

“Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Master Communicator”

During the early morning of Sunday December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the Pearl Harbor Naval base in Hawai'i. There were a minimal number of soldiers on duty at the time, as many offices were closed and soldiers on leave for the weekend. While the incoming Japanese attack planes were detected, they were mistaken for a group of American planes that were due to arrive from the mainland. These attacks continued for just over two hours, and came as a complete and utter surprise to the United States. “The Navy and Marine Corps suffered a total of 2, 896 casualties of which 2, 117 were deaths and 779 were wounded. The Army lost 228 to death...Altogether the Japanese sank or severely damaged 18 ships, including 8 battleships, three light cruisers, and three destroyers...the Japanese destroyed 161 American planes and seriously damaged 102” (Pearl). This attack was the causal factor to the United States joining World War II.

The day following the Japanese attacks, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed Congress, as well as the nation via radio, requesting a declaration of war against Japan. This request was overwhelmingly approved very shortly after Congress listened to it. This speech from President Roosevelt illustrates leadership communication in a time of major crisis and devastation. With the entire nation in sorrow and angry over what had happened, Roosevelt had to deliver effective rhetoric to aid the nation through this tragic time. While Secretary of State Cordell Hull urged Roosevelt to thoroughly recite the Japanese deceit, he decided to deliver a brief, uncomplicated appeal to the United States people. Although the speech was brief, the significance was enormous. “Congress took only thirty-three minutes to vote. In the Senate the count was 82-0, in the House, 388-1” (Prange 393). And thus, the retaliation the public was seeking had been initiated. “President

Roosevelt gave the people that alertness. He transformed indignation and confusion into purpose with an emotionally charged address. He gave the American people a forceful expression of conditions, and reminded them of the necessities of defense and ultimate victory. Even while reporting the situation in specific detail, the President managed to supply the sense of urgency which had been diminished through shock” (Carson 6).

Roosevelt’s ability to effectively guide a nation struck by tragedy into action serves as an example still today for the leaders across our country, and on an even greater scale, the world.

In this paper, I will illustrate how the rhetoric of Roosevelt guided a nation to unite under an ideology of patriotism during a time of great tragedy. Furthermore, I will explore how his use of ideographs assisted in his success of uniting the people of our country. I will analyze the details of the speech known as the Day of Infamy Speech, such as the intended audience, the exigency that called for this speech, and rhetorical devices used by Roosevelt within the speech. I will also examine how Roosevelt advances a notion of nationalism and patriotism through his Day of Infamy Speech, with specific examples from the text that demonstrate how he created such an ideology.

Rhetorical Effectiveness

One of the reasons why Roosevelt’s speech was so effective was because he had the support and confidence of the American people. At the time of the speech, Roosevelt was already in his third term as president, and was in the midst of guiding the nation through the Great Depression. Up until this time, America under Roosevelt had maintained a position of neutrality. However, this suddenly changed due to the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt did precisely what the nation wanted him to do in response to being the

victim of a deliberate attack, retaliate. His response was more than just a personal response, but rather more of a collective response of the nation as a whole. His speech was extremely effective in getting the nation to come together and collectively channel their response. The importance of this speech on the nation was immeasurable. Had Roosevelt decided to deliver his speech in an alternative manner, the nation may not have been unified to the response in the same way. The American people needed to hear the rhetoric that President Roosevelt delivered to them and truly comprehend how significant of an event this would be on our nation's history. He channeled the fears and emotions of the public into a united plan of retaliation, something the people were desperately searching for.

When Roosevelt assumed presidency during 1933, the United States was in the middle of a severe depression that had already been going on for more than three years. Many Americans were in search of hope during this bleak time, and Roosevelt sought to deliver that hope. During his Inaugural speech in 1933, he delivered the famous line, '...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself'. During his first term as president, Roosevelt passed many major legislations in attempt to put an end to the current depression. He was re-elected during 1936 by a landslide majority. Unlike his first presidential term, he did not pass nearly as much legislation during his second; and unlike his landslide victory during 1936, the election of 1940 was much closer, as won with a fifty five percent majority vote. His third term primarily focused on WWII, with the Pearl Harbor attack being the single most significant event for the United States, as it was the causal factor in the United States joining the war.

