they do not want to resort to military action, they may have been left with no choice. The second to last quote is a disturbing account of Milošević's character that works to stir up disgust for the Serbian leader, and it is even more shocking to see that the speech was from a White House Correspondents' dinner, which is typically a lighthearted occasion attended by journalists and celebrities. He was appealing to the public regarding his cause, reminding them who the villain was and that their shared vision of democracy and human decency was at stake. That quote in particular sets apart the character of the West from that of Milošević, suggesting that if he were to win Kosovo, the 21st century would start down a devastating path of no return toward ethnic cleansing, violence, and intolerance.

Delving into the ways Clinton presented the intervention as beneficial to the goals of the in-group is an important piece of the narrative. It is one thing to construct the in-group as superior to the Others, but there must be something for them to gain as well. The gains, as framed by Bill Clinton, are not entirely tangible, but that, arguably, speaks to the utility of this type of language. By conceptualizing the gains as being about "our values" or "our national interests", there is no need to pinpoint one specific end goal. It becomes a shadowy umbrella to cover a variety of achievements, so once the action is over, there will be the possibility of slotting any outcome into the narrative.

"We must also understand our stake in peace in the Balkans and in Kosovo. This is a humanitarian crisis, but it is much more. This is a conflict with no natural boundaries. It threatens our national interests." (Clinton, 1999b)

"And so I want to talk to you about Kosovo today, but just remember this: It's about our values." (Clinton, 1999c)

"Finally, we face the broader challenge of preventing future crises by promoting democracy and prosperity in this region which has been so troubled. With our Allies and partners, we must intensify these efforts." (Clinton, 1999j)

Even in the case of the last quote, "promoting democracy and prosperity" (Clinton, 1999j) is hardly something Clinton and his allies can easily cross off of their to-do list, and there is little detail regarding *how* they plan to accomplish this. Especially in the case of the Kosovo War, because although Milošević agreed to the international community's conditions in the end, he still held power, meaning they did not have entirely free reign over this newly cooling conflict. The conditions for success are still a bit vague, but it all works to offer the in-group an end point for this action, even if it is not specific.

Finally, one last way that Bill Clinton created a Western Self versus the Serbian Other was through a particular sentence structure that blatantly pitted the two against each other.

"He has rejected the balanced and fair peace accords that our allies and partners, including Russia, proposed last month, a peace agreement that Kosovo's ethnic Albanians courageously accepted." (Clinton, 1999d)

Framing the accords as "balanced and fair" while noting Milošević's rejection of them implies that he himself is not balanced and fair; furthermore, Clinton's acknowledgement

of the Kosovar Albanians accepting the accords further frames the two sides of the conflict as being opposites. Even the notion of "balanced and fair" is subject to interpretation, of course, and as one of the parties that proposed said peace agreement, of course Clinton would find them fair.

"Secretary Albright has worked tirelessly for a negotiated agreement. Mr. Milosevic has refused." (Clinton, 1999e)

This short quotation is full of juxtapositions. It perfectly demonstrates the way Clinton framed those in his camp against Milošević. For one, referring to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright by her title while using a commonplace address of "Mr." for Slobodan Milošević is a patronizing technique to belittle his political position. Then, explaining that Albright worked "tirelessly" on the accords while Milošević refused them shows exact opposites in action, framing Albright as a diligent diplomat while Milošević is a stubborn obstacle. Plus, "negotiated agreement" implies multiple parties working collaboratively to find a solution, while Milošević himself flat out refused. Clinton is again working to show the collective Us as a team against the leader of Serbia, framing him as a petulant dictator hungry for power and unwilling to negotiate.

"As long as he remains in power, as long as your nation is ruled by an indicted war criminal, we will provide no support for the reconstruction of Serbia. But we are ready to provide humanitarian aid now and to help to build a better future for Serbia, too, when its Government represents tolerance and freedom, not repression and terror." (Clinton, 1999i)

This quote is one of the more ominous within the analyzed speeches. This short snippet of Clinton's victory address is directed toward the people of Serbia who he had

already vaguely villainized, and these sentences further implicate them in the conflict. It is quite contradicting as well, as it almost suggests that they *chose* to give Milošević nearly unchecked power, and that it is up to them to oust him and set Serbia on those aforementioned paths toward democracy and prosperity. It is contradictory, however, since a key tenet of an authoritarian regime is that free and fair elections are impossible, so it seems like a threatening way to suggest that they find a way to rid themselves of Milošević, otherwise they will be on their own in terms of rebuilding and humanitarian aid.

