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The "Tech-Industrial Complex" and the "Oligarchy" Warning: Neologism, Intertextuality, and Prophetic Rhetoric in Biden's 2025 Farewell Address

[1] **Hasan Alisoy**
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Keywords	Abstract
intertextuality, Bakhtinian dialogism, presidential farewell address, neologism, tech-industrial complex	*This article examines the stylistic architecture of President Joseph R. Biden's January 15, 2025, farewell address through the lenses of intertextual analysis, Bakhtinian dialogism, and critical discourse analysis. Biden's coinage of "tech-industrial complex"—a direct lexical parallel to Eisenhower's 1961 "military-industrial complex"—represents a paradigmatic case of intertextual neologism designed to inherit the rhetorical authority of a canonical prior text. His unprecedented deployment of the term "oligarchy" to describe domestic American power dynamics marked a deliberate register shift, importing critical vocabulary previously reserved for post-Soviet states into domestic political discourse. Employing Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the "word as half someone else's," Kristeva's (1980) theory of textual absorption and transformation, and Fairclough's (1992) framework of manifest intertextuality, the study demonstrates how Biden constructed a "farewell as warning" through systematic stylistic borrowing from Eisenhower while adapting the prophetic frame for the age of technology monopolies and social media. The analysis reveals a speech structured around ring composition, double-voiced discourse, and a productive neologism pattern that positions the address within a lineage extending from Washington (1796) through Eisenhower (1961) to the present. The findings contribute to scholarship on presidential rhetoric, political neologism, and the application of dialogic theory to contemporary political discourse.*

Introduction

On January 15, 2025, five days before the inauguration of his successor, President Joseph R. Biden Jr. delivered his farewell address to the nation from the Oval Office. The seventeen-minute speech broke sharply from Biden's own rhetorical history. Where his prior addresses had typically opened

[1] Alisoy, H. Lecturer in English, Nakhchivan State University, Azerbaijan. Email: alisoyhasan@ndu.edu.az. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0247-476X

with catalogues of legislative accomplishments, this speech pivoted abruptly from a brief ceasefire announcement to an extended allegory about the Statue of Liberty withstanding a storm, before arriving at its rhetorical center of gravity: a prophetic warning against what Biden termed an emerging "oligarchy" of extreme wealth and a "tech-industrial complex" threatening American democracy (Biden, 2025). The speech was immediately recognized by commentators as a deliberate echo of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's January 17, 1961, farewell address, in which Eisenhower had coined the phrase "military-industrial complex" and warned against the disastrous rise of misplaced power (Eisenhower, 1961; Fallows, 2025; Meyerson, 2025).

The Biden–Eisenhower parallel is not merely thematic but deeply structural and lexical. Biden explicitly quoted Eisenhower's farewell, bracketing the quotation with the verbal markers "and I quote" and "end of quote" to make the intertextual borrowing maximally transparent. He then offered his own coinage—"tech-industrial complex"—as a direct lexical substitution within Eisenhower's syntactic frame. This constitutes what this article terms an intertextual neologism: a new term whose meaning, authority, and rhetorical force derive not from its semantic novelty alone but from its dialogic relationship to a prior authoritative utterance.

This article undertakes a stylistic and discourse-analytic examination of Biden's farewell address, drawing on three interconnected theoretical frameworks. First, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981, 1984, 1986) theory of dialogism, particularly the concepts of the word as "half someone else's," double-voiced discourse, and the utterance chain. Second, Julia Kristeva's (1980) reconceptualization of Bakhtinian dialogue as intertextuality—the principle that any text is a "mosaic of quotations" constituted through absorption and transformation of other texts. Third, Norman Fairclough's (1992) framework of manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity within critical discourse analysis (CDA). The article argues that Biden's farewell represents a paradigmatic case of dialogic political discourse—a speech whose rhetorical power derives precisely from its orientation toward prior utterances and its strategic reappropriation of an authoritative discursive frame for new political purposes.

