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# Eisenhower and the American Sublime

Ned O’Gorman

*This essay presents Dwight D. Eisenhower’s presidential rhetoric as an iteration of an American synecdochal sublime. Eisenhower’s rhetoric sought to re-aim civic sight beyond corporeal objects to the nation’s transcendental essence. This rhetoric is intimately connected to prevailing political anxieties and exigencies, especially the problem of “the Bomb” and the related philosophy of deterrence. Over and against the material presence of the atomic bomb, which threatened to concentrate national energies, Eisenhower advanced an expansive vision of national “spiritual” being to which corporeal images could only gesture. Correlatively, he positioned himself as a kind of priestly mediator. Therefore, he not only justified a strong deterrent stance in the Cold War, but made moral sense of it.*

*Keywords:* Eisenhower; Cold War; Civil Religion; Synecdoche; Sublime

Long before the premature and hyperbolic culmination of the Cold War in what Francis Fukuyama called “the end of history as such,” the Eisenhower administration brought a literal end to human history firmly within the nation’s capabilities by stockpiling thermonuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup> As scholars ranging from Emily Rosenberg to Sacvan Bercovitch have shown, when viewed from within the rhetoric of American liberal eschatology, the nation’s fortunes are not merely its own. Bercovitch summarizes the nineteenth-century consensus: “If America failed, then the cosmos itself—the laws of history, nature, and the mind—had failed as well. Millennium or doomsday, American heaven or universal hell.”<sup>2</sup> Thus “America” was a disjunctive proposition; in one manner or another, the nation would end history, either through the universalization of its way or through the annihilation of historical possibility itself.

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Nuclear warheads gave the nation material access to the latter possibility even as it could not achieve the former. The nuclear bomb, often referred to as “the Bomb,” is a doomsday technology for which the U.S. has never had a millennial correlative. Eisenhower admitted as much in his “Atoms for Peace” speech. Imagining a Soviet assault, he declared:

Should such an atomic attack be launched against the United States, our reactions would be swift and resolute. But for me to say that the defense capabilities of the United States are such that they could inflict terrible losses upon an aggressor—for me to say that the retaliation capabilities of the United States are so great that such an aggressor’s land would be laid waste—all this, while fact, is not the true expression of the purpose and the hope of the United States. . . .

[M]y country’s purpose is to help us move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men, the souls of men everywhere, can move forward toward peace and happiness and well being.

In this quest, I know that we must not lack patience.<sup>3</sup>

The United States, Eisenhower stressed, could wreak nuclear devastation in a manner both “swift and resolute.” This possibility was immediate and material. However, he continued, this alternative did not represent the benevolent hope of America. Indeed, since the nation did not have technologies capable of bringing millennial “peace and happiness and well being” as readily as the Bomb could bring disaster, Eisenhower described a gradual journey toward the former. In this way, he juxtaposed the doomsday scenario with what Rosenberg calls “the ideology of liberal-development-alism” of the “American dream,” a rhetoric that incorporated the market-driven expansion of “efficiency, abundance, democracy, wisdom, and social integration” into utopian democratic vistas.<sup>4</sup>

What was remarkable about 1950s America was the ability of its civic culture to sustain this liberal-developmental ideology before both a doomsday technology and a series of other sharp challenges including McCarthyism, Korea, Emmett Till, Little Rock, and Sputnik, to name just a few. Each episode was highly disruptive to the social and political culture, yet none led to a strong revision of the American dream. Rather, as Bercovitch observes, this dream has functioned in American political rhetoric as both the object and frame of public debate. As such, the nation engages in ongoing acts of self-renewal via “ritual[s] of consensus” that restrict “debate itself, symbolically *and substantively*, to the meaning of America.”<sup>5</sup> For Bercovitch, “America” has emerged historically and ideologically as “a laboratory for examining the shifting connections between political (in the Aristotelian sense) and aesthetic systems of meaning.”<sup>6</sup> What is in question, then, has not been the dream per se, but rather the correct alignment of the nation’s sentiments, aspirations, ideals, and policies for its millennial realization.

If America, so understood, has been a laboratory, then the overwhelming presumption of its systems of meaning has been that it is a laboratory of what eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers called “the sublime.” As Walt Whitman declared in *Democratic Vistas*:

For, I say, the true nationality of the States, the genuine union, when we come to a mortal crisis, is, and is to be, after all, neither the written law, nor, (as is generally supposed,) either self-interest, or common pecuniary or material objects—but the fervid and tremendous IDEA, melting everything else with resistless heat, and solving all lesser and definite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.<sup>7</sup>

The sublime is spatially and experientially commensurate with the idea of the American dream. Both sublimity and the dream move beyond debate, description, or determination. Both also approach the infinite, boundless, and ineffable. In its American mode, sublimity grounds the nation's epistemological, ethical, and political claims by placing their ultimate source beyond mundane knowledge and in the realm of the transcendental. Rhetoricized and ritualized, sublimity becomes what Émile Durkheim calls the "ecstatic" dimension of civil religion, in which civic sight is transformed and directed beyond present particularities to an "ideal superstructure."<sup>8</sup>

A primary locus of this transformation has been the U.S. presidency, at least since the rise of Theodore Roosevelt's "Rough Rider" ethos, and above all FDR's public image as a colossal world-historical leader. The presidency has been central to what Robert N. Bellah famously described as "American civil religion." Accordingly, presidential rhetoric, in Bellah's words, amplifies "an understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality."<sup>9</sup> This reality can be *embodied* in the presidential figure, and thus metonymically reduced, as in Roosevelt's Rough Rider or FDR's gigantic image, or it can be *mediated* in presidential rhetoric through a process of what Kenneth Burke called "conversion upward" via synecdochal association, as in Eisenhower's rhetoric.

In this essay, I argue that Eisenhower's presidential rhetoric is characterized by what I call the "American synecdochal sublime." The pivotal ideological and rhetorical moves of this rhetoric follow a three-part trajectory: (1) assume the American dream, and, consequently, the nation's either/or world-historical destiny; (2) locate the essence of America in the realm of the transcendental or spiritual; and (3) mediate between the mundane, tension-riddled, and often contradictory existence of the nation and the transcendental superstructure via synecdochal magnification to redirect civic sight beyond corporeal objects to transcendental ideals. This basic rhetorical structure is intimately related to Eisenhower's political philosophy, his practical concerns, his political anxieties, and to the very real problem of the Bomb. For pragmatic as well as ideological reasons, then, Eisenhower was concerned about the concentration of national energies in a singular corporeal object, whether the state, the military-industrial complex, Elizabeth Eckford in Little Rock, Sputnik, or his own body. The Bomb was an especially problematic object of concentration, for despite Eisenhower's protestation that "no physical phenomenon is inherently good or bad in itself," the evident intent of nuclear weaponry was total destruction.<sup>10</sup> Eisenhower, however, believed it was a supreme deterrent. His ongoing task with respect to the Bomb therefore was to draw on the American synecdochal sublime to affect an upward symbolic conversion that would change the nature of civic sight by producing an expansive vision of national spiritual being to which corporeal images

could only gesture. Correlatively, as Rachel Holloway has argued, he positioned himself as a priestly mediator.<sup>11</sup> Eisenhower's synecdochal sublime is therefore significant not only because it represented a willful displacement of the metonymic legacy of FDR, but also because it affected the way in which, and the position from which, Eisenhower interpreted political signs—events, objects, persons, and powers in the world. It allowed him to demote the significance of particular corporeal objects as merely contingent and to promote hyper-spiritual ideals. It allowed him not only to say things like “the defense capabilities of the United States are such that they could inflict terrible losses on an aggressor . . . all this, while fact, is not the true expression of the purpose and the hope of the United States,” but to make moral sense of such statements both psychologically and ideologically. Ultimately, as priestly mediator and transcendental interpreter of signs, Eisenhower absolved the nation of historic guilt, declared its spiritual essence, and legitimated his policies vis-à-vis the Bomb by creating and then exploiting a firm distinction between the corporeal and incorporeal.

This essay develops in three stages. In the first section, I give an account of the American sublime, describing it as the ecstatic dimension of American civil religion and as having either metonymic or synecdochal form. In the second section, I address Eisenhower's “taste” for synecdoche and “distaste” for metonymy with respect to political representation. In the third section, I take up Eisenhower's presidential discourse, arguing that he assumed a priestly mantle, performing the American synecdochal sublime through a rhetoric of national absolution, spiritual reinterpretation, and calls for human transformation. I conclude by turning directly to the issue of the Bomb and the deterrence philosophy that animated much of Eisenhower's Cold War presidency. I suggest that in as much as a nuclear America in the Cold War was a deterrent America, the terrifying specter of the former was converted into the pacific ideal of the latter via the American synecdochal sublime.

