

*From i*

## The Art of Commemoration

Fifty years after the Warsaw Uprising

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## CHAPTER 5

### A politician's sociology

US Vice President Gore's categorisation  
of the participants in the Warsaw Uprising

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#### 1. Analysing political speeches

When asked to analyse a commemoration speech of a politician, many methodological alternatives come to mind. One might, for instance, try to confront the speaker's rendering of the events in question with a representation, which the analyst considers to be more correct, exhaustive or appropriate. In the case of the speech US Vice President Albert Gore gave at the Commemoration of the Warsaw Uprising on 1 August 1994, it is indeed tempting to think of the things he did not say (the transcription of the speech is rendered in the *Appendix*). The two following quotes taken from internet-pages about the Uprising already give an indication of what Mr Gore did *not* topicalise. On a personal Princeton University web page, Marcin K. Porwit (<http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~mkporwit/uprising>, visited February 1998) characterises the Warsaw Uprising as follows:

The Warsaw Uprising was probably the largest single operation organised and executed by a partisan organization in WW II. It lasted two months, and when it was over, 200,000 people were dead, and the entire city was in ruins. In trying to achieve its goals, the uprising was a terrible failure. In showing the courage and the dedication of the Polish nation, it was a remarkable success.

*Britannica Online* concisely (<http://www.eb.com>, visited February 1998) – and maybe diplomatically – remarks:

Warsaw Uprising: (August–October 1944), insurrection in Warsaw during World War II by which Poles unsuccessfully tried to oust the German army and seize control of the city before it was occupied by the advancing Soviet army. The

uprising's failure allowed the pro-Soviet Polish administration, rather than the Polish government-in-exile in London, to gain control of Poland.

Vice President Gore did not speak about, e.g., the assistance the Russian army gave, or failed to give to the insurgents. Neither does he talk about the political reasoning that might have motivated the Polish government in London to give the go-ahead for the Uprising on that particular moment in history, with the advancing Russian troops temporarily bogged down east of Warsaw.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, however, I shall not talk about what is not said. Rather, I am going to examine just one aspect of the way language is used in the Vice President's speech. I will focus on the ways Mr Gore describes the two main parties in the 1944 Uprising: the Polish and the German side. By just keeping with the categorisation of persons and of the ways they are organised in collectives, I hope to show that Gore's descriptive practices are very sophisticated and savvy when it comes to dealing with the political delicacies that I believe to be typical for this type of event. In the presence of both the Polish President Wałęsa and the President of Germany, as well as of high dignitaries from other countries whose role in the Uprising has not been uncontested either, Gore may be assumed to have been 'walking on eggs' (as a Dutch saying goes). He had to manoeuvre between doing right to the Poles' history on the one hand, and to not offend too heavily his present-day political allies on the other. But I also hope to be able to formulate some interesting insights with respect to the lexical-semantic features of the categories Gore used in what might be seen as an attempt to reconcile rather contradictory standards.

Any report or description of an event is a specific (re-)construction of that very event. Through the selection of specific descriptive categories, giving those words a specific position in an utterance, and by arranging these utterances in a specific order a particular representation and evaluation of that event is accomplished. The categorisation of the participants in the event is one part of that job. By describing the participants in the Warsaw Uprising in a specific way, US Vice President Gore may be said to accomplish some kind of social-structural mapping of the parties involved. Gore's *sociology* of the Polish and the German populations partaking in the 1944 events, is the main object of analysis in this paper.

The analysis of the speech is not based upon the press release issued by the U.S. Information Agency of the American Embassy in Warsaw. Mr Gore's speech is transcribed from the videotaped recording of the Commemoration rally (see the *Appendix*). The differences of the actual speech with the officially

released text are not dramatic and most of the analysis presented here could have been done on the basis of the press release version. I nevertheless prefer to work on the materials as delivered in the event itself, because the actual delivery is in a sense Gore's *real* speech. Relevant passages will be quoted above the paragraphs in which I deal with them. All references to paragraph numbers (Roman, from I to XVII) and sentence numbers (between [ ]) point to the numbering of the transcription in the *Appendix*.

Roughly, the speech has the following outline:

- address of the audience;
- I meta-talk about the type of event a Commemoration is, partitioning the audience with respect to 'those who fought here half a century ago' and those who did not, tying the present to the past by contrasting the current solemnity with the tumult then;
- II-VII report of the Uprising; in paragraph II through V, more from the perspective of the Poles, in VI-VII focusing more on the German side;
- VIII-X the final outcome of the Uprising, the Second World War and the Cold War after it (in the long run, Warsaw, Poland and 'Liberty' have won);
- XI-XVII appeal to stop the 'cycle of hatred' across generations; call for peace for 'all children in every land' in Europe.

In particular, paragraphs II through VII deal with the events of the Uprising. They will be central in my discussion of the ways the US Vice President describes the parties involved in the conflict. The other paragraphs and the way in which references are made there to these parties will be considered only insofar as it seems relevant to the analysis.

Vice President Gore's sociology of the Polish party in the Uprising is analysed in section 2; his representation of the German side in section 3. In the latter section, I also talk about the different perspectives from which each of these parties is presented. In the final section 4, I conclude with a few observations regarding a striking difference in the way the populations in question are described. Categorisations of collectives, particularly the nationality categories *Polish* and *German*, appear to be used quite differently. I shall try to

explicate some relevant features of this class of categories so as to account in part for the way they are used on this particular occasion.