Additionally, the final bit of the quote, "when its Government represents tolerance and freedom, not repression and terror" (Clinton, 1999i) is another implication of U.S./Western character as opposed to Serbian characteristics. Clinton is saying that Serbia needs to set themselves on the correct path—one of tolerance and freedom, just like the United States, he says—and leave behind the repression and terror. The implication is that they are complicit in this war, but this is their chance to once and for all head down the path toward democracy and join the West in all that is righteous.

4.5 Vagueness, imprecision, and lack of detail

By this point in the analysis there is ample evidence to show that Bill Clinton has a particular talent for language. He finds ways to mix humor and heaviness, then historical memory and present day occurrences, all to form a particular narrative in a way that is palatable for all audiences. Through this, however, Clinton was also guilty of purposefully leaving out details of his plans, or NATO's broader action, which is a useful technique for avoiding commitment to a particular course of action. For example. the term "firmness" is used numerous times within these speeches, but at no point does it actually

become clear what Clinton's firmness is. He claims U.S. firmness was the reason for the end of the Bosnian War, and is the "only hope the people of Kosovo have" (Clinton, 1999e). This example encapsulates a major theme within his speeches: the ability to avoid offering particular details to the audience, a beneficial technique for remaining that relaxed, average American guy in the Oval Office. His speech at times gave the impression of a friend who was trying to explain a situation without knowing the full details himself:

> *"Now, at the time, a lot of people said..."* (Clinton, 1999c)
>
> *"All this stuff he's doing..."* (Clinton, 1999c)
>
> *"And it will be—let me say this, it will be far less expensive—far, far less expensive—for us to make a decent contribution to the long-term development of these people than it will be to wait around for something like this to happen again and run the risks, all the risks we had to deal with this time that it might spread and all of that."* (Clinton, 1999j)

Phrases such as "something like this" and "all of that" (Clinton, 1999j) in political speech give the impression of purposely excluding details about a situation to keep questions from being asked, while "all the stuff he's doing" and "a lot of people said" (Clinton, 1999c) is a way to imply an overwhelming amount of activity without needing to provide supporting evidence. These specific constructions carry with them a certain tone of being obvious, to the point that there is no need to clarify or offer specific details, because that is just the way things are, and you must take his word for it. Within the vagueness seen within Clinton's speeches, one almost flippant presupposition jumped out from two speeches as a shocking way to construct a security threat out of this conflict.

"...all the problems in Kosovo – the possibility that those things might be mixed with weapons of mass destruction is enormous." (Clinton, 1998a)

"They will get aligned with organized criminals, with terrorists, with people who have access to weapons of mass destruction. They will use all this technology and all these open airports and all this other stuff, and these conflicts will not stay confined to the land on which they occur." (Clinton, 1999h)

"Weapons of mass destruction" appears only three times within these thirteen speeches, but even one suggestion of the Kosovo War escalating to that level was an unexpected discovery within Clinton's rhetoric. The threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—considered to include nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological, and other weapons meant to inflict mass harm or destruction (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2022)—was disputed at the time, with some suggesting that Milošević might relaunch Yugoslavia's mostly abandoned nuclear weapons program, while others felt the threat of WMDs was extremely low (Potter & Tucker, 1999; Freedman, 2000). Notably, it was even suggested that the threat of WMDs was initially quite low, but that NATO's bombing campaign might become motivation enough for Milošević to reconsider the program's value (Potter & Tucker, 1999).

The mention of WMDs in Clinton's rhetoric should not be viewed as a factual representation of the world at the time, but as a political tool. It matters less whether Clinton truly believed this and instead matters that he established this connection to frame Kosovo as something the American people need to fear and, beyond the conflict, this mention of WMDs aligns with the theory of evilization.