Many Americans considered Roosevelt more than just a president, but also as a friend. Americans viewed Roosevelt as a credible person, someone that they could truly trust their nations decisions to. He delivered what became known as fireside chats to the nation, which were intended to transform the bad times into good ones. "He communicated the subtle range of his feelings in a manner that imparted directness and sincerity to his listeners. FDR talked to, not at, the American people" (Ryan 13). He often initiated these 'chats' with "Good evening, friends". These addresses to the nation urged the American people to maintain their faith during tough economic times. Roosevelt felt it important that these messages to the public to be clear and simple. "Franklin Roosevelt was a conscious stylist. At the heart of his theory of style was an insistence on clarity and simplicity. He wanted to be 'clear enough for the layman to understand" (Aoki 71). His capability of making every listener feel as if he were talking directly to them greatly contributed to the willingness of the American people to trust and back his decisions.

According to Aoki, Roosevelt uses at least three techniques to ensure his speeches were clear: easy to understand and open language, including examples and explanations, and simple organization of the text. He was very persuasive in these speeches, often using the pronoun 'we' or 'fellow' to allow his audience to feel engaged and a part of these addresses. In doing so, Roosevelt allows his listeners to feel a sense of intimacy and make a connection with him. Aoki goes into other rhetorical techniques used by Roosevelt during these chats. These techniques used by Roosevelt include "using 'we' when making assertions, embedding his assertions into an objective statement, artful use of adverbs and adjectives, and applying a subtle change of pace, from using soft language to hard language" (Aoki 73). Roosevelt was able to successfully reel in his listeners through his change of

language. He would begin with mild and subtle language and as he proceeded further into his speeches, he would stronger, more specific language. "FDR rarely sounded or looked anxious or hurried" (Ryan 21). His outstanding organization allowed for his techniques to be as successful as they were. These chats gave the public the hope they were searching for and urged them to have faith and stay positive in the nations journey ahead.

Unity was something in which Roosevelt found to be of the utmost importance. "He thought of the nation as having many members united into one organism, the health of each member being dependent on the health of every other member and of the nation as a whole" (Kingdon, 162). He knew that he needed to unite the nation together once again, especially considering the circumstances during the time of his presidency. "He saw events and individuals in terms of their relationships, and these relationships in terms of the whole – the whole country" (Kingdon 162). His sense of interrelatedness in terms of both people and events was incredible. He would see the bigger picture and use that vision as the forefront to guiding the nation together once again. "...Even in times as troubled and uncertain as these, I still hold faith that a better civilization than any we have known is in store for America and by our example, perhaps, for the world" (Kingdon 172). No matter how gloom the situation was, Roosevelt continually kept an eye in the direction he wanted our nation to gravitate to. His ability to give hope to the American people during tragic times significantly helped with the significant amount of support he received from his nation.

A day after what was at the time arguably the most destructive, traumatic event our country had seen, president Roosevelt addressed the nation. Apparent that everyone had been blindsided with disaster, the president had the responsibility to address the situation

accordingly. A solution needed to be implemented in order to alleviate the sense of defeat and despair that had overcome the nation. His intention of this speech was to urge Congress to declare war on Japan after the brutal attacks they dealt to Pearl Harbor. He wanted to convey to the nation that justice would be served and that they would recover from the tragedy even stronger than they were before. He provided the nation with a sense of hope and gave them a positive outlook on the future, much like he had done with his fireside chats. He also needed to show Japan that the people of the United States would not stand passively and let their country get invaded without retaliating themselves. Roosevelt also dealt with many constraints when preparing this speech, with one very important one being time, as it was necessary to address the nation in a timely manner following such devastation.

The Day of Infamy speech was in part so effective due to its length. The brief message delivered to the world by the president of the United States was done in an unprecedented manner. This structure of this speech is informative. It begins with the most famous line of the speech, which recalls what has occurred to the nation. Roosevelt proceeds to explain the events leading up to the attack, and ultimately goes into a call for action.