## 2. Categorising the Polish people

[4] We remember (0.5) General Bór, (1.1) the code name of Tadeusz Komorowski (1.0) who led the valiant people of Warsaw, (0.8) in revolt against Nazi tyranny.

[9] Against hopeless odds, (0.8) the Polish people dared to hope.

A group of people may be described in different ways. When Vice President Gore speaks of 'the Polish people', he is characterising a collective in terms of a category taken from a collection of nationality names. When referring a little earlier to 'the valiant people of Warsaw', he identified a collective on the basis of its residency in a specific city. The city-residency categorisation and the nationality categorisation are at least insofar inter-related that their respective uses in a series of descriptions allow for inference-making about the ways their referents relate to each other, e.g., the category Polish people includes the subset of the people of Warsaw.

It cannot be excluded, however, that Mr Gore is talking about the people of Warsaw as the Polish people. Both the order in which these referents are presented – first the 'people of Warsaw' [4], then 'the Polish people' [9] – and the features attributed to them, which in fact primarily apply to the Warsaw population, suggest this kind of hearing. The use of the *holonymic* description – the category identifying the whole of which the actual referent is a part – allows for the *de dicto* ascription of features to the whole population which *de re* just apply to the part. This kind of *category equation* operation provides for the possibility of *attribute transfer* from the part to the whole by treating the category for the part as more or less interchangeable with the category used to identify the whole (see Mazeland et al. 1995).

[7] Heroic (.) Polish freedom fighters (0.8) faced virtually alone (0.6) the fierce might of the Nazi Wehrmacht.

When Gore talks about 'heroic Polish freedom fighters', he uses a rather different type of description. Although still about *Polish* people, a subset of that population is taken apart by describing its members in terms of their role in a specific historic event (the Uprising, [21]). The complex categorisation 'freedom fighters' characterises a group of individuals in an 'event-specific' or *event-tied* way (Jayyusi 1984:114–121). 'Warriors' [15], 'non-combatants' [16] and 'martyrs' [22] are other instances of event-tied categorisations in Gore's speech. Contrary to the largely event-independent nationality and city-residency categorisations, a description as 'freedom fighters' refers to a group of people in terms of their situated role in a specific event.

[15] Disease and starvation fell (0.4) with impersonal ferocity (0.3) on Polish warriors and non-combatants alike. (0.6)

[16] Thousands of non-combatants (0.4) old men, (0.4) women, (.) little children (0.6) were herded into parks (0.6) and shot down by the Waffen SS.

The event is also used as the main resource for creating a contrast that provides for perhaps the most incisive partitioning of the population in question. There were active participants in the Uprising ('freedom fighters', [7]; 'warriors', [15]), but there was also a complementary subset of 'non-combatants' [16].

[10] Women fought on the barricades beside men, (0.9) using homemade bombs and (.) antiquated rifles and pistols (0.5) against the tanks (0.3) and artillery of the Wehrmacht.

The population partitioned with respect to the applicability of warrior status is again differentiated into smaller subsets by means of gender and age categorisations. Although not *per se* event-specific, age and gender groups appear to be distributed unevenly over the combative and the non-combative populations. When treating the involvement of women as a tellable with respect to the population of freedom fighters, the speaker assumes men to be the default type of person in the group of freedom fighters. That there were *women* fighting *besides men* is oriented to as a mentionable deviation from the general pattern that the fighters were men. Only old men are excused – and mentioned – for not being a combatant [16]:

- [16] Thousands of non-combatants (0.4) old men, (0.4) women, (.) little children (0.6) were herded into parks (0.6) and shot down by the Waffen SS.

The stage-of-life specifier 'old' provides for the inferential material to account for the inclusion of the class of 'old men' in a population different from the default home of the members of the category 'man'.

The default home of the subset of women – not differentiated with respect to age as is done for both the category of men ('old men') and for that of children ('little children') – is among the population that does not actively participate in the fights. Fighting – and, by consequence, being a freedom fighter – is treated as a *category-bound activity* for the class of men (Sacks 1972a/b; Jayyusi 1984: 35 ff.). It is not an activity that is category-bound for women. If they did, it is something rather abnormal, deviant and therefore not only mentionable, but also to be mentioned in order to be able to include them in the set of freedom fighters. Women who participate in the fighting are dealt with as category-mentionables. The default assumption is that freedom fighters are male and exceptions to this rule may be listed.

The borders of the domain assigned by default to a class of people, thus may be crossed. Not only did women fight besides men, even *children* entered the domain of the fighters, although access is not given lavishly:

- [11] While children in my country were growing up far from battle (0.7) Polish children (0.4) were carrying messages through the sewers (0.4) to freedom fighters in different parts of the city. (0.8)

- [12] Sometimes those children took up arms alongside their older brothers and sisters (0.4) and many of them died.