The significance of this analysis extends beyond the single speech event. Biden's farewell address arrives at a moment when the relationship between technology corporations and democratic governance has become a defining question of contemporary politics. The speech was delivered against the backdrop of technology executives—including Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, and others—visibly aligning with the incoming administration, a spectacle that Risse (2025) noted when observing that Trump positioned these tech leaders more prominently in his inauguration audience than his own cabinet nominees. Biden's rhetorical response to this realignment was not to engage in direct polemic but to reach for a framework of historical analogy, constructing his warning through layers of intertextual reference that invited listeners to understand the present through the lens of prior democratic reckonings. Understanding how this rhetorical strategy operates—how authority is constructed through dialogic borrowing, how

neologisms inherit cultural weight, and how genre conventions shape political meaning—offers insights applicable far beyond this particular speech.

The research questions guiding this analysis are: (1) How does Biden's coinage of "tech-industrial complex" function as an intertextual neologism, and what mechanisms of rhetorical authority transfer does it employ? (2) What is the significance of Biden's unprecedented domestic deployment of the term "oligarchy," and how does this register shift contribute to the speech's prophetic architecture? (3) How can the speech's stylistic features—its ring composition, metaphorical structure, and genre positioning—be illuminated through Bakhtinian dialogism and intertextual analysis?

Literature Review

The Presidential Farewell as Rhetorical Genre

The presidential farewell address constitutes a distinct rhetorical genre within American political discourse. Campbell and Jamieson (1990, 2008) identify the farewell as occurring during the "entr'acte"—the liminal period between election and inauguration—when the incumbent engages in symbolic divestiture of presidential authority. Its functions include establishing closure, reifying the president–citizen relationship, and creating institutional continuity. The genre's foundational text is George Washington's 1796 farewell, which, though never delivered orally, established the convention of the departing president offering warnings against threats to the republic (Gilbert, 1961). Washington cautioned against partisan factionalism and foreign entanglements, establishing the prophetic–admonitory register that would characterize the genre's most consequential instances.

After Washington, the formal farewell tradition largely lapsed until Truman revived it in 1953 as the first televised presidential farewell. Eisenhower's 1961 address—which introduced the "military-industrial complex" into public discourse—is widely considered the most consequential farewell after Washington's (Medhurst, 1994; Ledbetter, 2011). Milford (2023) has extended the genre analysis, finding that farewell addresses from presidents denied second terms often produce "generic hybrids, combining forms and functions of different addresses" (p. 4). Stuckey (1991) argues that interpreting reality is a core source of presidential power—a framework directly relevant to Biden's attempt to redefine the political landscape through the prophetic warning genre.

Eisenhower's Farewell and the Military-Industrial Complex

Eisenhower's farewell address went through at least 21 drafts over nearly two years, primarily authored by speechwriter Malcolm Moos and Navy aide Ralph E. Williams (Ledbetter, 2011). Medhurst (1994) identified "balance" as the speech's central organizing principle, appearing in multiple formulations: balance between the private and public economy, between cost and advantage, between the necessary and the desirable. The military-industrial complex passage itself

is framed within this balance architecture—acknowledging the necessity of a permanent defense establishment while warning against its unwarranted influence.

Initial reception was muted; a Washington Post editorial said Eisenhower had offered little that was new, and John F. Kennedy's inaugural address three days later overshadowed the farewell entirely. The phrase gained wide currency during the Vietnam War, when, as John Kenneth Galbraith noted, critics quoted Eisenhower for the "flank protection" his authority provided (Ledbetter, 2011). Ledbetter described the concept as a "rhetorical Rorschach blot" whose meaning adapted to successive political contexts—a characterization that speaks directly to its dialogic afterlife. Notably, Eisenhower originally considered the formulation "military-industrial-congressional complex" but dropped the third element, while an early draft used "military-scientific complex" before science adviser James Killian persuaded Eisenhower to change it.

Crucially for the Biden comparison, Eisenhower's farewell contained a second warning that is less frequently cited but directly anticipates Biden's concerns: the danger that public policy could become captive to a "scientific-technological elite." Eisenhower cautioned that government's increasing dependence on costly research risked subjugating the nation's scholars to federal patronage and the power of money. This often-overlooked passage reveals that the Eisenhower farewell already contained the seeds of the technology-power critique that Biden would develop sixty-four years later. Biden's intertextual borrowing thus reaches not only to the famous military-industrial complex phrase but resonates with the deeper structure of Eisenhower's entire warning—a structure concerned fundamentally with the danger that specialized knowledge and concentrated resources can subvert democratic self-governance.