### **The American Sublime**

Writing about the sublime poses the problem of definition.<sup>12</sup> Conceptions of the sublime have varied over time, as have its conventional objects and cultural uses. Such variations suggest that while an analytically precise definition of the sublime may be feasible, it is not necessarily desirable. To tap into the sublime is to tap into rhetorical, aesthetic, and historical shifts and alterations having to do with the way peoples and cultures have imagined themselves, others, and the world. Indeed, the sublime is perhaps best characterized by a reflexive process, wherein an aesthetic concept comes to inform a great variety of cultural practices, from tourism to reading, and these cultural practices in turn shape new conceptual approaches to the concept itself.<sup>13</sup> Evidence of this reflexive process is seen in the movement of the aesthetic of the sublime from the world of high art to common, everyday experience, as much as in its alteration from the narrowly aesthetic to the nationalistic, and above all, in its multiple iterations: the technological sublime, the apocalyptic sublime, the Romantic sublime, the democratic sublime, and so on.

Nevertheless, amidst such reflexivity, alteration, and iteration, a more stable aspect of the sublime is apparent, and it can be addressed by asking not what the sublime is, but what it has done. Noting the coincidence of the emergence of the sublime and the rise of modernity in the eighteenth century, Philip Blond has suggested that it may be modernity's secular answer to the problem of transcendence. Using terms closely allied with contemporary understandings of civil religion, Blond suggests that the sublime helps make possible the modern in a post-medieval, post-sacral, world. "[M]ost secular political, social, and philosophical movements seek to legitimate themselves [as] they seek to embrace that which transcends them," he observes. However, this embrace of the transcendent must be achieved in a way that does not "invalidate the secular world picture" or "shatter attempts to appropriate it [the transcendent]." The sublime provides for modernity a transcendent sphere or experience, and thus a means of legitimation, yet without the threat to modernity that might come in appeals to scripturally inscribed divine commandments or a rationally accessible natural hierarchy of value. Blond concludes, "The sublime delivers what is taken to be, for modernity, the transcendent experience *par excellence*."<sup>14</sup>

This account places the sublime within a broader sociological framework, one consistent with that which Émile Durkheim presents in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Durkheim remains the most influential theorist of the ways in which socio-political bodies practice religion, sacral or civil, to constitute community and legitimate authority. Durkheim's basic position is straightforward: "[S]ocial life, in all its aspects and in every period of its history, is made possible only by a vast symbolism," and this symbolism is always "religious."<sup>15</sup> When a group is gathered before enduring collective representations or engaged in ceremonial rites, it reinforces collective unity. "It is by uttering the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object that they become and feel themselves to be in unison." The sacred symbols and practices of society provide a means of accessing the "whole" or "expressing the social unity in material form."<sup>16</sup> Without such sacred symbols and performances, Durkheim concludes, "social sentiments could have only a precarious existence."<sup>17</sup> Importantly, for Durkheim the effect of religion in community is not only the constitution of a unified identity, but the generation of society as a "moral being": "[T]he effect of the cult really is to recreate periodically a moral being upon which we depend as it depends upon us. Now this being does exist: it is society."<sup>18</sup> Thus, sacred symbols and practices not only unify society, they do so in a way that renders it morally justified in its being. In various ways, societies constitute themselves through religion as unified and clean, pure, righteous, or just.

Robert Bellah argues that the presidency in America has acquired a "religious legitimation" vis-à-vis "an understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality."<sup>19</sup> This account of American civil religion has undergone numerous revisions, but, as Roderick P. Hart argues, Bellah's basic insight remains cogent: "[R]eligion provides a wealth of symbolic force for political leaders who associate themselves with such [transcendent] forces."<sup>20</sup> One particular form of

religio-political rhetoric that has been especially important to the modern presidency has been the casting of America's eschatological world-historical destiny over and against apocalyptic scenes of world cataclysm. When presidents do this, as Eisenhower did, they engage not merely in tactics of fear and hope, but in the formation of a political and moral community. Ultimate visions, Durkheim argues, are integral to the formation of the moral character of a community. Invoking a term used in Longinus's *On the Sublime*, Durkheim argues that moral forces are "unable to affect the human mind powerfully without pulling it outside itself and without plunging it into a state that may be called *ecstatic*, provided that the word be taken in its etymological sense [*ekstasis*]." <sup>21</sup> *Ekstasis* can be defined as "displacement," but was translated into French in the seventeenth century by the great popularizer of the sublime, Nicolas Boileau Despreaux, as "*enlève, ravit, transporte*," and then into English as "elevation," "ravishment," or "transport."<sup>22</sup> Within this experience, Durkheim writes, human consciousness is momentarily transformed as objects, symbols, words, or sounds have "superimposed" on them an "ideal superstructure." This ideal, having evoked a momentary but powerful transformation in human consciousness, in turn becomes "the reality" of a people.<sup>23</sup> Durkheim's analysis thus posits what Longinus suggested in antiquity: ecstatic experiences can be integral to social order as they perform a breach with the status quo vis-à-vis a transformation in human consciousness. The ecstatic may thus be said to have two typical functions, often in tension: the conservative and the transformative. Durkheim stresses the former. Ecstatic experiences can sanction the status quo by disclosing a transcendental basis or *telos*. On the other hand, Durkheim's formidable counterpart in the sociology of religion, Max Weber, emphasizes the way in which the ecstatic opens up horizons of charismatic power and possibility, and thus creates the possibility of a firm break with established order.<sup>24</sup> In the post-war era, on the heels of martial triumph but before the prospect of nuclear catastrophe, Eisenhower fused the conservative and transformative functions of the ecstatic into a rhetoric emphasizing the supremacy of spirit in America.

Historically, the liberal-developmental ideology has depended on practices of rhetorical amplification and magnification aimed at producing transport beyond a mundane and ambivalent national life to a higher reality. It has depended on the relation of people to gigantic and often transcendental figures and frontiers—sublime totems or vistas—which have the effect of displacement as they overcome a common order of national being and replace it with an extraordinary and unspeakable one.<sup>25</sup> However, I want to suggest that such rhetoric can take one of two forms: metonymic or synecdochal.

In turning to metonymy and synecdoche, I draw on two of Kenneth Burke's "Four Master Tropes." For Burke, metonymy entails the concentration of meaning in a singular object. Synecdoche, on the other hand, depends on a network of symbolic associations and interrelated meanings. Both metonymy and synecdoche work through association, creating meaning by representing a whole through a part. However, metonymy is unilateral in that its basic strategy is "to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible," whereas

synecdoche works more bilaterally, stressing “a *relationship* or *connectedness* between two sides of an equation, a connectedness that, like a road, extends in either direction, from quantity to quality or from quality to quantity.”<sup>26</sup> Hayden White, drawing on Burke, emphasizes that metonymy is reductionist, whereas synecdoche is integrative, moving more freely between microcosm and macrocosm or the corporeal and incorporeal.<sup>27</sup> Synecdoche, furthermore, often works by “conversion upwards,” which Burke describes as “a one-way process of magnification, a *writing large*.”<sup>28</sup> The difference between metonymy and synecdoche is consequently a matter of emphasis, direction, and intensity within the process of associating part and whole.

These differences have important implications for the state of the sign, and thus the state of the state, its leaders, its events, its citizens, and its politics. In general, we can say that the metonymic sign achieves relatively stable signification via reduction and concentration, whereas the synecdochal sign must remain unstable to be effective, as the flow of its signification is multidirectional. Metonymy creates a centralized and concentrated order, whereas synecdoche creates a dispersed and interconnected one. As such, these tropes can assume a kind of normative dimension with respect to the valuation of the corporeal. Metonymy tends to grant purchase to the corporeal, whereas synecdoche, especially when it converts upwards, can devalue the corporeal, making it relatively insignificant and merely contingent.

Thus, the metonymical and synecdochal versions of the American sublime have at their core differing perspectives on American democracy and its disasters. The metonymic version valorizes the Great Individual as the magnificent product of democracy. Positively, metonymy structures social crises as objects to be overcome via appeals to heroic figures and topographical emblems, the cycles of which correspond to epochal shifts. But metonymy also risks tragedy by taking a risk with the corporeal. Since the metonymic approach seeks absolution and legitimacy in the sacred historic figure, the demise of that figure can mean the death of an identity. The synecdochal sublime, on the other hand, precludes the possibility of such tragedy by constructing a nation expressive of a transcendental social being. Disasters are accidental events that can be categorically transcended. The claim to national identity seen in the synecdochal sublime rests on the presumption of a realm that is beyond corporeality, and to which corporeal objects can merely gesture. Even the sacred totem is but a sign, and thus even its collapse cannot undermine the transcendental essence of America.