Children did play a combat supportive role when 'carrying messages through the sewers'. But 'sometimes' they even 'took up arms', albeit in the company of 'their older brothers and sisters'. The latter collection of categories invokes yet another vantage point from which *men*, *women* and *children* can be characterised, – that is, from the perspective of their membership in *family* units. The use of this categorisation device allows for a type of cross-unification of the classes of people involved (men, women and children). It also offers an account for the partial inclusion of children in another population than their 'natural' home domain: it is through family ties children got involved in the fighting.

- [16] Thousands of non-combatants (0.4) old men, (0.4) women, (.) little children (0.6) were herded into parks (0.6) and shot down by the Waffen SS.

'Old men', 'women' and 'little children' are brought together as items in a list that is parenthetically specifying a roughly quantified number of non-combatants. Basically, the same groups are distinguished as in the complementary set of freedom fighters. Men and women along the gender dimension, and children from a stage-of-life perspective. However, the age-differentiation is much finer now. It is talked about *old* men and *little* children. Only the category 'women' – which presupposes adulthood – is not further specified with respect to age.

Putting the categories 'old men', 'women' and 'little children' together in the same list pushes the listener to look for the rationale that unites them. The way the speaker goes on – predicating 'were herded into parks and shot down by the Waffen SS' over this population – triggers the inference that the items in this list share a feature of situated defencelessness. Complementary to warriorship being a category-bound feature of *men*, defencelessness is treated as a category-bound feature of 'old men', 'women' and 'little children'. It accounts for compiling them in the same list.

The sharing of the same category bound feature also provides for a type of *implicative fit* of the items in the list (Jayyusi 1984: 86–93). Inferentially, it triggers the relevancy of a categorisation as *victims*. Ultimately, this type of inferable categorisation is absorbed by the much stronger qualification as *martyrs* [22]:

- [22] For a time it seemed (0.4) it seemed that this magnificent old city, (0.7) had become a graveyard of martyrs, (0.6)

'Martyr' is an event-tied category that does not differentiate between having died as a warrior or as a non-combatant. It focuses on one type of outcome for at least some members of the 'good' party in the event: the people referred to with this category died for a 'holy' cause.

Note, for a matter of fact, that the unit *city* has become the primary organising principle for describing the people of Warsaw at this point in the speech.

- [15] Disease and starvation fell (0.4) with impersonal ferocity (0.3) on Polish warriors and non-combatants alike. (0.6)

To conclude the discussion of this section, I will discuss the juxtaposition of 'Polish warriors' and 'non-combatants' in [15]. 'Warriors' may be heard as an alternative description for the same collective earlier referred to as 'freedom fighters' [7]. The explicit incorporation of a description of the purpose (*freedom*) for being a fighter does not only specify the type of event, it also accounts for the participation of this specific party in that very event.<sup>3</sup> 'Warriors' is less stringently tied to the event that occasioned its selection. The category is rather associated with a specific type of activities (*viz.*, pre-modern warfare and fighting). It stresses the martial status of the group in question without, however, characterising this martial nature in terms of the type of institutionalised arrangement the modern state organises its warfare capacity in (army, soldiers, ...). Rather, it is formulated in terms of some pre-modern state of warfare. Unlike 'freedom fighters' it does not bear any features that allow for inferences about the motives or aims for category incumbency.

'Non-combatant', on the other hand, is a negative-feature description. It states the relevancy of the denied feature's absence, as in 'non-smoker' or 'non-reader'. Phrases like 'smokers and non-smokers' partition a population into a group that has a feature, and a complementary group that does not have it. If there would have been talked about 'freedom-fighters and non-combatants' instead of 'warriors and non-combatants', this would have allowed for inferences with respect to the non-fighting group – which probably were less desirable. The negative-feature category would have allowed for extension of what is denied in its opposite *freedom fighters* beyond the compound's head only. That is, it might have triggered an inference that the group of non-combatants was not supportive of the purpose of the fighting. The contrast activated in 'warriors and non-combatants' does exclude this hearing. It is designed so as to eliminate this kind of inference.

Vice President Gore thus uses a highly differentiated aggregate of categorisation devices to describe the people of Warsaw during the Uprising. On the one hand, he uses stable, event-independent categorisations with respect to nationality, residency, gender and stage-of-life. On the other hand, event-tied collections of categories bring about segmentations with respect to such dimensions as having been an active combatant in the Uprising or not, or having died in it or not. Noticeably absent, however, certainly when compared to the way the German side is characterised (see the following section), is the categorical omission of characterisations in terms of political affiliation, or of