The Productive Compound: X-Industrial Complex

Eisenhower's coinage spawned what linguists would recognize as a productive compound template—a constructional idiom or snowclone where the first element is variable while the frame [-industrial complex] remains fixed. The most significant derivatives include the "medical-industrial complex" (Relman, 1980), the "prison-industrial complex" (Schlosser, 1998; Davis, 2003), and numerous variants including the immigration-industrial complex, the nonprofit-industrial complex, and the academic-industrial complex. Each compound inherits Eisenhower's critical authority through structural parallelism: the form signals a systemic threat to democratic governance analogous to the original. The listener imports the gravity, urgency, and critical stance of Eisenhower's farewell into whatever new domain the compound addresses. Significantly, the right-wing coinage "censorship-industrial complex"—used circa 2023–2024 to describe alleged government-social media collaboration on speech suppression—demonstrates that the compound's rhetorical authority is ideologically transferable, available to critics across the political spectrum. Biden's "tech-industrial complex" is the most explicitly intertextual of all these derivatives, because it is accompanied by a direct quotation of the source text, making the borrowing not merely structural but discursively marked and acknowledged.

Bakhtinian Dialogism and Intertextuality

Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism holds that every utterance exists as a response to prior utterances and anticipates future responses. No speaker is "the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69). Central to the present analysis is Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia: the coexistence within any utterance of multiple social languages, intentions, and accents. Each word carries what Bakhtin (1981) describes as the "taste" of the contexts in which it has previously lived its "socially charged life" (p. 293). The word in language is, crucially, "half someone else's"—it becomes one's own only when the speaker "populates it with his own intention, his own accent" and "adapts it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293).

Bakhtin's (1984) typology of double-voiced discourse, elaborated in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, provides a further analytical tool. The "word with a sideward glance" describes utterances oriented simultaneously toward their referential object and toward another person's discourse about that same object—speech that serves two speakers and expresses two different intentions. This concept illuminates how Biden's "tech-industrial complex" simultaneously addresses its object (concentrated technology power) while glancing at Eisenhower's prior discourse, inviting recognition of the parallel and appropriating its authority.

Kristeva (1980) coined the term "intertextuality" in her 1966 presentation of Bakhtin to Roland Barthes's seminar, reconceptualizing Bakhtinian dialogue as a relation between texts rather than between speaking subjects. Her foundational formulation—that any text is "a mosaic of quotations" representing "the absorption and transformation of another" text (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66)—provides the theoretical vocabulary for analyzing Biden's systematic textual borrowing. Fairclough (1992) operationalizes intertextuality for discourse analysis, distinguishing manifest intertextuality—where other texts are explicitly present—from constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity, involving the mixing of discourse conventions. His observation that texts may "assimilate, contradict, ironically echo" prior texts (Fairclough, 1992, p. 84) maps precisely onto the range of intertextual operations visible in Biden's farewell.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive approach combining stylistic analysis with Bakhtinian dialogic analysis and Faircloughian CDA. The primary data consists of the official White House transcript of Biden's January 15, 2025, farewell address (Biden, 2025), cross-referenced with the video recording for prosodic and gestural features. The secondary comparative text is the Avalon Project transcript of Eisenhower's January 17, 1961, farewell address (Eisenhower, 1961). Supplementary data includes media commentary from the immediate post-

speech period (January 15–20, 2025) and the scholarly analysis by Risse (2025) published by Harvard Kennedy School's Carr-Ryan Center.

Analytical Framework

The analysis proceeds through three integrated levels, following Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model. At the textual level, the study examines lexical choices (neologism, register), syntactic parallelism, metaphor (the avalanche and smothering imagery), and macro-structural features (ring composition, the five-part architecture). At the discursive practice level, the analysis traces manifest intertextuality—the explicit presence of Eisenhower's text within Biden's—and interdiscursivity, particularly the mixing of the farewell genre with the prophetic–admonitory register. At the social practice level, the study situates the speech within the political context of technology monopolization, the January 2025 transition, and the broader tradition of presidential farewell warnings.