These two strains of the American sublime, therefore, contain more general attitudes toward representation that, in turn, can be used to legitimate one form of democracy over another. Metonymy locates democratic representation in the exemplary body as the model of democracy, whereas synecdoche finds in the corporeal mere contingent signs of the incorporeal essence of American democracy. The metonymic version is thus dynamic, portraying democracy as a series of historical and corporeal achievements (e.g., great battles, heroic feats, and historic inventions), whereas the synecdochal version is more mediatory, even sacramental, presenting American democracy as an ascent ever nearer to the transcendent spiritual being that guarantees universal flourishing. Both magnify the dream of the nation's

ultimacy, thinking antithetically of America as an either/or apocalyptic project. However, they not only represent but “read” the nation differently. In a certain sense, the metonymic sublime calls forth prophets, who are able to interpret the historical material, identify its sacred figures, and announce its epochal shifts. Metonymy is generally connected to historicism. To the contrary, the synecdochal sublime calls forth a civic clerisy who function less as interpreters of historical developments and more as mediators between the mundane world of signs and the transcendent realm of ideal being, converting the significance of contingent corporeal objects upward into a mystical, incorporeal realm. Eisenhower, I argue, faced with the predicaments of modernity, mass society, and modern war, performed this sort of priestly role.

### **Eisenhower’s Taste**

During and after World War II, Eisenhower’s greatest problems and his strongest antitypes were political in nature. “Political” for him had less to do with the arts of negotiation and compromise and more to do with publicity and publics, which tended, he feared, to concentrate mass energies in singular objects, events, or institutions. Politics in this form worked against the maintenance of good order in a politically and economically interconnected world. An early indication of Eisenhower’s distaste for politics is evident in a 1942 diary entry, written before the invasion of North Africa that Eisenhower oversaw. The entry reflects on the problems the Allies faced. Timing, forces, and strategy were issues, but the sharpest problems, he surmised, were political in nature. First, there were the difficulties Washington and London were having in agreeing on a plan. Then there were the unpredictable responses of “neutral” France and Spain to the Allied invasion. And finally, there was the problem of psychological reaction to the attack: if it resulted in victory, it would create a boon of confidence for the Allies, but if a failure, it would be devastating for morale. All in all, Eisenhower concluded, the undertaking was of “a quite desperate nature. . . . [W]e are simply sailing a dangerous political sea, and this particular sea is one in which military skill and ability can do little in charting a safe course.”<sup>29</sup>

During his presidency, politics continued to present a problem to Eisenhower. C. D. Jackson, Eisenhower’s psychological warfare adviser during his military and presidential tenures, wrote in 1954 that the president “is still mystified in a sincere and uncomplicated way at the maneuvers of politicians.” Jackson imagined Eisenhower thinking, “With all there is to be done for this country, for the American people, for the whole world, how can any responsible man in the public life afford to waste God’s time in being a conniving bastard!”<sup>30</sup> And after his presidency, politics continued to represent something Eisenhower either willfully or subconsciously found alien. Stephen Ambrose has written of his discussions with Eisenhower:

[W]hile he had a sharp memory, he was not much interested in politics. The selectivity of his memory, in fact, was a good key to his feelings. He remembered relatively little about the political issues of World War II, or even about his own actions when they had been political. . . . When we discussed something he had

done as a soldier he would make detailed and highly quotable comments, but when we discussed politics he would usually shake his head and dismiss the subject.<sup>31</sup>

Eisenhower’s distaste for “conniving bastards” and selective memory with regard to politics disclose a more encompassing concern with the concentration of public power.

A second entry in Eisenhower’s diary during the North Africa period is illuminating in this regard, as it reveals a firm distinction in Eisenhower’s thought between order and politics, organization and the public:

Through all this, I am learning many things: One, that waiting for other people to produce is one of the hardest things a commander has to do. Two, that in the higher positions of a modern Army, Navy, and Air Force, rich organizational experience and an orderly, logical mind are absolutely essential to success. The flashy, publicity-seeking type of adventurer can grab the headlines and be a hero in the eyes of the public, but he simply can’t deliver the goods in high command.<sup>32</sup>

The terms of value here are “organization,” “order,” and “logic.” The terms of censure, however, are not mere opposites of these. They are concentrated in a description of a type (no doubt embodied by Douglas MacArthur, under whom Eisenhower served in the 1930s): “The flashy, publicity-seeking type of adventurer can grab the headlines and be a hero in the eyes of the public.” Indeed, concentration seems to be the issue here. As the “publicity-seeking type” concentrates mass attention on his figure, he forfeits organization, order, and logic. This type depends for his success on “the eyes of the public,” and therefore surrenders the opportunity for real leadership.

In the postwar years, Eisenhower made repeated calls for genuine national leadership in public speeches throughout the United States. “Leadership,” as Ira Chernus writes, was virtually a “god term” in Eisenhower’s postwar rhetoric.<sup>33</sup> And his ideal for national leadership, like military leadership, meant transcending the whimsical winds of publicity-filled political seas. “Leadership,” he declared in a July 1946 speech to the American Alumni Council, meant that one would “help produce, foster, and sustain . . . unity of purpose and action—to promote clear understanding of the relationships between domestic unity and the future peace of the world.”<sup>34</sup> Leadership, he said in another speech two months later, entailed “widened knowledge and . . . increased comprehension of human relationship.”<sup>35</sup> Leadership meant “firmness in the right, uncompromising support of justice and freedom, respect for all, and patience and determination in winning over any that through fear, hope for revenge, or any selfish purpose, are blinded to their own national, as well as the world’s, best interests.”<sup>36</sup> Leadership, in sum, entailed an “orderly, logical mind” and the capacity for broad-minded oversight, the qualities Eisenhower esteemed in the military commander.

Importantly, it was also during these years that Eisenhower repeatedly rebuffed calls to pursue political office. Courted initially by Democrats to pursue the presidency, and then much more so by Republicans, Eisenhower refused. An entry written on New Year’s Day 1950, while he was president of Columbia University,

attempted to justify why. His situation, he wrote, was exceptional with respect to national leadership, even as it was profoundly typical with respect to what he referred to as the “American system”:

My basic purpose is to try, however feebly, to return to the country some portion of the debt I owe her. My family, my brothers and I, are examples of what this country with its system of individual rights and freedoms, its boundless resources, and its opportunities for all who *WANT to work*, can do so [*sic*] for its citizens, regardless of lack of wealth, political influence, or special educational advantage. Nowhere else on earth has this type of material, intellectual, and spiritual opportunity been so persistently and so successfully extended to all. Regardless of all faults that can be searched out in the operation of the American system, I believe without reservation that in its fundamental purposes and in its basic structure it is so far superior to any government elsewhere established by men, that my greatest possible opportunity for service is to be found in supporting, in renewing public respect for, and in encouraging greater thinking about these fundamentals. Since I believe that all Americans, even though they do so unconsciously or subconsciously, actually support these basic tenets of Americanism, it follows that in the field in which I should work, (that is, the bringing of these basic tenets to our CONSCIOUS attention,) there is no difference between the two great parties.<sup>37</sup>

This reflection is remarkable for what it reveals about what Eisenhower professed, not only about his own role in national leadership, but about the nation. America is a place of “material, intellectual, and spiritual opportunity” that makes Eisenhower’s ascent to national leadership from modest roots typical—Eisenhower presents his very unusual life as essentially expressive of the American system. Such opportunities, he asserts, are “extended to all.” Furthermore, whatever faults the American system evinces (which have to be “searched out”) were minimal compared to the superiority of the American system. Finally, he held that “all Americans” concur with this assessment, albeit many do so “unconsciously or subconsciously.” Hence, his role was to transcend partisanship and politics and to devote his life to a kind of consciousness-raising with respect to the “tenets of Americanism.” His was a mission of converting upwards.

It is critical at this juncture to note that the apparently dramatic change of direction in Eisenhower’s career as a public figure, his decision to run for the presidency, is connected to the same sensibility that initially seems to have driven his distaste for such a pursuit. Subsequent to his decision to run for the executive office, Eisenhower cited three great national and international problems that together apparently conspired to give him reason to run for the presidency: the New Deal, communism, and (mostly Republican) isolationism. In practice, for Eisenhower and other like-minded Americans, the New Deal and communism shared a form: statism. In Eisenhower’s view, communism was Stalinism, and Stalinism was statism. The New Deal appeared to him to be a form of statism as well, centering national energies in a “paternalistic state” and paternalistic figure, FDR.<sup>38</sup> From Eisenhower’s perspective, Stalin and FDR were both (self-)styled as world-historical figures and easily subject to accusations of being power mongers. As his speechwriter Emmet Hughes wrote, Eisenhower approached the presidency as “almost a studied retort and

rebuke to Roosevelt. Where Roosevelt had sought and coveted power, Eisenhower distrusted and discounted it: one man’s appetite was the other man’s distaste.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, isolationism tended to concentrate national identity metonymically, but in a geographical space rather than a paternalistic state. Such concentration, Eisenhower believed, was not only contrary to Americanism, it was fundamentally illogical, for it suggested that America could act independently from the rest of the world. Geopolitics and economics, he held, worked otherwise. America’s vitality depended on world interdependence. The nation’s leaders, he held, must lead accordingly.