By this point, Clinton's rhetoric had met those three requirements of evilization: 1. he had established the intentionally acting Milošević as the face of the violence; 2. he created a specific characterization of Milošević that was reinforced in his speech acts (genocidal, violent dictator whose acts were already well known to the world); and 3: Clinton touted these character flaws as Milošević's nature, implying there was no hope for reform. The last piece of the evilization puzzle concerns the designation of a rogue state, and upon original consideration it seemed a stretch to consider Serbia a rogue state, but by Clinton's own designation of the state's potential for developing and using WMDs, the final piece fell into place (Müller, 2014).

Lastly, in consideration of Bill Clinton's purposefully vague language, it becomes necessary to consider the inclusion—or rather, exclusion—of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in his rhetoric. The KLA is the largely unidentified other warring faction within Clinton's rhetoric surrounding this conflict, which is odd given that the United States had at one point designated them as a terrorist organization (Herring, 2000). Much of Clinton's language hints at the existence of an opponent on the ground fighting against Milošević's troops, but the group remains mostly anonymous.

> *"...the warring parties in Kosovo..."* (Clinton, 1999a)
>
> *"At the same time, we've made it clear to the Kosovo Albanians that if they reject our plan or continue to wage war, they will not have our support."* (Clinton, 1999a)
>
> *"The Kosovar Liberation Army will have to demilitarize, as it has agreed to do."* (Clinton, 1999i)

The importance of these vague or limited mentions of the KLA is tied to Clinton's need for Milošević to remain the source of the violence in this conflict. He purposefully

omits details of attacks from the side of the KLA, keeping the focus on the atrocities committed by the Serb forces. This is not to say the KLA reached the same magnitude of violence, but notably a separate criminal court in the Hague was established for criminal cases dealing with KLA members, and to date at least one conviction has been made (Reuters, 2024).

Clinton's careful stepping around the subject of the KLA, even with the terrorist designation, is somehow successful; even in the cases of his explicit mention of their existence, he fails to include many details about their actual role in the conflict, maintaining a murky fog around the idea that the Serbs are fighting against armed militants and not only attacking civilians. He focuses on the KLA's admirable qualities, playing up their acceptance of the Rambouillet Interim Agreement—which was proposed in February 1999 by the Contact Group to broker an end to the violence (Herring, 2000)— and their demilitarization process, all while avoiding specifics about their activity. It is a successful technique in shadowing responsibility and playing up Milošević's brutality, helping to justify the bombing even further.

4.6 Emphasizing authority

A major contradiction observed within Clinton's speeches is his diligent effort to remind the country that he is a regular guy from Arkansas, all while reminding his audience that he is president of the United States and implying that his authority should be taken as gospel. Emphasizing his position of power via formal setting, lexical selection, and more is emphasized in van Dijk's CDA methodology, and it becomes apparent within Clinton's speech acts that this is not to be ignored (van Dijk, 2006).

"Now, you all know why I'm late today. I've been in a meeting with a very large number of Members of Congress in both Houses and both parties, including the leadership, to talk about the problem in Kosovo. And one of the Members who was there, a man from my part of the country, he said 'You know, Mr. President, I support your policy, but most of my folks couldn't find Kosovo on a map. They don't know where it is, and they never thought about it before it appeared on CNN. And you need to tell people what you're doing there and why—why it's important to us.' So I need to talk about that today." (Clinton, 1999c)

"But you didn't just hire me to make the easy decisions." (Clinton, 1999c)

Clinton's methods of showcasing his authority sometimes overlap with already discussed categories, with patronizing references to "Mr. Milosevic", mentions of Bosnia to emphasize his vision of peace, and an emphasis on the pro-democracy American in-group's role in a peaceful and stable Europe.

"I will say again to Mr. Milosevic, as I did in Bosnia: I do not want to put a single American pilot into the air. I do not want anyone else to die in the Balkans. I do not want a conflict…But a part of my responsibility is to try to leave to my successors and to our country in the 21st century an environment in Europe that is stable, humane, and secure. It will be a big part of America's future." (Clinton, 1999b)

"And so I would like to begin by going back to 1992 and to try to ask you to do something that most of the time I can't persuade the American people to do, which is to think about our foreign policy and our domestic policy as two sides of the same coin..." (Clinton, 1999c)

Of particular interest to this point of emphasizing his own authority are constructions when he implies that he alone knows the facts and has all of the answers. He often asks a

rhetorical *"Why?"* (Clinton, 1999c) to his audiences, the question providing him with the space to give the exact answer that he sees fit for his inquiry. This further cements the status quo, as well as the approved answers to the conflict's most pressing issues.