Theoretical Tools

The Bakhtinian concepts operationalized in this analysis include: the word as "half someone else's" (Bakhtin, 1981), applied to the "tech-industrial complex" coinage; double-voiced discourse and the "word with a sideward glance" (Bakhtin, 1984), applied to Biden's simultaneous orientation toward Eisenhower's authority and his own political purpose; the utterance chain (Bakhtin, 1986), applied to the farewell genre's diachronic development from Washington through Eisenhower to Biden; and heteroglossia, applied to the speech's layering of presidential authority, populist anger, prophetic warning, and technological critique within a single discursive event.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analytical procedure involved several stages. First, a close textual reading of both the Biden and Eisenhower farewell transcripts, identifying all instances of lexical parallelism, explicit quotation, structural correspondence, and thematic echoing. Second, a systematic comparison of the two speeches' macro-structures, identifying parallels in their opening frames, warning sections, and closing charges to citizens. Third, an analysis of Biden's metaphorical systems using conceptual metaphor theory as a supplementary tool alongside Bakhtinian analysis. Fourth, a review of the immediate media and scholarly commentary (Fallows, 2025; Meyerson, 2025; Risse, 2025; Wirls, 2025) to triangulate the researcher's interpretive claims against other informed readings of the speech. Fifth, a diachronic mapping of the [X]-industrial complex compound's genealogy, tracing the productive pattern from Eisenhower through its major derivatives to Biden's coinage. The combination of these procedures ensures that the analysis attends to the speech at multiple levels—from individual lexical choices through metaphorical systems to genre conventions and the broader discursive context.

Results and Analysis

The Intertextual Neologism: "Tech-Industrial Complex"

Biden's central coinage operates through what may be termed paradigmatic substitution within an inherited syntagmatic frame. Eisenhower's "military-industrial complex" established a three-element compound structure: [domain]-industrial complex. Biden substitutes "tech" for "military," preserving the syntactic architecture while redirecting its referential scope. This is not a novel technique—the compound has been productive since the 1960s, generating variants including "prison-industrial complex" (Schlosser, 1998; Davis, 2003), "medical-industrial complex" (Relman, 1980), and numerous others. However, Biden's coinage is unique in the lineage for one critical reason: it is accompanied by an explicit, verbally marked quotation of the source text.

In Bakhtinian terms, this constitutes maximally transparent double-voicing. Biden does not merely echo Eisenhower's phrase—he stages the echo, announcing it with the verbal markers "and I quote" and "end of quote." This deliberate framing transforms what might otherwise be an unmarked allusion into what Fairclough (1992) would classify as manifest intertextuality of the most explicit kind. The speech presents Eisenhower's words as authoritative discourse—in Bakhtin's (1981) terminology, discourse that demands allegiance—and then immediately derives a new utterance from that authority. The word "complex" arrives in Biden's speech already saturated with Eisenhower's intentions, Cold War anxiety, and six decades of institutional critique. It is, precisely, "half someone else's."

The mechanism of authority transfer operates through structural iconicity: the formal parallelism between the source phrase and the coinage signals that the new threat bears the same structural relationship to democracy as the old one. Just as the military-industrial complex represented the dangerous fusion of governmental and corporate power in the defense sphere, the tech-industrial complex represents an analogous fusion in the digital domain. The neologism's effectiveness depends entirely on the listener's recognition of the source—a recognition that Biden's explicit quotation ensures. Meyerson (2025) identified a crucial structural difference between the two warnings: Eisenhower warned against the power of institutions, while Biden warned against the power of the super-rich who have arisen through decades of deregulation and globalization. This shift from institutional to personal power represents a transformation of the inherited frame, not merely its replication—consistent with Kristeva's (1980) formulation of intertextuality as absorption and transformation.