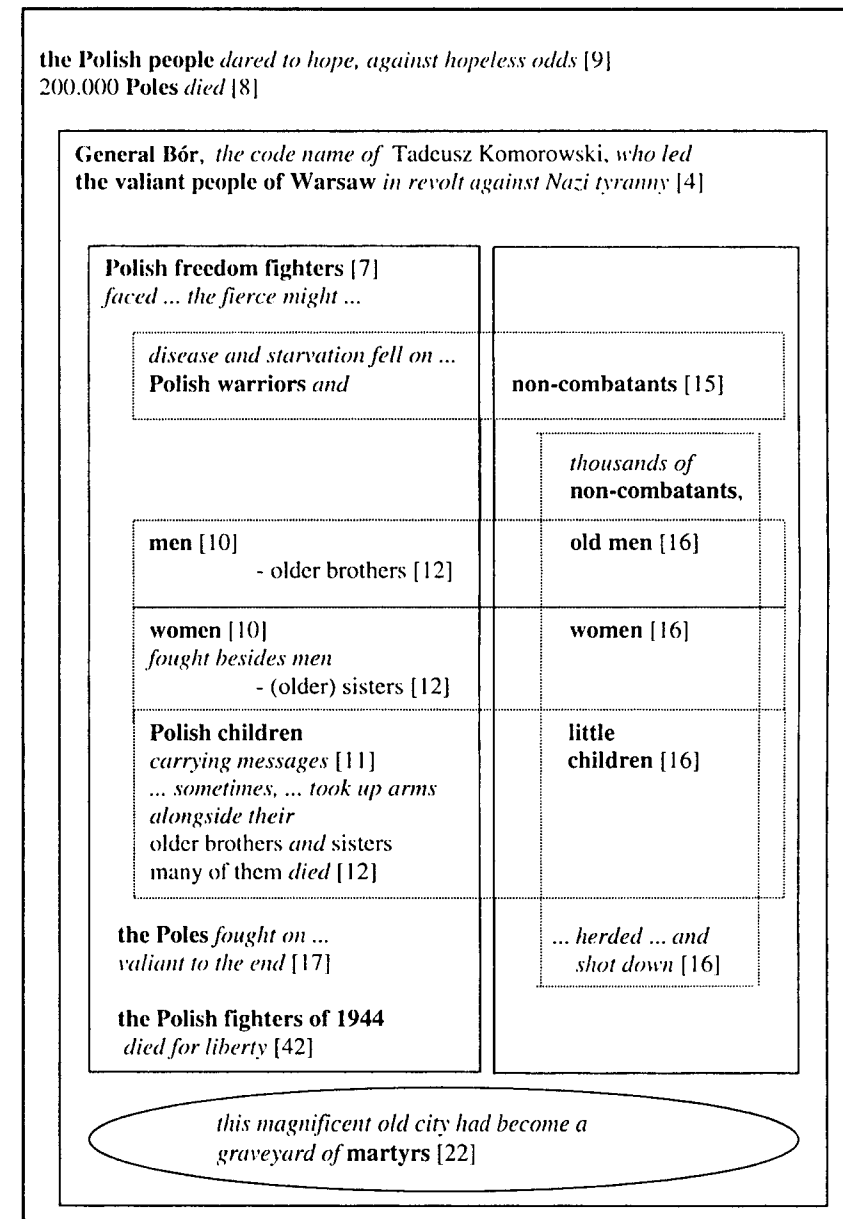


Figure 1. Gore's social-structural mapping of the Polish people

membership in organisations of the military and/or the resistance. The Polish people are primarily described in terms of event-tied categorisations, and in terms of stable gender and stage-of-life categorisations that are indifferent to membership in institutional or political arrangements.

Figure 1 (see the previous page; categories appear in bold) is an attempt to summarise the most pregnant partitionings resulting from Mr Gore's characterisation of the Polish party in the conflict. In the Figure, categories that are included within a more encompassing category are put within the frame of the latter; overlapping areas represent intersecting categories.

### 3. Describing the German side

The social-structural mappings Vice President Gore develops for the description of the German part in the Warsaw Uprising are of a distinct character. They result in quite a different picture of the population in question (see Figure 2, below).

- [4] We remember (0.5) General Bór, (1.1) the code name of Tadeusz Komorowski (1.0) who led the valiant people of Warsaw, (0.8) in revolt against Nazi tyranny,

First, when introduced for the first time into the world of the text, the opponent against which the people of Warsaw revolted is not described as a collective of people, but as an abstract, undesirable political state of affairs ('Nazi tyranny', [4]).

- [7] Heroic (.) Polish freedom fighters (0.8) faced virtually alone (0.6) the fierce might of the Nazi Wehrmacht.
- [10] Women fought on the barricades beside men, (0.9) using homemade bombs and (.) antiquated rifles and pistols (0.5) against the tanks (0.3) and artillery of the Wehrmacht.
- [16] Thousands of non-combatants (0.4) old men, (0.4) women, (.) little children (0.6) were herded into parks (0.6) and shot down by the Waffen SS.
- [18] Heinrich Himmler, (0.6) who served as Adolf Hitler's chief executioner, (0.8) took personal charge of the German forces in Warsaw (0.8)

- [19] He used the Uprising (0.6) as an excuse to vent his hatred (0.6) on the city that had refused to cower (0.6) before the criminal brutality (0.5) of his SS troops.

Second, although not in an event-tied way, the German party is almost exclusively referred to in terms of military categories. They are not primarily characterised as collectives of people, however, but as organised units within institutions ('the Nazi Wehrmacht', [7]; 'the Wehrmacht', [10]; 'the Waffen SS', [16]; 'the German forces', [18]; 'his SS troops', [19]). Contrary to the categorisation of the Polish fighters – in which case no names of the different resistance armies involved in the Uprising are mentioned –, the German forces are mostly referred to with uniquely referring proper names ('Wehrmacht', [7] and [10]; 'Waffen SS', [16]; 'SS troops', [19]). All of these names refer to stately organised military units within a specific, historically bound political framework (the period of the national-socialistic state). The main exception is the descriptive designator 'the German forces' [18]; I will come back to this type of description in the next section.