In a more explicit display of his all-knowing presidential status, Clinton leaves no room for disagreement on the state of the conflict and what is deemed to be the "factual" in relation to the Kosovo War.

"Okay. So let me just go through the facts." (Clinton, 1999c)

He does not shy away from claiming to know all facts regarding the situation, nor does he refrain from rolling his favorite themes into one quote, highlighting the American in-group while implying that those who disagree are proponents of ethnic cleansing and dictatorial regimes:

"You've got to decide, my fellow Americans, if you agree with me that in the 21st century, that America, as the world's superpower, ought to be standing up against ethnic cleansing if we have the means to do it and we have allies who will help us do it in their neighborhood. And you have to decide whether you agree with me that we have a clear interest, after what we saw in World War I, World War II, in the cold war and all the people who died, in a Europe that is united, not divided; democratic, not dictatorial; and secure and at peace, not racked by ethnic cleansing—and if you believe that's good for us economically and politically, over and above the humanitarian issue." (Clinton 1999c)

In particular, the above quote illustrates the power of establishing one's authority and subtly chastising those who disagree with the status quo. This goes beyond political

disagreement—Clinton constructs an association between disagreement and support for ethnic cleansing, and this creates a very difficult situation for those who do not support NATO's action but still condemn the violence of the war.

A final piece for consideration within this section of analysis is a bit different than the rest but was too important to exclude. This is the one instance where the material for investigation goes beyond the written transcripts of Clinton's speeches, and involved watching a recording of the aired address to the nation on the evening that NATO began their air campaign. This was prompted by the following sentence:

"Take a look at this map." (Clinton, 1999e)

The imperative tone of the statement felt significant enough to take Clinton's map into consideration within this text, and, as discourse goes beyond written and spoken language to include visual images (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002), it fits well within the scope of this research.

Figure 2 Map of Kosovo (C-SPAN, n.d.)

72

This map places Kosovo within a broader geographic context, helping American viewers better understand the geography of this conflict—and understand the geography in a way that supports Clinton's constructed reality. The color choices within the map are significant in terms of their connection to Clinton's narrative, especially the decision to color Serbia and Kosovo in vastly different colors and Kosovo and Albania in nearly the same, or perhaps identical, colors. Furthermore, choosing a color for Kosovo that is like those used for Croatia and Bosnia—other related wars that implicate Milošević's violent streak—feels intentional, serving as a visual illustration to link these conflicts under the same umbrella of a tyrannical Serbian leader.

Following investigation of this image indicated other relevant connections, such as the choice to color Serbia and Germany in the same shade of purple. A large portion of Clinton's rhetoric contains explicit links between Slobodan Milošević and Adolf Hitler, and though this may not be the intention, someone made the decision to color the two nations in the same shade. Additionally, the portion of the world shown on this map is an intentional choice. Clinton and his team could have used a different area for the map, one that showed more of Northern Europe, but by showing Greece and Turkey—the site of additional political tension during Clinton's presidency (Clinton, 1999c)—and the northeastern corner of Africa—a continent that witnessed bombings of American embassies around this same time (Clinton, 1998b)—this map conjured a specific context of the war for the audience. This action is bolstered by the idea that the map itself has "scant meaning without verbal accompaniment" (Chilton, 2004), linking to the theoretical basis of this text that meaning is imposed by the speaker and the narrative they aim to construct.

4.7 Storytelling

At its core, storytelling involves the construction of a reality, whether based in fact, fiction, or some combination of the two. It demonstrates power and aligns social identities, and Clinton's use exhibits both of these themes and more (van Dijk, 2015). The main impact of storytelling is to paint an image of the situation, something that will leave an indelible mark in the mind's eye and conjure up certain images to emphasize, in this case, the horrors of the conflict. Constructions that rely on storytelling must feature vivid imagery, or narratives that leave room for speculation and remain at the back of the audience's mind long after the actual speech act occurs.