The "Oligarchy" Register Shift

Biden's use of "oligarchy" to describe domestic American conditions constituted what multiple commentators recognized as an extraordinary lexical choice. NPR correspondent Asma Khalid stated that she had previously heard Biden reference the word only in the context of corruption in Russia and Ukraine, making its domestic application a striking departure (NPR, 2025). The term "oligarchy" carries a semantic field overwhelmingly associated with post-Soviet political

dysfunction—Russian plutocrats, Ukrainian power brokers, Central Asian authoritarian regimes. Biden's importation of this term into domestic discourse represents a deliberate register shift: the critical vocabulary of foreign-policy analysis is redeployed as a diagnostic tool for American conditions.

From a Bakhtinian perspective, this register shift exemplifies the "word with a sideward glance." The term "oligarchy" does not merely describe concentrated wealth; it simultaneously invokes the failures of post-Soviet democratization, implying that America risks following a similar trajectory. The word glances at Russia while ostensibly addressing America, creating what Bakhtin (1984) would recognize as an internally dialogized utterance—one that contains within itself the response it anticipates. When Biden says an "oligarchy is taking shape in America," the heteroglossic resonances of the word—its associations with Putin, with failed transitions, with democratic backsliding—perform rhetorical work that no synonym could replicate. The choice of "oligarchy" over alternatives such as "plutocracy" or "aristocracy of wealth" is itself an act of rhetorical positioning.

Wirls (2025) extended the intertextual chain, identifying Andrew Jackson's 1837 farewell address as another antecedent for Biden's oligarchy warning. Jackson had cautioned against concentrated financial power threatening democratic governance—a parallel that Biden's speechwriters may well have been conscious of. This multiple intertextual layering—Eisenhower for the compound neologism, Jackson for the oligarchy theme, Washington for the genre itself—produces what Fairclough (1992) would describe as a high degree of interdiscursivity, mixing the farewell genre, the prophetic register, populist economic critique, and foreign-policy analytical vocabulary within a single speech event.

The speech's treatment of artificial intelligence further reinforces the prophetic architecture. Biden characterized AI as "the most consequential technology of our time—perhaps of all time," offering "profound possibilities and risks for our economy and our security, our society, our very—for humanity" (Biden, 2025). The verbal stumble at "our very—" before landing on "for humanity" registers a moment of scalar escalation: Biden reached beyond the conventional political categories of economy, security, and society to invoke the existential frame of humanity itself. This echoes Eisenhower's own scalar progression, where the military-industrial complex's "total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—" extended the warning beyond material to metaphysical domains. Both speakers, at the climax of their warnings, breach the conventional categories of political discourse to invoke something larger—a rhetorical move characteristic of the prophetic register.

Metaphorical Architecture: Avalanche, Smothering, and the Statue

The speech deploys three interconnected metaphorical systems. The first is the governing frame of the Statue of Liberty as an allegory for American democracy—built to withstand storms,

designed to sway without falling, moving forward atop a broken chain of bondage. This metaphor creates a ring composition (inclusio): the speech opens and closes with the Statue, framing the warning section within an arc of national resilience. The rhetorical effect is to contain the prophetic alarm within a structure of hope—democracy may bend, but it is engineered not to break.

The second metaphorical system addresses misinformation. Biden employed a double metaphor of overwhelming force and suffocation: Americans are being "buried under an avalanche of misinformation and disinformation," while "the truth is smothered by lies told for power and for profit" (Biden, 2025). The avalanche metaphor constructs misinformation as a kinetic, gravitational force—massive, sudden, and burying. The smothering metaphor shifts the register from natural disaster to deliberate violence—someone is smothering something. Together, they create a semantic field of asphyxiation: "buried," "crumbling," "disappearing," "smothered." The progression enacts an escalation from environmental catastrophe to intentional killing, culminating in the refrain "for power and for profit," which attributes agency and motive to the previously impersonal avalanche. This refrain appears twice in the speech, creating a rhythmic link between the misinformation crisis and the oligarchy theme.

The third metaphorical thread is historical: the invocation of "robber barons" and the Progressive Era as a precedent for the current moment. By framing contemporary tech oligarchs as analogues to Gilded Age industrialists, Biden situates his warning within a narrative of cyclical threat and democratic renewal—Americans "stood up to the robber barons back then and busted the trusts" (Biden, 2025). This historical metaphor performs the same function as the Eisenhower allusion: it imports the authority of a prior moment of democratic reckoning into the present crisis.