- [18] Heinrich Himmler, (0.6) who served as Adolf Hitler's chief executioner, (0.8) took personal charge of the German forces in Warsaw (0.8)
- [19] He used the Uprising (0.6) as an excuse to vent his hatred (0.6) on the city that had refused to cower (0.6) before the criminal brutality (0.5) of his SS troops.
- [20] He ordered them (0.3) to erase Warsaw, (0.5) from the map of Europe.
- [21] So when the Uprising was finally crushed (0.6) Himmler's methodical agents of death (0.6) went through Warsaw (0.4) blowing up (0.3) those buildings that remained standing.

Third, whereas there is only one hint at an informal hierarchy holding for the 'people of Warsaw' ('General Bór ... who led the valiant people of Warsaw in revolt against ...', [4]), the German forces are depicted as acting within the strictly formal top-down hierarchy of an organised modern state army, – compare 'Heinrich Himmler ... took *personal charge* of the German forces in Warsaw' [18]; '*his* SS troops' [19]; '*he* ordered them ...' [20] and '*Himmler's* methodical agents of death' [21]. Moreover, Himmler himself is parenthetically re-specified as an instrument of an individual who is in a hierarchically higher position ('Adolf Hitler's chief executioner', [18]).

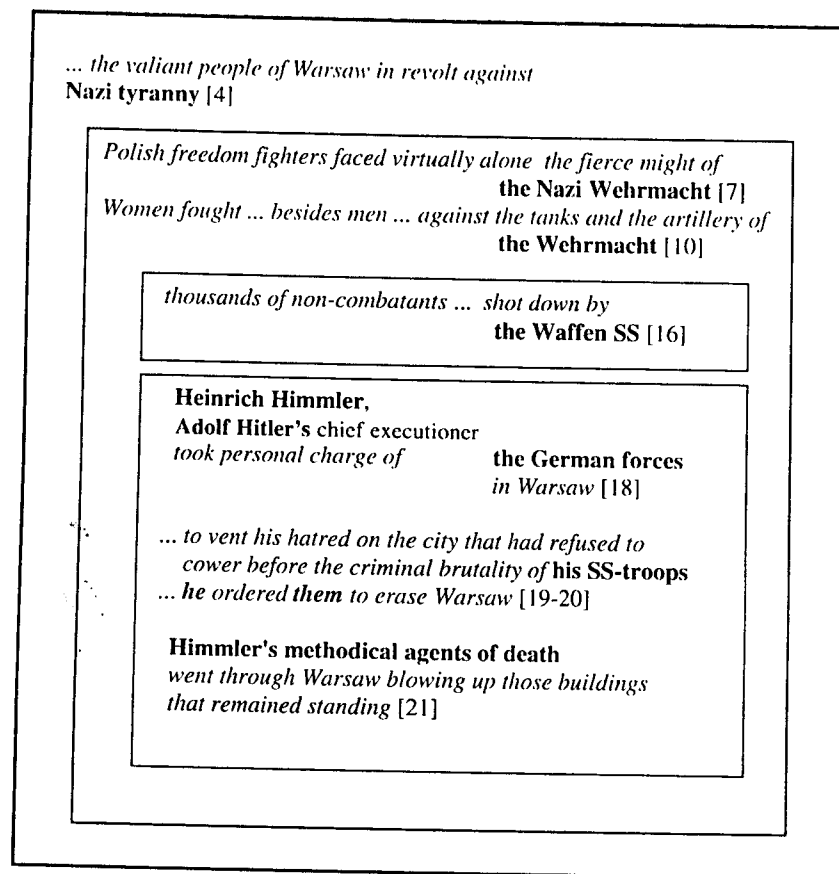


Figure 2. The characterisation of the German party in the Warsaw Uprising

The German side thus is categorised in such a way that, on the one hand, the combative entities themselves are de-personalised. They are not characterised as a population consisting out of a gathering of individuals unified with respect to some relevant feature, but they are described in terms of institutionalised military units. The way the noun phrases referring to these entities are sententially positioned – in sentence-final position, syntactically embedded as specifying arguments of abstract entities or military tools – enforces a non-personal way of looking at them (compare ... ‘the fierce might of the Nazi Wehrmacht’, [7], and ... ‘the tanks and artillery of the Wehrmacht’, [10], respectively).

On the other hand, the characterisation in terms of hierarchically organised entities allows for personalisation of the leadership at the top of these military institutions. The only times a noun phrase describing a representative of the German side is given the prominent first position of a sentence, formulating it both as an *agens* and making it to the grammatical subject of the sentence, is when reference is made to a single person. Compare again ‘*Heinrich Himmler* ... took personal charge of the German forces in Warsaw’ [18]; ‘*he* used the Uprising ...’ [19]; ‘*he* ordered them ...’ [20] and ‘*Himmler’s* methodical agents of death went through ...’ [21]. The only time that the discourse is organised from the perspective of the German side is when the speaker is referring to a specific member of the opponent of the Polish people [18–21]. Agentivity and inferentially related attribution of responsibility are only stipulated when it comes to a single individual (Pomerantz 1978). The potential to attribute responsibility to just a single individual is further enhanced by explicitly ascribing a personal motive to Himmler:

[19] He used the Uprising (0.6) as an excuse to vent his hatred (0.6) on the city that had refused to cower (0.6) before the criminal brutality (0.5) of his SS troops.