> *"We should remember what happened in the village of Racak back in January—innocent men, women, and children taken from their homes to a gully, forced to kneel in the dirt, sprayed with gunfire, not because of anything they had done but because of who they were."* (Clinton, 1999b)

> *"Now they've started moving from village to village, shelling civilians and torching their houses. We've seen innocent people taken from their homes, forced to kneel in the dirt, and sprayed with bullets; Kosovar men dragged from their families, fathers and sons together, lined up and shot in cold blood. This is not war in the traditional sense. It is an attack by tanks and artillery on a largely defenseless people whose leaders have already agreed to peace."* (Clinton, 1999e)

Bill Clinton tells the story of Kosovo with imagery that is not too dissimilar from the way one might describe the other historic atrocities he so frequently cites and opts for particular language to emphasize how indiscriminate the killing is. It is not based on what the person does, but rather who they are. These stories are told through a generalizable enough framework that even when he mentions Kosovo, it is feasible to remove the

74

specific location and swap it out for Bosnia or various places within Europe during the second World War. He uses themes that play on individual sympathy by referencing violence committed against families, repeating the same phrasing about being "sprayed with bullets" to emphasize the messiness of the entire conflict. "This is not war in the traditional sense", he emphasizes (though he had previously explained to the American public that the NATO action *was* just like any other military intervention (Clinton, 1999c)), drawing on the theory of securitization to justify why it is vital that the West acts to end this horror.

The West must also act to prevent the conflict from expanding:

"If it continues, it could spread to neighboring Albania, just to the south. Most of the Kosovars are Albanians. What if they flood Albania with refugees? Albania has a Greek minority. What are they going to do? Are we going to recreate this all over again? Then it could put massive numbers of refugees in Macedonia, where you have both a Slavic majority and a Muslim minority; a country now with a President and a Prime Minister that have worked with us and taken our NATO troops in and worked with us, putting enormous pressure on them. Believe me, it could draw in even Greece and Turkey." (Clinton, 1999c)

This is not a story in the traditional sense, but it works similarly to construct a certain picture and include presuppositions that paint a constructed reality that *may or may not* end up being accurate. Playing up the potential of the conflict is a way of telling a story, constructing a reality to emphasize why it is important that the United States and NATO stop Milošević in his tracks before it implicates the entire continent. He highlights the religious differences within the region in a final attempt to explain the volatility of this conflict,

employing those same rhetorical questions that were already analyzed to illustrate his all-knowing power when it comes to this conflict and urge the American people to remain on his side—the right side—in this conflict.

4.8 Lexicon

Lexicon as a category is simultaneously quite vague for rich analysis and too important to disregard in a text of this nature. It is very a general consideration, but lexicon is emphasized by van Dijk as a vital tool for legitimizing rhetoric and mitigating responsibility, and as such, is important for this text's analysis chapter (van Dijk, 2015, 475).

4.8.1 Kosovo as (non)-European

Clinton employed a certain lexicon with far-reaching implications regarding the status of Kosovo after the conflict—not to mention implications for Clinton's foreign policy—which involved sowing the seeds of doubt with regard to Kosovo, and the Balkans more generally, as Europe. This technique works in tandem with the constructions of the in-group as already analyzed. The in-group includes the U.S., NATO members, and Europe. But Clinton needed to be mindful of how inclusive his understanding of Europe was, lest he too strongly consider Kosovo or Serbia as Europe and rid himself of the manipulation tactic of dangling European status in front of the two territories.

In the most pressing moments of the NATO campaign, he considers Kosovo (and Bosnia) to be vital, labeling bloody conflict in either location as threatening "...the heart of Europe…" (Clinton, 1998c; Clinton, 1999c; Clinton 1999e). Kosovo is also of concern due to the potential for massive loss of life and a refugee crisis "in the middle of Europe"

(Clinton, 1999a), plus the frequent trouble stemming from "bitter ethnic problems in Europe" (Clinton, 1999e).

But, just as quickly, Clinton denies Kosovo and the broader Balkan region their European status. They get pushed to "the underbelly of Europe" (Clinton, 1999h) and remain "on a major fault line between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East" (Clinton, 1999e). The latter, in particular, works to Other the country and the region, denying it full European status and bringing in two other regions that are frequently Othered in Western political consciousness.

Once NATO's campaign ended, and the war was over, Clinton's characterization of the region remained unclear.