There are a few points that I would like to address regarding President Roosevelt's Day of Infamy Speech. First off, he did not use any speechwriters to construct the speech, but rather dictated nearly every word of it himself. The only exception to this is the next-to-last sentence, which he decided to use the phrasing suggested to him by Harry Hopkins, one of his closest advisors. For the most part, Roosevelt does not offer his personal opinion regarding the matter, but instead simply detailed the facts of the event, leaving it up to the

listeners to draw their own conclusions. His speech was intended to draw upon the anger that the American people were feeling after being betrayed and attacked by Japan, which had a strong emotional impact with its listeners. As a rhetorician, he does an excellent job of providing pauses during the speech, making it easy to follow, and adding inflection to words which he felt to be of more importance. He did an outstanding job of using foreshadowing in his speech, stating that the American people will come to 'absolute victory'. "Franklin Roosevelt's delivery possessed no characteristics which detracted from his effectiveness. His voice quality, pitch, speaking rate, and use of loudness all served to enhance the ideas he was presenting, without calling attention to themselves...Roosevelt's excellent voice and his clear, incisive articulation contributed materially to his delivery and thus to his total effectiveness as a speaker" (Brandenburg 30). Although he may not have been known for his intelligence, Roosevelt was able to successfully implement his message through the outstanding usage of these characteristics.

Roosevelt is letting everyone know, including the American listeners as well as the Japanese, that the United States would fight back and would not be denied. He is making it known to the world that our nation will not be defeated by these attacks, but rather will return even stronger, and ultimately win the war against Japan. Lastly, Roosevelt made it known of the historical importance of this tragic event. Beginning the speech with "A date, which will live in infamy," he is explaining that the tragedy of the preceding day will not be forgotten for the remainder of time. "But always will our whole nation remember the character of the onslaught against us". His use of the future tense here gives the listener a sense of how significant this event will be on our nation's history. It will go down as a day of great sorrow and tragedy, but one that ultimately led to the unity of the American people

under a sense of patriotism and to the end of the Great Depression. Roosevelt's ability to unify an entire nation during the midst of a severe tragedy is a direct cause of his simple yet effective rhetoric. His simple format and clear reasoning, on top of already having the trust of the American people, ultimately led to our nation coming together as a whole and declare war against the enemies responsible for the devastating events of December 7, 1941.

Method

The framework that I will be analyzing this speech through is that of ideological criticism. "In an ideological analysis, the critic looks beyond the surface structure of an artifact to discover the beliefs, values, and assumptions it suggests" (Foss 209). My primary goal in this paper is to discover and make visible the ideology that is embedded in this artifact. As the critic, my analysis "seeks to explicate the role of communication in creating and sustaining an ideology and to discover whose interests are represented in that ideology" (Foss 213). I will use the work of three scholars in particular, each key contributors to ideological criticism, in analyzing the artifact: Sonja Foss, Michael McGee, and Philip Wander.

Communication scholar Sonja K. Foss provides clear guidelines for understanding and practicing ideological criticism. "The primary components of an ideology are evaluative beliefs - beliefs about which there are possible alternative judgments" (Foss 209). Each ideology "includes a set or pattern of beliefs that evaluates relevant issues and topics for a group, provides an interpretation of some domain of the world, and encourages particular attitudes and actions to it" (Foss 210). As I delve deeper into my analysis of the speech, I

will illustrate how President Roosevelt successfully does this and leads the nation to a particular attitude and call to action.

Ideological criticism did not come about from a single person or idea. Rather, numerous scholars with varying backgrounds and perspectives aided in its evolution. “First introduced by French revolutionaries, ‘ideology’ referred to the critical study of ideas. Napoleon contrasted ideology with knowledge of the heart and the lessons of history. Marx appropriated the term and used it to mean the ruling ideas of the ruling class. In the twentieth century, critical theorists used the term to designate the lack of totality or completeness in any attempt to generalize” (Wander 1). It is important to keep this in mind when applying this method.