The adversary of the people of Warsaw in the Uprising is thus primarily categorised in terms of abstract military entities under the leadership of an individual, which has his own personal motives for ordering his troops to act mercilessly. This party is not only less stratified than the Polish people, it is also effectively deprived of allusions to personal agentivity or responsibility at the levels of its non-administering members.

#### 4. Comparison of the practices used to describe each side

[18] Heinrich Himmler, (0.6) who served as Adolf Hitler’s chief executioner, (0.8) took personal charge of the German forces in Warsaw

One of the most remarkable features of Gore’s description of the opponent party in the Warsaw Uprising – a feature, though, that I was only able to register as a noticeable absence after having reconstructed Gore’s social-structural mapping as discussed in the former sections – is the minimal use of the nationality category ‘German’. In the course of the whole speech, it is used

only once [18]. Measured against the abundant number of times in which the adjective 'Polish' figures in characterisations of the other party in the conflict, this is a remarkable contrast.

The skewing of the frequency in which nationality categories are used can perhaps be accounted for in terms of the lexical-semantic features of the category types at hand. Descriptions like 'Nazi tyranny', (Nazi) 'Wehrmacht', 'Waffen SS', 'SS troops' and even a metaphorical descriptive expression like 'Himmler's methodical agents of death' are all historically bound categorisations. They only apply for a certain period in history to specific, time-bound military units of the national-socialistic state-apparatus. They do not allow a transfer of category-associated features to a more encompassing collective like 'the German people'.

Nationality categories like *German* and *Polish*, on the other hand, are not tied *per se* to a specific historic period. As a consequence, particularly relevant for the occasion of the Commemoration speech, they are indifferent to subsequent generations of the collective at hand, and of the state entity (or 'nation', [31]) that can be associated with it. They do allow for transfer of features from one to a next generation of the populations they characterise.

With respect to the Polish people, Vice President Gore seems to orient to this kind of transferability of features as a favourable type of inference his audience is allowed to make. Compare:

- [42] The Polish fighters of nineteen forty four (0.7) died for liberty (0.6) and for human dignity. (0.8)
- [43] Their example and their sacrifice (0.6) were for all people (0.7) and all times. (0.6)
- [44] Recent history has proven (0.5) that their sacrifice (0.4) helped sanctify liberty for all.

A similar type of transferability of category associated features, however, is effectively blocked off by almost completely avoiding the use of the nationality categorisation *German*. This tendency in Mr Gore's use of categories is also in line with the use of characterisations of the current audience such as:

- [31] Some would say (0.6) that the strangeness is deepened by the presence here (0.5) of representatives from the nations that contended (0.3) on all sides of that fiery conflict, (0.7) including some who had very different leadership (0.5) and ideologies then.

Continuity – and thereby transferability of features – may be claimed with respect to *nations*. It is not applicable to nations with *different leadership* and *ideologies*, however. The selective use of categories is also supporting Mr Gore's concluding appeal to not 'pass hatreds from generation to generation ...'.

- [32] Perhaps such a gathering is strange, (0.6) given the terrible propensity of human kind (0.6) to pass hatreds from generation to generation (0.7) and to heap on the heads of children (0.2) in the present (0.5) the blood guilt of the past.

I think it is the generation-indifference of nationality categorisations that seems to account for the fact that Mr Gore is observably preferring historically bound categories over nationality categories when talking about the opponent of the Polish people in the Warsaw Uprising.

The categorisation of the German side in the Warsaw Uprising in Gore's speech thus provides for minimisation of the linkability of the Nazi forces in 1944 Warsaw to the present-day German people and nation. It characterises the German forces in terms of historically bound and depersonalised military units. Personal involvement and individual responsibility are only assigned to their leadership. Inferential transfer of features to current generations is blocked off by almost entirely avoiding descriptions in terms of nationality categorisations.

The Polish people, on the other hand, are described so as to maximise transferability of features of the Uprising's heroic freedom fighters to the people and the nation as a whole. They are primarily characterised in terms of event-tied categorisations and through stable gender and stage-of-life categorisations. This way of describing them allows for attribution of features independent from their membership of institutional or political arrangements. It even provides for transfer of features to the nowadays Polish people and nation by the abundant use of nationality categorisations that are independent from historically bound generations and the era that occasioned US Vice President Albert Gore's Commemoration speech.



## Notes

1. I thank Jay Johnson for taking a look at my English and for giving some very useful comments.
2. Marcin K. Porwit notes: "In order to strengthen its bargaining position, the London government gave the go-ahead for the uprising, hoping to achieve these goals:
  - Control of Warsaw by forces loyal to the London government
  - Broad popular support for the London government."
3. For an American audience, a categorisation as *freedom fighters* might trigger yet another type of association. In the eighties, during the presidency of President Reagan, the Nicaraguan *contras* were referred to as 'freedom fighters', often with the categorisation 'terrorists' as the other member of the contrast-pair. By using the term 'freedom fighter', Vice President Gore might have alluded to a certain degree of similarity and continuity regarding the type of *freedom* it was and is fought for (Jay Johnson, personal communication).