"A final challenge will be to encourage Serbia to join its neighbors in this historic journey to a peaceful, democratic, united Europe." (Clinton, 1999i)

Clinton had painted this intervention as being the key to the Balkans' full status as democratic, European states, but now he reminds the American people that this work has barely begun. Instead of being a certainty, it is a "historic journey", implying a long road ahead for Serbia and its neighbors to join Europe. His sentence appears to focus on pushing Serbia down a righteous path, but by stating that its neighbors are also still progressing down their own path toward Europe, it emphasizes the entire region's enduring non-European status. His rhetoric in this way reconfirms the othering, and leaves room to revoke any connotation of the Balkans as European as needed in future foreign policy or political activity.

4.8.2 Additional lexicon for consideration

Clinton's lexicon is rife with intentionally selected words, chosen for the power each one has in manipulating the audience to agree with his proposed course of action. He constructed the necessity around action by insisting that "we must" and "will do what is necessary" (Clinton, 1998c) to end this conflict, adding temporal qualifications such as "right now" (Clinton, 1999a) to emphasize that this operation could not come later and "we must—we must—act now" (Clinton, 1999d).

Not only was this conflict time sensitive, but Clinton made sure the audience understood that intervention was the obvious course of action. It is "clearly" the right thing to do, he notes on numerous occasions (Clinton, 1999b; Clinton, 1999c; Clinton, 1999d; Clinton, 1999g), as it is in America's "national interest" (Clinton, 1999a) and is standing in the way of the future that will be left to "our children" (Clinton, 1999b; Clinton, 1999c; Clinton, 1999d; Clinton, 1999e). Mentions of a future for America's children also play on the securitization/evilization theories, suggesting that existential destruction will come from inaction against Milošević, and therefore building support for Clinton's intervention.

Once the conflict ended, the lexicon remained important for constructing a lasting understanding of Operation Allied Force. Afterall, it was a "necessary conflict" that had "been brought to a just and honorable conclusion" (Clinton, 1999i). Clinton's lexicon in discussing the casualties of NATO's intervention is unsettling, noting that the operation was simply "striking at Serbia's military machine" and that "the loss of life was limited to the tragedies in two training incidents" (Clinton, 1999j). This selective lexicon teeters on the edge of vagueness and a lack of detail, but arguably is more about Clinton's choices

to discursively frame the target as "Serbia's military machine" (Clinton, 1999j) instead of passenger trains, hotels, local villages, hospitals, and vital infrastructure which are only some of the many locations hit by NATO's campaign (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 2000). Though many instances of civilian targeting were accidental, Clinton's rhetoric is still notably unapologetic and selective, ignoring the suffering added to an already war-torn region by NATO. Furthermore, though his context was only focused on the casualties in terms of NATO's troops, it feels important that he chose the words "limited to" (Clinton, 1999j) when describing any loss of life in the intervention which killed somewhere around 500 people (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 2000).

4.9 Final thought on Clinton's narrative

One question that remains unanswered through this investigation but continues to come to mind is less about *how* Clinton did this, but *why* he had to construct this narrative. His language works hard to paint the image of a genocidal dictator, but one cannot help wonder why it was necessary to over-employ these varying rhetorical techniques, when Milošević's actions should speak for themselves. Milošević's villainy is well-documented, yet this analysis shows an exhaustive effort on Clinton's part to play up parts of his evil character and frame it (and him), using the ideas of securitization and evilization, as a unique evil that must be ended. He did it quite effectively, but one cannot help but wonder why this man, whose materially bad acts should speak for themselves, needed to become the subject of additional rhetorical flourish to convince the American people that intervention was necessary to put an end to his campaign of terror.

Conclusion

In an effort to understand how President Bill Clinton created and reinforced legitimacy and societal status quo for the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, this paper conducted an analysis of thirteen of his political speeches, all with the goal of analyzing the ways in which he used language to build his case, assert his power, and shape public thought. Using van Dijk and Fairclough's methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, the speeches were initially analyzed for the primary rhetorical techniques employed by President Clinton, which produced the following eight categorizations: passive sentence structures & minimization; reattribution of responsibility; manipulating social cognition via generalization; positive self-presentation vs. negative other-presentation; vagueness, imprecision, and lack of detail; emphasizing authority; storytelling; and lexicon. Following the initial analysis, the individual techniques were further investigated to dive into the complexities of Clinton's language use and the implications his choices had on the construction of a particular political reality.