What apparently led Eisenhower to run for the presidency was connected to the same proclivity that had earlier brought him to rebuff political aspirations: a “distaste,” as Hughes puts it, for the metonymic concentration of power and a taste for a synecdochal national rhetoric. Eisenhower’s distaste for the concentration of power was both pragmatic and ideological. Pragmatically, Eisenhower believed that the concentration of power would lead to ruin, especially with respect to the economy: statism could simultaneously drive up taxes and government debt and generate a public environment controlled by a cult of personality. Ideologically, Eisenhower believed in “free enterprise,” in the virtue of national spiritual strength, and that too much attention to the corporeal world would undermine economic enterprise and national morale. All in all, as Chernus correctly notes, Eisenhower would have “taken it for granted that spiritual and pragmatic motives naturally reinforced each another.”<sup>40</sup> In his presidency, synecdoche was a trope that could rebuke and reverse the concentration of power he feared, as well as represent economic balance, free enterprise, and, as I will argue, a philosophy of nuclear deterrence; sublimity was the aesthetic in which synecdoche took shape, and priestcraft was the rhetorical art he developed.

### **Presidential Priestcraft and the American Synecdochal Sublime**

Immediately after the war, Eisenhower spoke as though the world had embarked on a new era of creativity, expression, and peace. Thus, he opened an address at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1946 with these words:

We have recently emerged from a bitter conflict that long engulfed the larger nations of the globe. The heroism and sacrifice of men on the fighting lines, and the moral and physical energies of those at home, were all devoted to the single purpose of military victory. Preoccupation in a desperate struggle for existence left time for little else. . . . Now we enter upon an era of widened opportunity for physical and spiritual development, united in a determination to establish and maintain a peace in which the creative and expressive instincts of our people may flourish.”<sup>41</sup>

The focus on physical (especially economic) and spiritual development, a new era of peace, and the aesthetic expression of instinct was a reiteration of the liberal-developmental ideology and the idea of American exceptionalism, but with a new emphasis.

Historically, American exceptionalism was positioned over and against feudal Europe. America, it was held, was exceptional because it was free of the traditions, genealogies, and material ossification of old Europe. This freedom meant the possibility of radical innovation and experimentation with respect to both self and society. It meant infinite possibility and the boundless expression of creativity. Eisenhower's characterization at the Met of a new, widened epoch for development and expression performs this American exceptionalism, but in a different key. It is far less bound to the American landscape than its progenitors, and it comes not on the heels of European feudalism but rather before "the golgotha of a Third World War."<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Eisenhower's enthusiasm must be read in light of atomic weaponry. Hiroshima and Nagasaki represented for him "a brink from which the prospect—if we turn not into sure paths of peace—is a thousand times more terrifying than anything yet witnessed."<sup>43</sup> In Eisenhower's discourse, atomic warfare displaces feudal Europe as the disaster to which America is an aesthetic response. John Lewis Gaddis notes that it was Eisenhower, much more than John Foster Dulles, who came to cling ferociously to the U.S.'s powerful nuclear arsenal in the name of deterrence. Eisenhower wanted not just to avoid nuclear war through deterrence, but *all wars*, of whatever kind. Eisenhower believed that the threat of a massive, disproportionate response to any aggression (not just nuclear aggression) by enemy states could keep the peace. In this way, his nuclear imaginary was deeply tied to his vision of world peace and stability.<sup>44</sup>

A similar postwar appeal to a new era of creativity and instinctive expression was apparent in Barnett Newman's 1948 reiteration of the idea of American exceptionalism with respect to artistic practice. Sounding very much like his nineteenth-century American predecessors, Newman's "The Sublime Is Now" describes how a few American artists had finally succeeded in breaking free of European aesthetics and were articulating "a new way of experiencing life."<sup>45</sup> Like Eisenhower, he spoke of instinct, expression, creativity, and nationhood in universal terms free from corporeal boundaries (i.e., landscape):

We are reasserting man's natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to the absolute emotions. We do not need the obsolete props of an outmoded and antiquated legend. We are creating images whose reality is self-evident and which are devoid of the props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images, both sublime and beautiful. We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia, legend, myth, or what have you, that have been the devices of Western European painting.<sup>46</sup>

In his 1963 essay "The American Sublime," Lawrence Alloway argued that Newman and others were expressing a wish for "psychic greatness."<sup>47</sup>

Eisenhower, too, sought psychic greatness, which he referred to as "spiritual" greatness. In his rhetoric, America became a preeminently spiritual being. His taste for synecdoche was fused with the trope of "spirit over matter," putting him in a dramatic position with respect to national leadership. In his first inaugural address, Eisenhower assumed the mantle of a priest, mediating between America's spiritual greatness and the mundane material world. Indeed, throughout his presidency,

Eisenhower performed a kind of Weberian “priestcraft,” where priests are presented as institutionalized mediators, absolvers, interpreters, and vanguards of change.<sup>48</sup> Weber writes, “The full development of both a metaphysical rationalization and a religious ethic requires an independent and professionally trained priesthood.”<sup>49</sup> Weber notes that state officials can function as a kind of priesthood, and, since Weber, the presidency has been approached in these terms.<sup>50</sup> However, this scholarship often addresses presidential priestcraft with admiration, if not credulity. I will argue on the contrary that this is a highly problematic presidential role when it renders the nation’s crises and contradictions insignificant.

Eisenhower’s priestcraft depended on dualisms between the mundane and the transcendent, the exterior and the interior, and the static and the transformative, where transcendence, interiority, and the transformative represent the ecstatic dimension of the nation. These dualisms were performed through an American synecdochal sublime; they hinged on glimpses of a transcendental nationhood that accounts for the near, low, and common, even as America is made to exceed this mundane, contingent, and ultimately inferior existence. I approach these performances by presenting a template of priestly acts in Eisenhower’s presidential rhetoric consisting of three items: the performance of national absolution, acts of priestly interpretation, and calls for human transformation.

### *National Absolution*

America in the 1950s was a montage of images, events, and personalities. The nation was possessed by suspicion, controversy, and conflict even as it took part in a reassuring rhetoric of democratic faith and economic optimism. Isolationism waned; the New Deal’s legacy grew suspect; McCarthyism thrived only to crash; serious racial crises were met with a mixture of sensationalism, moral outrage, and apathy; and Eisenhower was elected twice to the presidency under slogans as jarring as “dynamic conservatism,” “progressive, dynamic conservatism,” “progressive moderation,” “moderate progressivism,” and “positive progressivism.”<sup>51</sup> Most dramatically, Eisenhower cast the nation on a mission for world peace even as he and others in his administration spoke of massive nuclear retaliation, added substantially to the U.S. inventory of thermonuclear warheads, and introduced the nuclear ballistic missile to the nation’s arsenal. However, the image of America that emerged from Eisenhower’s presidential rhetoric captured little of the tension or contradiction of this montage. Instead, the national purpose was cast in a language evocative of spiritual greatness. Eisenhower thus converted “America” upward and inward, consequently placing a firm line dividing the incorporeal essence of the nation from its corporeal contradictions.

In his first public speech act as president, Eisenhower did two things entirely new in the history of inaugural addresses. First, he asked permission to pray, and then he did so. His speech began, “My friends, before I begin the expression of those thoughts that I deem appropriate to this moment, would you permit me the privilege of uttering a little private prayer of my own.”<sup>52</sup> The language of this request is

significant. First of all, he addressed his audience simply as “friends.” FDR had done the same in his 1945 inaugural, but only as the third term in a list featuring a more formal mode of address: “Mr. Chief Justice, Mr. Vice President, my friends.”<sup>53</sup> Truman did not address his audience as “friends.” Eisenhower’s simple use of “friends” to begin his inaugural address suggested that the beginning point of his relationship with the citizenry was one of felicitous fellowship rather than political convention. Indeed, we see in this simple address what was evident throughout Eisenhower’s discourse—the idea that underlying the Union is a civic bond centered on a spiritual essence that transcends constitution and contract. Thus, later in the first inaugural speech, Eisenhower explicitly credited this felicitous mystic bond for the seamlessness of the presidential transfer of power. Having described a common “faith” at some length, he concluded:

It is because we, all of us, hold to these principles that the political changes accomplished this day do not imply turbulence, upheaval, or disorder. Rather this change expresses a purpose of strengthening our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents, a conscious renewal of faith in our country and in the watchfulness of a Divine Providence.

The friendship of faith, he claimed, made harmonious political change possible as it held back a more “natural” human tendency to make political changes disruptive events.