Genre and the Prophetic Register

Biden's farewell explicitly positions itself within the prophetic–admonitory tradition of presidential farewells. The speech's signal sentence—"In my farewell address tonight, I want to warn the country of some things that give me great concern" (Biden, 2025)—echoes Campbell and Jamieson's (2008) identification of the farewell's divestiture function: the departing president, freed from electoral consequences, speaks truth as a final act of democratic stewardship. This prophetic register is reinforced by the physical performance Fallows (2025) documented: mid-speech, Biden's body language shifted from valedictory to urgent, his hands moving from folded to gesturing directly at the camera with a pen—a somatic marker of the transition from retrospection to prophecy.

The genre positioning creates a three-term utterance chain: Washington (1796) warned against factions and foreign entanglements; Eisenhower (1961) warned against the military-industrial complex; Biden (2025) warns against the tech-industrial complex and oligarchy. Each farewell warning gains authority from the chain itself—each new entry retroactively validates the genre's significance. As Fallows (2025) observed, Eisenhower's speech received limited attention at the

time but "steadily grown in attention and importance" in subsequent decades, suggesting Biden's address may follow a similar trajectory of delayed recognition. This is the Bakhtinian utterance chain made concrete: each farewell responds to its predecessors while anticipating its successors in the genre.

The Withdrawal Speech as Intertextual Prelude

Biden's farewell cannot be fully understood without reference to his July 24, 2024, Oval Office address announcing his withdrawal from the presidential race—the first such withdrawal by an incumbent since Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. That speech opened with a quadruple historical allusion, naming Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt in rapid succession as portraits surrounding him in the Oval Office. Each allusion carried implicit commentary: Jefferson for democratic ideals, Washington for the principle that presidents are not kings, Lincoln for rejecting malice, Roosevelt for rejecting fear. Where the withdrawal speech mobilized the Founders through direct naming, the farewell mobilized Eisenhower through structural and lexical borrowing. Together, the two speeches form a paired set—a diptych of democratic legitimation, the first anchored in the revolutionary founding, the second in the Cold War reckoning with institutional power.

Discussion

The analysis reveals Biden's farewell address as a densely intertextual speech whose rhetorical power derives from what Bakhtin (1981) would recognize as its orientation toward prior utterances. The "tech-industrial complex" coinage is not merely a clever parallel—it is a dialogic act that appropriates Eisenhower's authoritative discourse, populates it with new intentions, and redirects it toward a contemporary threat. The explicit quotation of Eisenhower's exact words ensures that the source text's authority is not merely alluded to but staged and transferred.

The speech's effectiveness demonstrates a principle that dialogic theory illuminates but political communication scholarship has not fully explored: the rhetorical power of intertextual neologism. Unlike ordinary coinages, which must establish their authority through repetition and adoption, an intertextual neologism arrives pre-loaded with the accumulated cultural weight of its source. The compound "tech-industrial complex" does not need to prove its gravity—it inherits gravity from the sixty-four years of cultural resonance that Eisenhower's coinage has accumulated. As Ledbetter (2011) described the original as a "rhetorical Rorschach blot," Biden's derivative partakes of the same adaptive quality—its meaning expands to encompass whatever the listener perceives as threatening about concentrated technology power.

The "oligarchy" register shift operates through a different but complementary mechanism. Where the compound neologism borrows from a specific text, the register shift borrows from an entire discourse—the analytical vocabulary of post-Soviet political analysis. The word's heteroglossic resonances—its "taste" of Russia, Ukraine, and democratic failure—perform argumentative work

that no denotative synonym could achieve. Risse (2025) rightly cautioned that "America is not Russia, and it would be misguided to make comparisons to Putin," but the rhetorical force of the term lies precisely in the frisson of the comparison: if the word "oligarchy" can be applied to America, then America's democratic exceptionalism is no longer assured.