The results of these analyses revealed something of a script-like structure within Clinton's rhetoric, wherein he emphasized his power and manipulated the audience via certain terms and phrases, thus coinciding with the aims of the CDA methodology selected for this text. His use of passive sentences and particular minimizations highlighted a tendency to frame this intervention as something natural, minimizing his, the United States', and NATO's role in the bombing campaign, and, by using catch-all phrases and lay-person rhetoric, rather than high-level political terminology, Clinton was able to make this intervention palatable for all audiences within the United States.

Furthermore, as an extension of aiming to minimize American responsibility for the bombing, he frequently redirected criticism or questions of his action back toward Milošević's violence, framing it in a way that indicated there was only one actor who could be in the wrong within this situation. It further reinforced the status quo, reminding the American public and any potential critics that they either had to be on Clinton and NATO's side, or they were siding with a dictator. This also points to Clinton's technique of manipulating social cognition through generalizations, which was focused on connecting well-known historical atrocities to the actions of Milosević and his forces to frame him as a new Hitler. Frequently invoking mentions of World War I, World War II, the Holocaust, and the Bosnian War, there was little room for disagreement regarding the narrative being constructed, as his manipulation tactics implied support for genocide if you stood against this intervention.

The major overarching focus of Clinton's rhetoric was the creation of an *Us versus Them* relationship between the United States and their NATO allies and the Serbs, which was reinforced by all rhetorical techniques and apparent in constructions wherein Clinton explicitly invoked questions of morality and humanity. He reminded the public that American interests and values were at stake in this conflict and pitted the Serb (and often generally Balkan) identity against that of the West, substantiating his claims with reminders of the inherent violence within their region and the hope for democratic peace that is only possible via Western guidance.

A key reveal from the analysis returns to notions of "truth", which, per the poststructuralist framework, is something constructed via language. Bill Clinton did this by omitting certain details or providing only vague information of the situation, which further

manipulated public consciousness to reinforce the opinion he had deemed as correct. This ability to decide what is "truth" comes from his position of authority, as there is at least a modicum of command imbued within the role of President of the United States. This means that even those who may not agree with Clinton's larger political campaign could be persuaded to adhere to the status quo he was creating for this situation, and with his selected rhetorical techniques, they may even unconsciously be swayed to believe his framing without further critical thought.

The final two techniques analyzed showed that the method of storytelling and broad category of lexicon could not be underestimated in their power to manipulate. Storytelling at its core has a connotation of a mixture of truth and fiction, adding further room for Clinton to play with the material facts and shape them in the way he found most fitting for his reality. Lexicon is a broad categorization, but through the analysis of some of this most frequently used terminology it became clear that Clinton made a concerted effort to rely on specific trigger words to create that script for the bombing, evoking emotion as needed and linking the most poignant ideals—American values and the future of American children—to the violence on the ground, thus establishing a need for immediate and thorough intervention.

This analysis aims to contribute to the literature by going beyond an analysis of only the use of metaphor or history in Clinton's political rhetoric, and by analyzing multiple speeches across nearly a year-long period to identify this script-like structure within Clinton's rhetoric. Additionally, it offers a post-9/11 look into Clinton's rhetoric, using the theory of evilization, which emerged from Bush's WoT discourse, to better understand the effort on Clinton's part to paint Milošević as an inherent evil with no hope of reform. This text is limited to the scope of Clinton's rhetoric on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and his efforts to create an

ideological status quo within American society, but there are further implications for consideration that would be valiant undertakings for future research.

Much research exists on the subject of Operation Allied Force and its impact on foreign policy (see Dunn, 2009; Daalder & O'Hanlon, 1999; Webber, 2009), but a more specific look into how this rhetoric within Clinton's political speeches links to his broader foreign policy, and even the foreign policy of following U.S. presidents, especially in terms of NATO expansion, would be of interest for the field. Similarly, analysis into the ways in which Bill Clinton's rhetoric surrounding the NATO bombing might have helped set the stage for George W. Bush's WoT discourse would be a fascinating study into the enduring influence of language. Some similar work has been done on how related discourse between Reagan, Clinton, and Bush worked to create the true WoT narrative (Tsui, 2014), but there is room for additional investigation into the role of political language in shaping public thought on the WoT. It has been argued within this text that these techniques are not only impactful for the immediate present, but serve in the long run with powerful lexicon to evoke emotion, and this would be one way to investigate such a claim.