Second, in asking permission to pray, Eisenhower described the speech that was to follow as “the expression of those thoughts that I deem appropriate to this moment.” The language of “expression” and “thought” and his use of the phrase “I deem” associated the oration with his contemplations. Importantly, Eisenhower made no claim to a definitive reading of the times. He did not say something like “those words appropriate to this moment,” which would imply his ability to know what words are needed. Eisenhower rebuffed the idea that he could be a conduit or channel for an exterior divine mind vis-à-vis the interpretation of history, as with the prophet. Indeed, he stated in the speech, “[W]e find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of these times in which we live.” Rather, Eisenhower presented himself as bound to sense and intuition, describing the speech as emanating up through layers of the self: it will be the expression (top layer, that of language) of a thought (intermediate layer, that of contemplation) he deems (bottom layer, that of judgment and will) appropriate.

Thus the significance of the language used to describe the prayer itself: “a little private prayer of my own.” In one sense, the description is misleading. There simply is nothing “private” about the prayer Eisenhower uttered. It was made in the most public of places and it concerned the most public of issues: government. Furthermore, it was in one way a brazen presidential act, as no president had ever opened an inaugural speech with a prayer. And yet, the phrase “my own” shifted the meaning of “private” from that which is the antonym of “public” to that which is the synonym of “personal.” Again, Eisenhower grounded his utterances, whether the inaugural address or the prayer that preceded it, in his interior self, hidden from the

public eye, not by virtue of a social boundary between public and private, but in the way that a mystic’s meditations must always be “private” because their ultimate significance always exceeds conventional language. Eisenhower’s “private” or non-public life was interior because it was connected to the transcendent. His turn inward was a conversion upward.

Indeed, the priestly resonances of Eisenhower’s first inaugural speech were not accidental. They were already evident in his 1950 diary-entry claim that all Americans unconsciously support Americanism, and, as he later recalled his first speech as president, they were driven by a concern that Americans were forgetting the spiritual basis of the nation:

Religion was one of the thoughts that I had been mulling over for several weeks. I did not want my Inaugural Address to be a sermon, by any means; I was not a man of the cloth. But there was embedded in me from boyhood, just as it was in my brothers, a deep faith in the beneficence of the Almighty. I wanted, then, to make this faith clear without creating the impression that I intended, as the political leader of the United States, to avoid my own responsibilities in an effort to pass them on to the Deity. I was seeking a way to point out that we were getting too secular.<sup>54</sup>

While Eisenhower here seems to separate himself from a priestly office—“I was not a man of the cloth”—the “But” which follows this disavowal affirmed the proper place of a priestly role in the national scene, and sanctioned his assumption of it. Additionally, and importantly, Eisenhower recognized, at least in a modest way, that the assumption of this role reshaped the nature of presidential responsibility.

Beyond this biographical aspect, the priestly role Eisenhower assumed was essential to the coherence of his discourse. The essence of the Cold War, Eisenhower declared in the first inaugural address, was “no argument between slightly differing philosophies.” On the contrary:

This conflict strikes directly at the faith of our fathers and the lives of our sons. No principle or treasure that we hold, from the spiritual knowledge of our free schools and churches to the creative magic of free labor and capital, nothing lies safely beyond the reach of this struggle. Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark.

In this way, as many commentators have noted, Eisenhower took up the image of the Cold War as a diabolical conflict, one viewed from the perspective of the “spiritual.” For Eisenhower, the president was therefore charged with the mediation of spiritual realities. In this ritualistic and religious national role, he needed to attend frequently to the incorporeal basis of corporeal phenomena. At the heart of the presidential office was a hyper-spiritual and moral vocation, one that brought people to see material phenomena—be they political, social, or economic—as mere signs of a higher immaterial reality.

This approach reinforced the immense interpretive latitude Eisenhower exercised in his speeches. He could draw a direct connection, as he did in his first inaugural, between “the grower of rice in Burma and the planter of wheat in Iowa, the shepherd in southern Italy and the mountaineer in the Andes . . . the French soldier who dies in

Indo-China, the British soldier killed in Malaya, and the American life given in Korea”—for all, he claimed, were possessed by the same “faith.” This faith was not only a universal “common bond,” it was itself expansive in its expressions, from the “faith of our fathers” to “the spiritual knowledge of our free schools and churches to the creative magic of free labor and capital.” Eisenhower’s priestcraft thus resulted in a conception of an American democratic faith that had as its only bounds that which was its complete opposite, tyranny, depicted variously in the first inaugural as “tyrant,” “slavery,” “darkness,” and “imperialism.” Eisenhower’s priestcraft enabled him to further the image of an unequivocal bipolar world.

The result, moreover, was a preeminently priestly one: national absolution. In Eisenhower’s presidential discourse, such absolution was performed with respect to two types of crisis, both of which were potential sources of national guilt. First, in the domestic realm, Eisenhower’s approach to social disparity relied on a strategy of absolution dependent on the synecdochal sublime and the president’s priestly role. For example, as implied within his first inaugural speech and as evident in later speeches, Eisenhower’s priestly access to the synecdochal sublime could explain away socio-economic disparity in the United States by refusing it even penultimate status. American egalitarianism was thus presented as a matter of essential spirit, and disparity as mere difference in the expression of equality. As he noted in the first inaugural, “[T]he virtues most cherished by free people . . . all are treasures equally precious in the lives of the most humble and of the most exalted.” Thus, socio-economic disparity might be rendered insignificant with respect to the essence of American faith. Subsequent to the first inaugural, the *Nation* complained that Eisenhower “completely ignored the domestic scene.”<sup>55</sup> This was not quite true. Rather, he addressed the domestic scene in a manner that assumed the ultimate absolution of the nation from any serious problems or binding guilt, as American principles of equality, liberty, justice, and so on were made essentially transcendental. As James Reston commented in the *New York Times* the day after the first inaugural, “The thing that impressed most observers here about President Eisenhower’s first state paper was that he spoke almost entirely in universal terms.” Policy solutions to domestic problems, Reston concluded, had to wait.<sup>56</sup>

On the international front, Eisenhower’s discourse absolved the nation vis-à-vis the historical guilt inherent in the massive buildup of nuclear weaponry. By far the greatest disaster Eisenhower imagined was nationwide destruction through the modern weapons of war, and it was when addressing this topic that the power of the synecdochal sublime to absolve the nation was most apparent. A persistent theme emanating from the Eisenhower administration was the horrifying specter of a surprise nuclear attack. “Surprise attack has a capacity for destruction far beyond anything which man has yet known.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in his “Chance for Peace” address, he spoke of “weapons of war now capable of inflicting instant and terrible punishment upon any aggressor.”<sup>58</sup> And in his “Atoms for Peace” speech he claimed, “[E]ven a vast superiority in numbers of weapons, and a consequent capability of devastating retaliation, is no preventive, of itself, against the fearful material damage and toll of human lives that would be inflicted by surprise aggression.” Indeed,

Eisenhower repeatedly pointed to the day when the United States would be suddenly attacked by Soviet bombs and, in turn, instantly respond with a massive nuclear reprisal. This dreaded day, as he imagined in “Atoms for Peace,” would culminate the confrontation between “two atomic colossi,” producing a “civilization destroyed—the annihilation of the irreplaceable heritage of mankind handed down to us generation from generation.”

However, Eisenhower’s catastrophic imagery rarely stood by itself. Rather, the president found a release from these visions through an opposite vision. As he said in “Atoms for Peace,” nuclear annihilation “is not the true expression of the purpose and the hope of the United States.” The true vision America casts is one of universal peace. “Against the dark background of the atomic bomb, the United States does not wish merely to present strength, but also the desire and the hope for peace.” In this way, visions of catastrophe in Eisenhower’s discourse were repeatedly followed by millennial visions of world peace and harmony, and these visions were tied to the interior, which was also the transcendental, realm of “hope” and “faith.” America’s faith, he announced, is “the faith which can bring to this world lasting peace for all nations, and happiness and well-being for all men.” The United States will “devote its entire heart and mind to find the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life.”<sup>59</sup> This language of faith and spirit made the opposite of catastrophe not merely relative peace or general concordance, but the consummate expression of a transcendental, indeed ecstatic, human condition. The historical *telos* of America in his rhetoric was millennial peace and prosperity.

Nevertheless, Eisenhower’s emphasis was not on the historical *telos* so much as the transcendent ideals, principles, and spiritual truths realized in this *telos*. And these existed irrespective of historical fate. Eisenhower refused to see “America” in the visage of the Bomb, all the while maintaining the nation’s prerogative to produce, control, and indeed detonate this doomsday technology. The nation was absolved in as much as one took little account of the Bomb’s material manifestation with respect to the meaning of America. In a sharp dualism, spirit stood over matter and America was presented as ultimately spirit. The corporeal world was relegated to an inferior level. However, it was clear to Eisenhower and others that it was within the corporeal world that America would thrive or fail in the Cold War. The corporeal world thus remained a locus of political and material, if not moral, accounting. And it was in this context that Eisenhower engaged in priestly interpretation.