One of those scholars, Philip Wander, believes that ideological criticism is vital in determining the motivations of those who generate rhetoric. Another, Michael McGee, brought about a term known as an “ideograph”. McGee describes an ideograph as a word or words attached to an ideology, which help build the ideology and fulfill the ideological meaning. He differentiates this with an ideology in that an ideograph appears within the text and discourse, whereas an ideology is the interpretation. “The important fact about ideographs is that they exist in real discourse, functioning clearly and evidently as agents of political consciousness. They are not invented by observers; they come to be as a part of the real lives of the people whose motives they articulate” (McGee 7). This passage from McGee illustrates the situation surrounding the speech following the Pearl Harbor attacks. Roosevelt is articulating the motives of the American people to Congress, and uses certain “ideographs” to convey the emotion the entire nation experienced. I will analyze what I feel

to be the primary ideographs used by Roosevelt in order to guide the nation together under an ideology in the subsequent section.

Ideological criticism generally consists of a four-step process. First, I will identify the presented elements used by FDR throughout the speech. I will then identify the suggested elements and offer my personal interpretation of them. Then, I will formulate the ideology being advanced by Roosevelt, and lastly identify how those elements serve to function the way in which they do. Identifying the presented elements “involves identifying the basic observable features of the artifact. These might be major arguments, types of evidence, images, particular terms, or metaphors” (Foss 214). When looking at the suggested elements, “the critic articulates ideas, references, themes, allusions, or concepts that are suggested by the presented elements” (Foss 216). This involves actually going through the artifact and generating what the presented elements are suggesting. The third step, formulating an ideology, involves figuring out “what major ideational clusters, themes, or ideas characterize all or most of your suggested elements” (Foss 217). It is important to note that this step involves focusing on the suggested elements rather than the presented elements. The presented elements may be used for support, however the main focus is directed toward the suggested elements. The last step, identifying the functions served by the ideology, involves discovering “how the ideology you constructed from the artifact functions for the audience who encounters it and the consequence it has in the world” (Foss 220). The following section illustrates this four-step method.

Application of Method

President Roosevelt’s speech the day following the attacks on Pearl Harbor was only twenty-five sentences long, less than five hundred words, and lasted under seven minutes,

according to the Schlager Group. While President Roosevelt was delivering his speech to Congress, as evident from the greeting of “Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate, of the House of Representatives,” he also had to take into account that he would be addressing the entire nation via radio. The vast majority American households were tuned in to this address. The public at this time was in a state of shock, fear, and despair and in need of strong, effective rhetoric from the leader of their country. Not only was the president addressing his nation, he was addressing the world. This speech also had intentions of making it known to the Japanese that there would be consequences for their actions. In addressing the entire world, Roosevelt made it known to everyone the United States new stance regarding the war.

Throughout this speech, Roosevelt uses the pronouns ‘our’ and ‘us’, giving the American people the sense that they are included in these decisions. These words help unite the American people and give them a sense of cohesiveness. “No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might, will win through to absolute victory” (Roosevelt 1). The president does an outstanding job of creating this sense of cohesiveness among the American people with his use of plural pronouns, making the public feel amalgamated as a country. By choosing to begin with the phrase “Yesterday, December 7, 1941”, Roosevelt is addressing the immediate historical past. “This placement of yesterday contributes to the overall past-present-future structure of the address and to the connotative values of ‘time’ in it” (Stelzner 423). Roosevelt is establishing the date so that it will never be forgotten. “Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces-with the unbounding

determination of our People- we will gain the inevitable triumph..." (Roosevelt 2). On top of doing an excellent job of instilling a unified front, Roosevelt also used rhetoric to urge Congress into voting to go to war with Japan. The way in which he pointed out that the citizens, territory, and interests of the American people are in grave danger puts Congress in a position to do whatever it can to make sure that the American people are not in grave danger, which in this situation means retaliating against the Japanese.

It was important that Roosevelt illustrate the violence and destruction that Japan has caused. He used words such as 'deliberately', 'onslaught', and 'deceive', demonstrating that Japan had intentionally planned such violence and that their intent was to betray the United States. "Roosevelt pointed out, the nature of the attack and the distance of the targets from Japanese bases made it apparent that the operation had been planned 'days or even weeks ago.' Thus, we were reminded that the enemy was not merely guilty of temporary insanity but was indeed guilty of premeditated murder" (Carson 6). Those ideographs – deliberately and deceive – along with others, such as "date" and "infamy", evoke a feeling of betrayal among the audience. They illustrate that this attack was premeditated and came with the intentions to deceive the United States. By evoking such emotions, Roosevelt is guiding his audience toward feeling a sense of ideology.