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## Appendix

## Transcription of Mr Gore's address

transcribed by Harrie Mazeland on the basis of the videotape

## Legend of the transcription conventions

I —(39.6)—	roman number indicates paragraphs on the basis of the written press release, followed by duration of the delivery of that paragraph in seconds
[1]	number of sentence on the basis of the written press release
(1.2)	length of a silence in tenths of seconds
(.)	a dot placed in parentheses indicates an interval of no speech less than two tenth of a second
.	<i>period</i> : falling intonation contour
,	<i>comma</i> : slightly rising intonation contour
?	<i>question mark</i> : (more) strongly rising intonation contour
extension	<i>colon</i> : noticeable extension of the sound or syllable with the colon

[1] President Wałęsa, president Herzog, (0.7) prime minister Major, (0.8) and all of the dignitaries from all of the countries represented here and ladies and gentlemen.  
(3.4)

I. ————— (39.6) —————  
 [2] Commemorations of battle (1.2) always have a special quality. (1.5)  
 [3] Those who fought here (1.1) half a cen- (.) half a century ago (1.2) must find a certain strangeness (0.7) in our effort to recapture with words (0.9) in calm and solemn quiet (1.0) the tumult and terror of war to the death (0.5) in a savage time.  
 (1.9)  
 [ Polish translator, 18.0 ]  
 (1.4)

II. ————— (22.7) —————  
 [4] We remember (0.5) General Bór, (1.1) the code name of Tadeusz Komorowski (1.0) who led the valiant people of Warsaw, (0.8) in revolt against Nazi tyranny, (0.9) a revolt that began (0.6) on August first, (0.4) nineteen forty four. (0.8)  
 [5] We remember what they did (0.7) and what they gave.  
 (3.5)  
 [ Polish translator, 16.5 ]  
 (1.4)

## III. ----- (25.3) -----

[6] For over two months (0.5) in the broiling summer heat (0.7) Warsaw was swept by the sound and fury of battle. (1.0)

[7] Heroic (.) Polish freedom fighters (0.8) faced virtually alone (0.6) the fierce might of the Nazi Wehrmacht. (0.9)

[8] In the end two hundred thousand Poles died (0.8) almost as much as my country lost in all of World War Two.

(1.0)

[ *Polish translator*, 19.8 ]

(1.3)

## IV. ----- (34.7) -----

[9] Against hopeless odds, (0.8) the Polish people dared to hope. (1.2)

[10] Women fought on the barricades beside men, (0.9) using homemade bombs and (.) antiquated rifles and pistols (0.5) against the tanks (0.3) and artillery of the Wehrmacht. (0.9)

[11] While children in my country were growing up far from battle (0.7) Polish children (0.4) were carrying messages through the sewers (0.4) to freedom fighters in different parts of the city. (0.8)

[12] Sometimes those children took up arms alongside their older brothers and sisters (0.4) and many of them died.

(0.8)

[ *Polish translator*, 32.0 ]

(1.3)

## V. ----- (30.3) -----

[13] The dusty air (0.4) sank with the reek of death. (1.0)

[14] Water was short. (0.9)

[15] Disease and starvation fell (0.4) with impersonal ferocity (0.3) on Polish warriors and non-combatants alike. (0.6)

[16] Thousands of non-combatants (0.4) old men, (0.4) women, (.) little children (0.6) were herded into parks (0.6) and shot down by the Waffen SS. (0.9)

[17] Still (0.5) the Poles fought on beneath their white and red flag (0.5) valiant (0.3) to the end.

(1.0)

[ *Polish translator*, 21.0 ]

(1.5)

## VI. ----- (25.9) -----

[18] Heinrich Himmler, (0.6) who served as Adolph Hitler's chief executioner, (0.8) took personal charge of the German forces in Warsaw (0.8)

[19] He used the Uprising (0.6) as an excuse to vent his hatred (0.6) on the city that had refused to cower (0.6) before the criminal brutality (0.5) of his SS troops. (0.9)

[20] He ordered them (0.3) to erase Warsaw, (0.5) from the map of Europe.

(0.8)

[ *Polish translator*, 19.8 ]

(1.6)

## VII. ----- (28.2) -----

[21] So when the Uprising was finally crushed (0.6) Himmler's methodical agents of death (0.6) went through Warsaw (0.4) blowing up (0.3) those buildings that remained standing. (1.0)

[22] For a time it seemed (0.4) it seemed that this magnificent old city, (0.7) had become a graveyard of martyrs, (0.6) an uncarved tombstone (0.4) of rubble and ruins (0.5) marking the end of a history (0.3) that had lasted seven hundred years.

(0.9)

[ *Polish translator*, 19.1 ]

(1.6)

## VIII. ----- (29.4) -----

[23] Himmler's purpose failed. (1.3)

[24] Today we meet here, (0.8) in a thriving city (0.6) in a free land, (0.6) a Poland (0.5) and a Warsaw (0.4) that never died. (0.9)

[25] We try after half a century, (0.5) to find words that may evoke for another generation (0.7) the haunting glory shining in memory (0.4) over the sacrifice of the silent dead (0.6) who here gave their lives (0.4) for Poland (0.4) and for liberty.