The speech's prophetic architecture—its ring composition, its escalating metaphors of asphyxiation, its explicit genre self-positioning as a warning—reflects a sophisticated understanding of the farewell genre's conventions. Campbell and Jamieson's (2008) observation that the farewell occurs during an institutional "entr'acte" is enacted through Biden's liminal status: no longer electorally accountable, not yet historically irrelevant, he occupies the threshold position that the prophetic register requires. The Bakhtinian framework reveals something further: this is not merely a speech about power but a speech about language and power—about who has the authority to name and to warn, and about how that authority is constructed through strategic reappropriation of prior discourse.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. This analysis draws primarily on the written transcript and published commentary rather than a systematic audience-reception study. The speech's long-term cultural impact—whether it follows the trajectory of delayed recognition that Fallows (2025) predicted—remains to be determined. Additionally, the political context of the January 2025 transition inflects interpretation in ways that may shift as historical distance increases. Future research might employ corpus-linguistic methods to track the adoption of "tech-industrial complex" in public discourse, or conduct comparative analyses of Biden's farewell with other presidential farewells using computational stylistic tools.

A further dimension worth exploring in future scholarship is the speech's reception across ideological lines. The Biden farewell provoked sharply polarized responses: CNN's David Axelrod called it perhaps one of the best speeches he had ever heard Biden deliver, while conservative commentators questioned the credibility of the oligarchy warning from a politician who had spent decades working closely with corporate interests. This polarization itself illuminates Bakhtin's (1981) insight that words are always already populated with competing intentions. The phrase "tech-industrial complex" enters a discursive field where different audiences bring radically different evaluative accents to the same lexical material—for some, it names a genuine structural threat; for others, it is a hypocritical appropriation of Eisenhower's credibility by a politician who lacks comparable authority. The dialogic nature of the coinage ensures that it cannot control its own reception; it is, as Bakhtin would predict, subject to the responsive understanding of its audience.

The question of Biden's credibility as a speaker of these words raises a broader theoretical point about the relationship between ethos and intertextuality. Eisenhower's military-industrial complex warning derived much of its force from the speaker's identity: a five-star general and Supreme Allied Commander warning against military power carried unique rhetorical authority precisely

because the warning came from within the institution being criticized. Biden's warning against oligarchy and tech power does not enjoy the same insider credibility. However, the intertextual strategy compensates for this asymmetry: by explicitly invoking Eisenhower's authority, Biden borrows not only his words but his ethos. The quotation functions as a surrogate credential—if Eisenhower warned against misplaced power, and Biden extends the same structural analysis to a new domain, then the authority of the analysis transfers even if the speaker's biography differs. This is a sophisticated rhetorical maneuver that dialogic theory helps to explain: the borrowed voice supplements the speaker's own authority with the accumulated cultural capital of the source.

Conclusion

Biden's 2025 farewell address represents a paradigmatic case of dialogic political rhetoric—a speech constructed through systematic intertextual borrowing from what is arguably the most consequential presidential farewell in American history. Through the lens of Bakhtinian dialogism, the speech reveals itself as a complex act of discursive appropriation: Biden takes Eisenhower's authoritative discourse, repopulates it with new intentions, and deploys it against a new configuration of power. The "tech-industrial complex" coinage functions as an intertextual neologism that inherits rhetorical authority through structural parallelism. The "oligarchy" register shift imports the critical vocabulary of foreign-policy analysis into domestic discourse, creating a heteroglossic utterance whose meaning depends on the prior contexts the word has inhabited.

The analysis demonstrates that political neologism is not merely a matter of lexical invention but of dialogic positioning within an utterance chain. Biden's farewell positions itself as the third major entry in a genre lineage—after Washington and Eisenhower—that defines the presidential farewell as prophetic warning. Whether this positioning succeeds—whether Biden's speech enters the cultural memory as Washington's and Eisenhower's have—depends on the same historical contingencies that shaped its predecessors' receptions. Eisenhower's warning was largely ignored at the time and gained resonance only through the Vietnam War. Biden's warning, addressed to the age of artificial intelligence and technology monopolies, awaits its own moment of validation or obsolescence. As Bakhtin (1986) insisted, every utterance is a link in a chain that extends both backward and forward: Biden's farewell speaks not only to Eisenhower's past but to a future it cannot yet know.

Declaration of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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