These ideographs, however, have different meanings when looking at the synchronic relationships and diachronic structure. The diachronic structure pertains to how it is assessed over time throughout history, whereas synchronic refers to how it was at that given particular time. The diachronic structure of the ideographs used in the speech does not seem to change very much historically over time. Even today, when looking back on the tragedy of December 7, 1941, people can truly experience the emotion that these

ideographs evoke. It was such a historic event, that people understand why Roosevelt chose to use the words “date” and “infamy”. To this day, the attacks on Pearl Harbor remains one of the most tragic incidents in our nations’ history. Even though people today can sense the tone and intensity of the speech, it is not the same as listening to the speech would be after experiencing a tragedy such as the attacks on Pearl Harbor. The synchronic relationship of these ideographs are actually quite similar to how they are viewed throughout history, just a little more penetrating . These words aroused such raw emotion out of people at that time and assisted in their sense of patriotism. Learning that another country had intentionally attacked your own roused the feeling of wanting to stand up for your country and express your loyalty and honor to it. “An ideograph is an ordinary language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular normative goal” (McGee 15). This passage by McGee summarizes perfectly this situation. Certain words used by Roosevelt represented what most every American citizen felt at that time. They evoked the proper emotion that people were already feeling and expressed the collective goal of the American people; to stand up and fight back.

Roosevelt uses anaphora in the middle of his speech, as he begins each sentence of listing the Japanese attacks by stating ‘the Japanese attacked’. He repeats this phrase six times:

“Yesterday, the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaysia.
Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night Japanese forces
attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last

night Japanese forces attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island” (Roosevelt 1).

By doing this, he is really driving home the feeling of betrayal and deception that the American people feel due to being the victim of such brutal, strategic attacks. “The lengthy iteration is necessary to establish the magnitude of the Japanese thrust” (Stelzner 429). By listing each individual attack, Roosevelt is really stressing the deception from the Japanese. He is really trying to portray the Japanese as the villain, and use that vilification of the enemy to assist in the unity of the American people. The listener cannot help but take note of each attack, fueling the feeling of betrayal. Roosevelt’s ability to gather the nation to come together and stand up to a common enemy, in this case being the Japanese government, allows his listeners to share a common, unified enemy. They know exactly who has betrayed them and the extent of that betrayal. He also made subtle yet effective changes to his speech. By changing the word ‘attacks’ to ‘attack’, making it singular, he gives the American audience a sense of relief that there will not be any future attacks. His ability to make subtle yet dramatic changes in his rhetoric is part of the reason why Franklin Roosevelt is one of the most effective rhetoricians of all time.

There are numerous amounts of suggested elements present in this speech. The first comes from the well-known title of this speech. President Roosevelt suggests to the entire country that the preceding day’s attacks on Pearl Harbor will live in infamy. Although the nation was well aware of the catastrophe that has happened, the president suggests that it will go down in history as one of the most severe and brutal attacks on our country. By suggesting that this event will be remembered as one of the most severe attacks on our nation, Roosevelt is able to really drive home the severity of the situation and give the

people of that time a feeling of being the victim of one of the most brutal tragedies ever. The sense of astonishment that one would feel taking that in is something that I can relate to having lived through another one of the most horrific tragedies in the history of our nation, the World Trade Center attacks. Feeling victim to one of the most brutal attacks in history not only invokes a sense of disbelief, but even more so, beseeches a sense of unification in wanting to do whatever possible to help a fellow citizen. During a time of such immense tragedy, only the truly important things takes precedent. Everything else that may have been happening in your life takes second stage to the extreme calamity of ones country.

The next suggested element from this speech that I would like to address is when Roosevelt suggests that the Japanese attacks were premeditated. "It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago" (Roosevelt 1). President Roosevelt is making it known to the entire nation that the United States Government had zero foresight of such occurrences and could have done nothing to prevent its occurrence. He suggests to the people that the Japanese had these attacks planned well in advance with intent on sending a message to the American people. This also instills a sense of victimization among the American people. They were the destined prey of a malicious attack. Feeling victim to such immense catastrophe additionally fuels a sense of retaliation toward your attacker.