### *Priestly Interpretation*

Eisenhower’s Cold War rhetoric can be read as incongruent, if not contradictory. On the one hand, he presented the Cold War as a diabolical conflict between two entities: America was benign, spiritual, and principled, whereas the Soviets were malign, materialistic, and irrational. This frame was unequivocal and metaphysical, and demanded a kind of prophetic stance.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Eisenhower’s pragmatic emphases on global interdependence, economic complexity, and strategic (and often

secretive) geopolitical interventions suggested a realist stance, more Machiavellian than transcendental. At the very least, he held that the U.S. needed to show sensitivity to various complex geopolitical contexts and make a great deal of economic and military investment. Thus, ideologically, Eisenhower stressed the metaphysical essence of the Cold War, whereas pragmatically he sought to marshal the nation's strategic and material resources to fight it.

This tension is marked through incongruent interpretations of Eisenhower's rhetoric. Philip Wander claims that the Eisenhower-Dulles administration was characterized by a "prophetic dualism" which insists on "America's moral or spiritual superiority" and "divides the world into two camps." Wander casts this as highly ideological discourse, funded by the "Protestant Establishment."<sup>61</sup> Martin Medhurst, on the other hand, argues that Eisenhower's discourse is pragmatically motivated and based on "realist assumptions."<sup>62</sup> Still, even this interpretation describes Eisenhower as having a "fanatical' devotion to democracy" that was expressed in "religious sentiment."<sup>63</sup> Taking a third approach, Robert Ivie claims that Eisenhower was a "realist" who nevertheless "left a rhetorical legacy of fear that perpetuated the age of peril."<sup>64</sup>

The tension between Eisenhower's transcendentalism and his realism—or between interpretations of Eisenhower as ideologue or pragmatist—may not be as acute as these differences in interpretation suggest. Robert Hariman argues that the realist style "begins by marking all other discourses with the sign of the text" because of its assumption that "political power is an autonomous material force."<sup>65</sup> Eisenhower's synecdochal sublime reveals that there is more than one way to mark discourse with the sign of the text. One can convert upward by assuming that meaning ultimately resides beyond the sign and that national purpose is an autonomous spiritual force. One then accounts for the corporeal world as a realm of "mere signs" reflecting governing spiritual forces. As Weber says of highly abstract forms of religious life, "[S]pirits may be regarded as invisible essences that follow their own laws, and are merely 'symbolized by' concrete objects."<sup>66</sup> In such systems, priests function as interpreters of the spiritual thrust of the corporeal sign.

Eisenhower demonstrated this spiritual reinterpretation in two speeches he delivered in the winter of 1957—his Eisenhower Doctrine address and his State of the Union speech. Each address took the contingent particulars of the Cold War conflict and translated them into a universal phenomenon. In priestly fashion, Eisenhower discerned the ultimate meaning, the spiritual sense, and the sublime trajectory of material signs. Accordingly, in his State of the Union address, he called for "vision and wisdom and resolution" in "all echelons of government," and presents as the assumption of his policy the connection of all socio-political phenomena to a singular reality:

You meet in a season of stress that is testing the fitness of political systems and the validity of political philosophies. Each stress stems in part from causes peculiar to itself. But every stress is a reflection of a universal phenomenon.

Eisenhower described the universal phenomenon to which he referred as “the spirit of freedom,” which (“sometimes dangerously,” he noted) is propelling a global “persistent search for the self-respect of authentic sovereignty and the economic base on which national independence must rest.” The “spirit of freedom” was expressed worldwide; however, he claimed that the U.S. Constitution had the particular privilege of giving it distinct proclamation when it affirmed the founding principles of human liberty, human welfare, and human progress. Consequently, he argued, the United States must be committed to “a high role in world affairs: a role of vigorous leadership, ready strength, sympathetic understanding.”<sup>67</sup> The hierarchy of spirit over matter firmly in place, Eisenhower proceeded to argue for increases in U.S. corporeal activity vis-à-vis material investment abroad. Such a role for the U.S. in the Middle East had been outlined five days earlier in his Eisenhower Doctrine, when he asked Congress to sanction increased U.S. military, economic, and moral (i.e., psychological warfare) intervention in the Middle East.

In the Eisenhower Doctrine speech, the president argued that Russia’s dealings in the world were motivated neither by security nor economic gain. Rather, “The reason for Russia’s interest in the Middle East is solely that of power politics. Considering her announced purpose of Communizing the world, it is easy to understand her hope of dominating the Middle East.” Thus he argued that ultimately the Middle East entailed dynamics that “transcend the material.” For Eisenhower, these dynamics were not simply moral—such as Russia’s greed for power. Rather, they involved a metaphysical “supremacy.” He states:

The Middle East is the birthplace of three great religions—Moslem, Christian and Hebrew. Mecca and Jerusalem are more than places on the map. They symbolize religions which teach that the spirit has supremacy over matter and that the individual has a dignity and rights of which no despotic government can rightfully deprive him. It would be intolerable if the holy places of the Middle East should be subjected to a rule that glorifies atheistic materialism.<sup>68</sup>

Eisenhower here reinterpreted the Cold War by presenting the significance of holy lands within a metaphysical hierarchy of spirit over matter. Hariman shows how Machiavelli’s realist style shifts from “textuality to topography,” stressing knowledge and objectivity rather than convention and decorum.<sup>69</sup> Eisenhower made topography a text, and then this text a mere sign: for him, Mecca and Jerusalem were “places on the map,” yet they were more than this. On a register of the ultimate, Mecca and Jerusalem were symbols of a spiritual truth—that of the supremacy of spirit. Eisenhower thus marked them as texts and then converted upward. Importantly, Eisenhower linked this metaphysical hierarchy to a political vision described as the positioning of “individual rights” over “despotic government.” Thus, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism—blithely conflated and reduced to symbols of the spiritual—validated the essentially metaphysical thrust of Eisenhower’s American liberalism.

Clearly, this emphasis on the metaphysical was politically risky, in as much as it could have minimized the importance of the material. To avert this risk, Eisenhower’s conversion upward needed also to make a return to the corporeal, for otherwise he

could have divested himself of the authority to marshal and manage the nation's material infrastructure. Indeed, a great portion of Eisenhower's 1957 State of the Union address was devoted to pragmatic concerns about the future of the U.S. economy, and the central demand made by the Eisenhower Doctrine was for congressional support for budgetary expenditures in foreign aid and military output. However, the interpretive purchase of the synecdochal sublime here becomes apparent, as through it the corporeal can, however contingently, signify the sublime. The 1957 State of the Union address argued that the nation's economic prosperity was a sign of the transcendent spiritual basis of America. Principles of the Constitution like human liberty, human welfare, and human progress—described as “lighting fires in the souls of men everywhere”—were presented in the speech as the true basis of U.S. economic prosperity. Of course, the idea that liberty gives birth to prosperity has a robust lineage within liberal thought. However, in Eisenhower's speech the idea was performed as a hermeneutical strategy for mitigating the apparent contradiction between the metaphysical essence of the Cold War and a pragmatic call for more money and resources, and between the benevolent transcendental essence and pacific intent of the United States and its aggressive, militaristic, and often stealthy geopolitical actions. Accordingly, Eisenhower introduced complexity into his perspective, a notion in sharp tension with the unequivocal bipolarity of so much of his Cold War rhetoric. He stated, “[W]e must take into account the complex entity that is the United States of America; what endangers it; what can improve it.” This reckoning, he argued, begins with the economy: “The visible structure (of the United States) is our American economy itself.” Complexity emerged to take on economic questions, but in what sense was the economy complex, given that Eisenhower had argued in the same speech that economic prosperity was but the sign of the transcendental?

Complexity, for Eisenhower, characterized primarily the nature of American fidelity. It is difficult to maintain fidelity to a transcendent and mystical univocity when the corporeal world appears so contradictory, tension-filled, and multifarious. The presidential role, therefore, was one of spiritual reinterpretation, making fidelity more felicitous by disclosing the transcendental sources of corporeality. It was in this vein that Eisenhower linked the economic prosperity of 1956 and 1957 to spiritual fidelity:

At home, the application of these [spiritual] principles to the complex problems of our national life has brought us to an unprecedented peak in our economic prosperity and has exemplified in our way of life the enduring human values of mind and spirit.

Thus the tension between Eisenhower's appeal to the fundamental spiritual basis for American domestic and international action and the primacy of material investment and strategy in policy was mitigated. By foregrounding the spiritual, Eisenhower established a perspective on American nationhood that justified action within the corporeal world in spiritual terms.

However, Eisenhower’s priestly performances of national absolution and spiritual reinterpretation would have fallen flat if they had not been supplemented by a rhetoric of transformation. Indeed, they depend for their plausibility and power on the possibility for Americans to experience the transcendent, to access spirit, to reach the sublime. In this way, the third aspect of Eisenhower’s priestly performance—the call for human transformation—was integral to his American synecdochal sublime.