Lastly, as a suggestion for further research, a study into the enduring impact of Clinton's rhetoric on Serbia would be of interest. An investigation into 21st century political discourse that frames Serbia from a similar narrative point of view as Bill Clinton's constructed reality would offer insight into his enduring script, showing how he set the stage for future leaders to implicate Serbia (or the Balkans) as needed. Ideally, research would consider the ways in which the figure of Milošević then became a tool to be operationalized in political discourse for following U.S. leaders, highlighting that these historical contexts and figures are meant

to be reused and updated in whatever way is deemed necessary to meet a wider political

goal.

Summary

Words are a malleable toolkit for influencing opinion on a variety of matters, establishing connections between labels and concepts until the association becomes natural. In the realm of the political, this act takes on new power to explain and legitimize military action as something essential. This text investigates this phenomenon within the political discourse of President Bill Clinton during the period of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) bombing campaign of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. With a look at 13 of Clinton's speech acts surrounding this campaign, this text offers insight into how Bill Clinton's rhetoric worked to mold the mental models of his audience—the American people—thus creating a base of support for NATO and the United States' action and thereby justifying intervention. Eight techniques were uncovered—passive sentences & minimization; reattribution of responsibility; manipulating social cognition via generalization; positive self-presentation vs. negative other-presentation; vagueness, imprecision, and lack of detail; emphasizing authority; storytelling; and lexicon—but they all work toward the same goal: demonstrating power and manipulating public understanding of the bombing campaign.

Slova jsou tvárným nástrojem k ovlivňování názorů na nejrůznější věci, vytvářejí spojení mezi označeními a pojmy, dokud se tato asociace nestane přirozenou. V politické sféře nabývá tento akt nové síly při vysvětlování a legitimizaci vojenských akcí jako něčeho zásadního. Tento text zkoumá tento jev v rámci politického diskurzu prezidenta Billa Clintona v období bombardovací kampaně Severoatlantické aliance (NATO) na Svazovou republiku Jugoslávii. Díky pohledu na 13 Clintonových řečnických aktů, které tuto kampaň provázely, nabízí tento text vhled do toho, jak rétorika Billa Clintona působila na

formování mentálních modelů jeho publika - amerického lidu - a vytvářela tak základnu

podpory pro NATO a akci Spojených států, a tím ospravedlňovala intervenci. Bylo

odhaleno osm technik - pasivní věty a minimalizace; přisuzování odpovědnosti;

manipulace se sociálním poznáním prostřednictvím generalizace; pozitivní sebeprezentace

vs. negativní prezentace druhých; vágnost, nepřesnost a nedostatek detailů; zdůrazňování

autority; vyprávění příběhů; a lexikon - ale všechny směřují ke stejnému cíli: demonstraci

moci a manipulaci s chápáním bombardovací kampaně veřejností.

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Appendix

Appendix no. 1: Analyzed speech acts (table)

Title	Date	Link	Parenthetical Citation
Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Aspen, Colorado	25 July 1998	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/226482	Clinton, 1998a
The President's News Conference with President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic	16 September 1998	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/225122	Clinton, 1998b
Remarks in New York City on the Situation in Kosovo	12 October 1998	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/224965	Clinton, 1998c
The President's Radio Address	13 February 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/229229	Clinton, 1999a
The President's News Conference	19 March 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/229659	Clinton, 1999b
Remarks at the Legislative Convention of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees	23 March 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/229688	Clinton, 1999c
Remarks Announcing Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	24 March 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/229734	Clinton, 1999d

Address to the Nation on Airstrikes Against Serbian Targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	24 March 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/229752	Clinton, 1999e
Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner	1 May 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/229671	Clinton, 1999f
Remarks on Departure From Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, and an Exchange With Reporters	8 May 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/229996	Clinton, 1999g
Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in San Diego, California	16 May 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/230276	Clinton, 1999h
Address to the Nation on the Military Technical Agreement on Kosovo	10 June 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/226640	Clinton, 1999i
Remarks on the Military Technical Agreement on Kosovo and an Exchange With Reporters	10 June 1999	https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu /node/226627	Clinton, 1999j