"As Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken in our defense" (Roosevelt 1). Here the president is suggesting that he has already taken measures to ensure the safety of the American people. As the nation would find out not long after, our country had decided to retaliate against the Japanese and enter into

World War II. Following this, he suggests again that such a devastating event to our nation will always be remembered and never forgotten. Multiple times throughout this speech Roosevelt lets it be known that these events will go down in history as one of the most severe attacks on the United States of America. He really wants to stress to the American public the severity of these attacks and how our nation must respond accordingly.

When Roosevelt says that he will “make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us” (Roosevelt 1), he is suggesting to the people that our government and armed forces are doing everything within their power to protect and keep us safe from such devastating events. He is doing everything possible to help put the minds of the public at ease during a time of great fear and anxiety and assure them that they will not be subject to such desolation in the future. The American people are desperately looking for their leader to give them assurance that they will not be victim to such devastation again, and Roosevelt instills such confidence through his carefully deliberated use of rhetoric.

At this point, it is starting to become evident that President Roosevelt is expressing the emotions felt by the American people and trying to unite the country together under an ideology of patriotism. Through his repetition of the magnitude of devastation to his suggestions that our country will do whatever necessary to defend ourselves from such devastation in the future, Roosevelt is trying to guide the public to gather as one and stand up for our beliefs. No matter the age, race, or ethnicity, Roosevelt’s speech aims to bring together the American people to stand up for their beliefs and for being a citizen the United States of America. Franklin D. Roosevelt was very successful in doing this, partly due to his relationship with the American people. Through his fireside chats, Roosevelt had initiated a

sense of friendliness amongst his listeners, allowing them to feel a sense of connection with their president. His simple and clear use of language and organization made it possible for his listeners to comprehend his message. These factors already gave him a sense of connection with his audience. The way in which he illustrated that the Japanese attacks were deliberate and planned out gave his listeners a feeling of being violated and betrayed. Knowing that the majority of listeners would already naturally feel a sense of patriotism during a time of extreme devastation to one's country, Roosevelt used that to further enhance that feeling. Numerous times, he mentions how our nation will be triumphant and win through to absolute victory, instilling in his audience a sense that they will get through this difficult time.

It was relatively easy for Roosevelt to instill this ideology into the entire nation due to the fact that the devastation of the previous day had everyone in a state of shock and fear, searching for someone and something to guide them through it. President Roosevelt was that person and patriotism was that something. People were empowered by his address and they felt that there is no better country than our own and were encouraged to do whatever possible for one another in order to help our country endure the tragedy. On top of the unique situation, Roosevelt's outstanding ability to be able to connect with his audience on an intimate level allowed for his message to be easily and widely accepted by all. When the people have the ultimate trust and faith in their leader, such as they did in President Roosevelt, they are much more willing to follow in their decisions, especially during a time of great desolation. They were encouraged to adopt his position on this issue because it represented the position of the vast majority of the country. It was not as if his position represented a marginalized group, with a majority dissent. After being brutally

blindsided by devastating attacks, the country felt the same way as Roosevelt when he asked Congress to declare war. They gathered behind their leader and assumed the posture of having to fight for their themselves, their freedom, and their safety.

Conclusion

The attack on Pearl Harbor, as Roosevelt predicted, is still to this day one of the most devastating attacks on our country. Many great men and women lost their lives when the Japanese surprise attacked the United States. President Roosevelt helped unite and guide a nation under an ideology of patriotism through his Day of Infamy address to both Congress and the entire country. Roosevelt had already earned the trust and faith of the American people, as he was in his third term as president. His fireside chats allowed for his listeners to connect with him on a regular basis. His simple to understand language allowed the common folk to be able to connect with him as a human being and really get the sense that he was one of them. Roosevelt's ability to be able to gather a nation together in this time was remarkable, almost as if there was no difficulty to it whatsoever.