### *Human Transformation*

Eisenhower’s speeches claimed a kind of ultimate innocence for the nation before its morally dubious actions and artifacts, not the least the Bomb. The synecdochal sublime became a means of disavowal, distancing, and displacement with respect to the contradiction between American empirical realities and its intent. It entailed, above all, the ability to say within a single speech that America was poised to destroy civilization if provoked, but that the true intent of the nation was world peace and prosperity. With hindsight, these sorts of claims might seem to many to be spectacular. However, Eisenhower’s rhetoric was in an important sense conventional. His claims intersected with commonplaces of American self-understanding, particularly with respect to explicit and implicit calls for transformation within human consciousness. Calls for human transformation minimized the tensions in his policies by suggesting that the most profound problems the nation faced were not manifest in technologies like the Bomb per se, but in the inappropriate subjective reactions of citizens.

Eisenhower was not prone to present political philosophies as such, but one of his most succinct early public statements of a kind of political philosophy came in an address to an airplane industry group in New York in May of 1947. In it, he praised the power of industry, seen in the technological advances represented by the airplane, to achieve “conquest” over the environment. “Vision and magnificent faith in human capacity have mastered the ancient obstacles of time and space.” However, Eisenhower warned early in the speech, “Technological advance has out-distanced . . . the social progress that it induces or, more accurately, that it demands.” This “lag,” he claimed, “is a dangerous condition that can invite disaster.” Consequently, he concluded that “scientific developments must be matched by fundamental changes in human attitudes.”<sup>70</sup>

In the postwar years, especially when speaking to religious groups, Eisenhower sometimes used the phrase “moral regeneration” to describe the fundamental change he sought.<sup>71</sup> Much later, in 1954, after it was made public that the U.S. had tested a usable hydrogen bomb in Operation Castle, Eisenhower used similar language in a radio and television address:

Now, this transfer of power, this increase of power from a mere musket and a little cannon, all the way to the hydrogen bomb in a single lifetime, is indicative of the things that have happened to us. They rather indicate how far the advances of science have outraced our social consciousness, how much more we have developed scientifically than we are capable of handling emotionally and intellectually.<sup>72</sup>

Eisenhower thus suggested that alarm before the hydrogen bomb was rooted in a failure of human consciousness. Human capacities had not yet reached a point of intellectual and emotional commensurability with the potential for human destructiveness. He therefore repeated his call for a transformation in human consciousness.

Weber notes, “[P]riests may find ways of interpreting failures in such a manner that the responsibility falls, not upon the god or themselves, but upon the behavior of the god’s worshippers.”<sup>73</sup> Eisenhower’s calls for a transformation in human orientation vis-à-vis the Bomb followed this approach, as the real problem, he claimed, was located within public consciousness. In his 1954 post-Operation Castle address, Eisenhower used the image of the family to exemplify a more proper national response: “It meets these problems courageously. It doesn’t get panicky. It solves these problems with what I would call courage and faith, but above all by cooperation.”<sup>74</sup> Such words are consistent with what Eisenhower had been advocating for years by 1954. Americans needed to come to see their interdependence and their need for cooperation. Change in human consciousness meant a dramatic realization of and commitment to social, and especially economic, interconnectedness, as well as an ability to see the transcendent spiritual significance of empirical objects and events in the world. An eye for synecdochal relations rather than metonymic reductions was at the center of such a transformation. If America could learn to see synecdochically, the Bomb’s significance would be changed, as civic sight would turn from the image of nuclear holocaust to gaze on the “true expression of the purpose and hope of the United States.” The nation would no longer get “panicky.” Throughout his presidency, Eisenhower thus sought to coach Americans to see the world and the objects and events therein through a lens that placed spirit over matter. His rhetorical performance of national absolution and spiritual reinterpretation were offered as ingredients of a robust national subjectivity. Conversely, he presumed that infelicitous public reactions to objects and events disclosed not a problem with policies or technologies, but with civic sight and public consciousness. Such reactions demonstrated a lack and showed all the more the need for a transformation in human consciousness.

Human transformation is very near the heart of the American sublime. An expansive gap has long existed between American hope and practice. America’s benevolent, world-transformative rhetoric has consistently outrun its performances. Indeed, this gap is related to the ideology of democracy, for democratic citizens almost always under-perform with respect to democratic ideals. They are, as Eisenhower lamented on more than one occasion, too often selfish, short-sighted, apathetic, or lazy. Thus, as Patrick Deneen notes in a critical mode, “democratic faith” rests on

the possibility of *democratic transformation*. In particular, by advancing a conception of human beings as both infinitely malleable and ameliorable, along with an accompanying belief in the compatibility or malleability of nature and the universe to such perfectionist inclinations, the impulse to “perfectibility” [subtly embedded within modern notions of democracy] becomes an integral component of democratic faith.<sup>75</sup>

Forms of the American sublime have been crucial to the sustenance of this nationalized democratic perfectionist impulse because the sublime performs, even if only momentarily, a transformation in human consciousness—*ekstasis*. The American sublime can therefore underwrite the hope of the American dream by holding out the possibility of ecstatic transformation.

Consequently, calls for human transformation are a commonplace in American rhetoric, and the sublime, seemingly radical in its possibilities, tends to have a strongly conservative function. In his first inaugural, Eisenhower used remarkably perfectionist language to describe his dreams and aspirations. After declaring that “whatever America hopes to bring to pass in the world must first come to pass in the heart of America,” he concluded:

The peace we seek, then, is nothing less than the practice and fulfillment of our whole faith among ourselves and in our dealings with others. This signifies more than the stilling of guns, easing the sorrow of war. More than escape from death, it is a way of life. More than a haven for the weary, it is a hope for the brave.

Lyndon Johnson called Eisenhower’s first inaugural “a dignified statement of the dreams and aspirations that motivate millions of people.”<sup>76</sup> *Newsweek* described the address as a “moving statement of the nation’s destiny as leader of the free world.”<sup>77</sup> The *New York Herald Tribune* celebrated it as a speech “shot through with gleams of idealism—the kind of idealism that has characterized America in its greatest undertakings.”<sup>78</sup> The *Dallas Morning News* declared, “Dwight Eisenhower sent his voice across two oceans Tuesday to bring reassurance to those sorely afflicted and afraid. He ended all fear that the new President will fail to appreciate this nation’s position in the hopes of free men.”<sup>79</sup> And Republican Senator Alexander Wiley was quoted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as saying, “There is not a line in it that all Americans can not heartily indorse [*sic*].”<sup>80</sup> Thus, America and its dream in 1953. Eisenhower called Americans toward spiritual perfection and envisioned supreme national heights. However, his call was received as typical and received conventional forms of praise. The paradox of the American sublime, disclosed in 1953, is that it can be so conventional. The radical, the ecstatic, the transcendental, and the ideal can be integral to the conservative civil religious tenor of the nation.

## Conclusion

In his memoir of the Eisenhower years, Hughes wrote of Eisenhower, “Perhaps no adjective figured so prominently in his political vocabulary as ‘spiritual,’ and his spontaneous speeches were rich with exhortations on America’s ‘spiritual’ strength.”<sup>81</sup> As Chernus argues, Eisenhower’s appeals to spiritual strength were meant in part to be a buffer against either public alarmism or general apathy before the Bomb:

The highest value, voluntary self-restraint, required a practiced restraint of all emotions, including both fear and complacency. . . . He insisted that U.S. national security depended on the practice of the uniquely American virtue of emotional self-control. He expected his words from the bully pulpit to raise the public’s spiritual level, promote its virtue, and guide the nation to the ideal middle way.<sup>82</sup>

Similarly, Medhurst describes Eisenhower as a “true civil religionist,” committed to inculcating civic piety in people so as to withstand the stormy geopolitical circumstances of the 1950s.<sup>83</sup> Chernus and Medhurst thus both emphasize the way in which Eisenhower sought to shape national character through appeals to spiritual strength.

I have argued in this essay that Eisenhower’s appeal to the spiritual included a second, transcendental dimension, which was not so much aimed at the formation of a kind of national moral fiber as it was at elevating, within a schema of national meaning, spirit above matter. Of course, this second dimension was of a piece with the former, but it operated less according to the logic of virtue and more according to those of experience and perception. Eisenhower’s rhetoric suggests that he sought not only to cultivate spiritual civic strength, but spiritual civic sight. I have argued that this rhetoric was a reiteration of the American sublime in its synecdochal form.

The American sublime fills the vacuous gap between a kind of mundane realism and a millennial (or disastrous) national destiny. It demands, and indeed momentarily performs, a transformation in human consciousness. It therefore holds out the hope of a more permanent *ekstasis*, which, of course, would no longer be “displacement” but a perfect and ultimate “placement” or at-homeness. It thus subtly but powerfully underwrites the materially manifested ambition of the American dream. Indeed, America’s millennial destiny is repeatedly turned back on the corporeal world and invoked to justify material “advances,” such as the expansion of capital or the development of massively destructive armaments. In this way, the American sublime justifies the American attempt to take “the infinite into our threats,” in Oliver O’Donovan’s words, as well as into our hopes and aspirations.<sup>84</sup> However, the synecdochal sublime goes one step further, for it presumes not only a kind of temporal gap between mundane reality and a future ideal, but an atemporal gap between matter and spirit. As corporeal objects are overcome while being converted upward into the incorporeal, they come to signify a spiritual intent quite distinct from the intent driving the material structure of the technology.