(0.8)

[ *Polish translator*, 20.5 ]

(1.2)

## IX. ----- (21.9) -----

[26] The strangeness of this moment (1.0) is that no words we can frame are adequate to that task. (1.2)

[27] If you would see the true monument (0.7) for these noble martyrs, (0.6) look around you. (1.0)

[28] Look at Warsaw (0.9) look at Poland (0.9) look at this international assembly (0.7) that gathers to do them honor.

(0.9)

[ *Polish translator*, 18.5 ]

(1.0)

## X. ----- (12.6) -----

[29] Real peace (0.3) between East and West (0.7) has come after wars that were first hot and then cold. (0.8)

[30] Liberty (0.5) has burst the chains of slavery (0.5) and buried them in the earth.

(3.2)

[ *Polish translator*, 9.4 ]

(1.2)

XI. ----- (15.9) -----

[31] Some would say (0.6) that the strangeness is deepened by the presence here (0.5) of representatives from the nations that contended (0.3) on all sides of that fiery conflict, (0.7) including some who had very different leadership (0.5) and ideologies then.

(1.0)

[ *Polish translator*, 12.4 ]

(0.6)

XII. ----- (22.7) -----

[32] Perhaps such a gathering is strange, (0.6) given the terrible propensity of human kind (0.6) to pass hatreds from generation to generation (0.7) and to heap on the heads of children (0.2) in the present (0.5) the blood guilt of the past. (0.5)

[33] But it is good (0.3) that we are all here (0.6)

[34] This is a ceremony (0.3) of healing (0.5) as well as remembrance.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 18.8 ]

(0.9)

XIII. ----- (22.0) -----

[35] If our sons and daughters (1.3) are to dwell together in peace (0.4) in the world (0.8) the cycle of hatred and vengeance must be broken. (1.0)

[36] Those who have been at sword point must cry (0.4) Hold! (0.3) Enough! (0.9) and together take hands to the forge (0.6) to shape the weapons of war (0.6) into instruments of peace.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 17.3 ]

(1.0)

XIV. ----- (23.1) -----

[37] The living and the dead from the Warsaw Uprising (0.8) deserve more than vengeance against those innocent of their blood. (1.0)

[38] They deserve our unbending resolve (0.6) five decades after their gallant sacrifice (0.6) to build a Europe where past hatreds (0.5) will vanish in the warmth of new understanding, (0.5) tolerance, (0.5) mutual forgiveness (0.4) and common hope.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 23.2 ]

(1.1)

XV. ----- (16.7) -----

[39] No one can escape the past. (0.9)

[40] We can however, (0.8) choose those parts of the past that we will use in constructing the future. (0.8)

[41] We must not choose to enslave the present (0.4) and to bind the future (0.3) in the shackles of ancient hatreds.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 14.0 ]

(1.4)

XVI. ----- (19.5) -----

[42] The Polish fighters of nineteen forty four (0.7) died for liberty (0.6) and for human dignity. (0.8)

[43] Their example and their sacrifice (0.6) were for all people (0.7) and all times. (0.6)

[44] Recent history has proven (0.5) that their sacrifice (0.4) helped sanctify liberty for all.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 16.2 ]

(1.4)

XVII. ----- (20.5) -----

[45] The most precious monument (0.7) for those we honor today (0.9) will be a Europe (0.2) where all children in every land (0.7) can waken (0.2) without fear (0.7) live their days (0.3) without hatred (0.9) dine together in plenty (0.7) and lie down to sleep in peace. (0.8)

[46] Let it be so.

(0.7)

[ *Polish translator*, 16.6 ]



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## Preface

Fifty years after the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising, on the evening of 1 August 1994, a Commemorative Ceremony took place in Warsaw. Polish president Lech Wałęsa, who had organised the ceremony, wanted it to be a farewell to the period in history when the world had been divided along the lines drawn at the Yalta conference. Furthermore, he intended the commemoration to be an occasion for reconciliation and an occasion for establishing new relationships. For that reason, not only the former allies and liberators, but also the former enemy (Germany) was invited, as well as the ally (Russia) which became the 'official' liberator of Poland, but had – according to a majority of the Poles – betrayed the Poles during the Warsaw Uprising, and, moreover, had become the new oppressor of Poland from 1945 onwards. At the ceremony, representative speakers from all these involved nations addressed the audience.

In this volume, a discourse analysis of each of these addresses will be presented. Several questions are relevant to such an analysis, such as:

- How do speakers formulate their role in the ceremony, as a person, and as a representative?
- How is reference made to events of the Uprising itself, to particular actions within the Uprising, and to the participants and their respective roles?
- Which symbolic or other meanings are attributed to the events of the Uprising?
- How is the Uprising related to a larger context – especially in relation to earlier and later events in history?
- How is the act of commemorating conceived?
- How does the time-distance of fifty years appear in the addresses?
- How are present-day relationships conceived, and related to historical relationships?
- Are audiences other than the immediately present one explicitly or implicitly addressed?

In 1994 and 1995 many other commemorative events were organised throughout Europe and other parts of the world, due to the fiftieth anniversary of several major events of the Second World War. In comparison to these other events the Warsaw Commemorative Ceremony is rather unique, both as to