The analysis of the speech illustrates how Roosevelt's rhetoric successfully allowed for his audience to connect with and engage in his message. His simple organization and language use along with incorporating concrete examples made his message effective and easy to comprehend. His use of plural pronouns such as 'our' and 'we' give his audience a sense of unity with himself, allowing for a more intimate relationship and deeper sense of trust. His pausing and inflection gave certain words and phrases more importance. The change of pace from soft to hard language use would effectively reel in his listener before

using stronger, more persuasive language to drive home his main message. His use of certain words or “ideographs” accurately represented the emotion and collective goal of the American people at that time.

This speech serves as a prime example of how a rhetorician can effectively guide an audience in a direction under an ideology. Granted, he was already in a position of power as the President of the United States, but nonetheless his ability to successfully connect with the American people and help unite and lead them through such a devastating time is an outstanding illustration of a leader effectively leading his people. Roosevelt was a very successful leader of our country and did whatever he felt to be in the best interest of everyone as a whole. With the vast majority of Americans already favorable to him after what he had already accomplished during his first two terms as President of the United States, Roosevelt was aware that he would have the support of his people. However, he still had to make a statement that would both incorporate the feelings and emotions of the nation as well as employ the proper call to action. He made it known to the entire world that the United States would not sit back and let premeditated attacks, such as those on Pearl Harbor, happen without letting the attacker know one thing: we will fight for our rights and what we believe in and not cower in the face of immense tragedy.

As one of the greatest, most influential presidents our country has even seen, Franklin Roosevelt possessed the uncanny ability to be able to successfully connect with audiences on an intimate level. Arguably his most famous and important and influential speech was the one the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was able to unite a nation that had been heavily damaged by traumatic events under an ideology of patriotism. At a time of shock and despair, he successfully channeled their fearful emotions into ones of

pride, blessed to be able to live in such a great country. Roosevelt's leadership and rhetoric are a phenomenal example to anyone with intentions on being able to persuade and guide an audience in a particular direction. In my scholarly opinion, Franklin Delano Roosevelt is one of the greatest rhetoricians to have ever lived, and due to his rhetorical talents, was able to lead a country through one of the most devastating periods in its history.

Works Cited

- Aoki, Keiko. "A Study of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Persuasive Communication within the Fireside Chat: An Analysis of Language and Style." *Human Communication* 9.1 (2006): 71-81. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 4 June 2011.
- Benson, Thomas W. *Landmark Essays on Rhetorical Criticism*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras, 1993. Print.
- Brandenburg, Earnest, and Waldo W. Braden. "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Voice and Pronunciation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38.1 (1952): 23-30. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 5 June 2011
- Burghardt, Carl R. *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*. 4th ed. State College, PA: Strata Pub., 2010. Print.
- Carson, Herbert L. "REPLY TO INFAMY." *Today's Speech* 10.2 (1962): 5-6. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 5 June 2011.
- Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. 4th ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2009. Print.
- "Franklin D. Roosevelt." *The White House*. Web. <www.whitehouse.gov>.
- Kingdon, Frank. *As FDR Said; a Treasury of His Speeches, Conversations and Writings*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950. Print.
- McGee, Michael Calvin. "The "ideograph": A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66.1 (1980): 1-16. Print.
- "Pearl Harbor." *World War II History Info*. Web. 26 July 2011. <<http://worldwar2history.info/Pearl-Harbor/>>.

Prange, Gordon W., Donald M. Goldstein, and Katherine V. Dillon. *Dec. 7, 1941: the Day the Japanese Attacked Pearl Harbor*. New York: Wings, 1991. Print.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Day of Infamy speech." *Day of Infamy Speech* (2009): 1. *Academic Search Elite*. EBSCO. Web. 5 June 2011.

Ryan, Halford Ross. *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Rhetorical Presidency*. New York: Greenwood, 1988. Print.

Schlager Group. "Five Things You Should Know About FDR's Pearl Harbor Speech." *Schlager Group*. 7 Dec. 2007. Web. 26 July 2011. <www.schlagergroup.com>.

Stelzner, Hermann. "'War Message,' December 8, 1941: An Approach to Language." *Communication Monographs* 33.4 (1966): 419-37. Print.

"US Historical Documents: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Infamy Speech." *University of Oklahoma College of Law*. Web. <www.law.ou.edu>.