The deterrent state that Eisenhower consummately enforced exemplifies this structure. David Nye argues that nuclear bombs represent the dissolution of the American technological sublime: “A technology so terrifying ceased to seem sublime. It could no longer claim to be an engine of moral enlightenment, to be contemplated in the same spirit in which one would approach natural scenery.”<sup>85</sup> Nye is correct to the extent that the “scenery” before Americans was world annihilation. However, in as much as a Cold War nuclear America was a deterrent America, it could overcome the terrifying specter of the Bomb via conversion upwards. O’Donovan describes transcendence as the “inner fortress of deterrence-theory.” Thus he notes that the deterrent state assumes that it

can transcend the belligerent content of its threats in the pacific intent of its threatening. The state’s will to deter, it is claimed, is at arms-length from the disproportion contained in the threat; it deploys it only hypothetically to yield a prospect of disaster that will ensure the keeping of peace.<sup>86</sup>

Deterrence thus depends on a hierarchy of intention, in a dualism where the significance of the corporeal sign (the Bomb) is rendered insignificant relative to the transcendent purposes of the state (world peace). All the while, the Bomb is said to be a necessary, though contingent, temporary, and ultimately inferior, sign of nationhood. In the Eisenhower administration, the synecdochal sublime is the rhetorical art of transcendence through which this feat was performed; it was that which perniciously made moral sense of juxtaposing threats of massive retaliation with expressions of a desire for world peace. The scenery before America was not nuclear annihilation, but America's transcendental essence.

However, if the American sublime is so commonplace that its power to fill vacuous gaps is hidden in plain sight, then American discourse is characterized by the perilous blindness described in 1952 by Ralph Ellison's narrator in the *Invisible Man*:

I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.<sup>87</sup>

The American sublime is a distorting mirror that deflects attention from the mundane and profane to the extraordinary idea of America, such that we do not reckon with the particularity of political problems or the propensities that inhere in our technologies. However, in order for the injustices, disparities, inconsistencies, and crimes of the nation to be addressed and redressed, even imperfectly, and in order for the intent and consequences of our technologies to be considered, objects and events in the world must have the capacity to assume a determinate form. The American sublime described here eviscerates the rhetorical conditions that bring such determinate forms into the sphere of recognition and accountability.

## Notes

- [1] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989): 4.
- [2] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 61. See also Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).
- [3] Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address before the General Assembly of the United Nations on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, New York City, December 8, 1953," also known as "Atoms for Peace," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1953), document 256, 1953; available from John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online] (Santa Barbara, CA: University of California [hosting], Gerhard Peters [database]), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9774>. Hereafter presidential statements that are part of the *Public Papers* series will be cited as *PPP*, document number and year, followed by the URL for the document as it can be accessed in online *The American Presidency Project*.
- [4] Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 7, 12.
- [5] Bercovitch, *Rites of Assent*, 49 (emphasis in original).
- [6] Bercovitch, *Rites of Assent*, 362.

- [7] Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas," in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman: As Prepared by Him for the Deathbed Edition; With an Introduction by Malcolm Cowley* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1948), 2:213.
- [8] Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915), 227–8. David E. Nye presents the American sublime as a form of civil religion, in *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994). See pages 21–2, 28, and 36.
- [9] Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 40. This article was originally published in *Daedalus* in the winter of 1967. For more on American civil religion, see the rest of *American Civil Religion*, and also Roderick P. Hart and John L. Pauley II, eds., *The Political Pulpit Revisited* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005); Michael Novak, *Choosing Our King: Powerful Symbols in Presidential Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1974); and Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988). A recent reappraisal of civil religion as political philosophy has been offered by Patrick J. Deneen, *Democratic Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- [10] Eisenhower quoted in Ira Chernus, *Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 32.
- [11] Rachel L. Holloway, "'Keeping the Faith': Eisenhower Introduces the Hydrogen Age," in *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 66.
- [12] This problem is taken up by Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla in the introduction to *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- [13] On the way in which the sublime shaped tourist practices, see Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959). On the relation of the sublime to reading practices, see Ashfield and de Bolla, *The Sublime*, and Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics, and the Subject* (New York: Blackwell, 1989).
- [14] Phillip Blond, "Introduction: Theology before Philosophy," in *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Phillip Blond (New York: Routledge, 1998), 16.
- [15] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 231.
- [16] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 230.
- [17] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 231.
- [18] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 348.
- [19] Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 24, 40.
- [20] Hart and Pauley, *Political Pulpit Revisited*, 21.
- [21] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 227 (emphasis in original). Longinus, 'Longinus' on the Sublime, Greek text, ed. D. A. Russell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).
- [22] Nicolas Boileau Despreaux, "Préface: Traité de Sublime," in *Oeuvres Complètes de Boileau Despreaux: Précédées des Oeuvres de Malherbe, Suivies des Oeuvres Poétiques de J. B. Rousseau* (Paris: Lefevre, 1835), 520. "Ekstasis," in Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968). On the etymology of "sublime," see Jan Cohn and Thomas H. Miles, "The Sublime: In Alchemy, Aesthetics, and Psychoanalysis," *Modern Philology* 74 (1977): 289–304.
- [23] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 228–9.
- [24] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff, introd. Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 3, 12.
- [25] See James P. McDaniel, "Figures for New Frontiers, from Davy Crockett to Cyberspace Gurus," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 91–111; Ned O'Gorman, "The Political Sublime: An Oxymoron," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 34 (2006): 889–915.

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- [28] Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 134 (emphasis in the original); see also Burke’s discussions of “transcendence upwards” in *Attitudes toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). David Tell’s “Burke’s Encounter with Ransom: Rhetoric and Epistemology in ‘Four Master Tropes,’” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 34 (Fall 2004): 33–54, is helpful for understanding Burke’s perspective on metonymy and synecdoche.
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- [32] Eisenhower, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 2:824.
- [33] Ira Chernus, *General Eisenhower: Ideology and Discourse* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 293.
- [34] Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Address before the American Alumni Council upon Presentation of the Council’s Award of Merit, Amherst, Massachusetts, July 11, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks: Dwight D. Eisenhower in His Messages and Speeches*, ed. Rudolph L. Treuenfels (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1948), 120.
- [35] Eisenhower, “Address at Veterans’ Day, Nebraska State Fair, Lincoln, Nebraska, September 1, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 121.
- [36] Eisenhower, “Address before Convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars, Boston, Massachusetts, September 3, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 130–1.
- [37] Eisenhower, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 11:883 (all emphases and the parenthetical comment are original).
- [38] Eisenhower, *Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, 20:1753.
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- [41] Eisenhower, “Address—Art in Peace and War—After Being Made Honorary Fellow by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y., April 2, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 81.
- [42] Eisenhower, “Address at Fourth of July Observance, Warren County Courthouse, Vicksburg, Mississippi, July 4, 1947,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 243.
- [43] Eisenhower, “Address upon Receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Toronto University, Toronto, Canada, January 12, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 71.
- [44] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 173.
- [45] Barnett Newman, “The Sublime Is Now,” in *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, ed. Herschel B. Chipp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 552.
- [46] Newman, “Sublime Is Now,” 553.
- [47] Lawrence Alloway, “The American Sublime,” *Living Arts* 2 (1963): 14.
- [48] Weber, *Sociology of Religion*; see especially 1–46.
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- [55] Editors, “The President’s Prayer,” *Nation*, January 31, 1953, 91.
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- [65] Robert Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17.
- [66] Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, 4; see also 32–45.
- [67] Eisenhower, “Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 10, 1957,” *PPP*, document 8, 1957, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=11029&st=&st1=>.
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- [69] Hariman, *Political Style*, 20.
- [70] Eisenhower, “Address at Annual Dinner of Wings Club, New York, N.Y., May 5, 1947,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 185.
- [71] See Eisenhower, “Address at Meeting of United Jewish Appeal, Washington D.C., February 23, 1947,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 176, and “Address on Receiving the Churchman Award for the Promotion of Good Will and Better Understanding among All Peoples, New York, N.Y., December 3, 1946,” in *Eisenhower Speaks*, 168.
- [72] “Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation, April 5, 1954,” *PPP*, document 72, 1954, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10201>.
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- [80] “Eisenhower Talk Praised by Many in Both Parties,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, January 20, 1953, 2A.
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- [82] Chernus, *Eisenhower’s Atoms for Peace*, 27.
- [83] Medhurst, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, 12.
- [84] Oliver O’Donovan, *Peace and Certainty: A Theological Essay on Deterrence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 21.
- [85] Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, 254.
- [86] O’Donovan, *Peace and Certainty*, 20.
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