The Rhetoric of Political Address:

An historical-critical analysis of some of the United States' most important orations

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Aristotle, in his preeminent work *Rhetoric*, devised a preceptive tradition of rhetorical theory which has indisputably been the most influential analysis of the craft ever formulated. In it, he offered four distinct tenets of rhetorical oration: *inventio*, *elocutio*, *dispositio*, and the combined *pronuntiatio* and *actio*. *Inventio*, the process of inventing or writing a speech, is explained as being of paramount importance to the appropriate use of rhetoric. In addition, three types of rhetorical speeches were described as being the epideictic address of praise or blame, the forensic speech in courts of law, and, most useful in the Greco-Roman period, the deliberative oration in the political forum. The utility of invention in the realm of political speaking remains prevalent even in the modern era of American speech writing, as is evidenced by the variety of critical assessments of some of the most important addresses in the nation's history. The proper or improper use of rhetoric in such speeches can essentially determine their effectiveness. Three such pivotal speeches which exhibited unique persuasive agendas are President Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and, considered as a whole, President Richard M. Nixon's dual "Watergate Speeches."

President Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address"

President Abraham Lincoln's funeral oration at the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery on November 19, 1863 is arguably one of the finest examples of rhetoric perfection in the American political tradition. Wrapped in the political directives of the Northern philosophy of the U.S. Civil War, Lincoln succeeded in delivering an epideictic address for those who had fallen in battle while emphasizing the eternal importance of their contribution to the concept of democracy. Perhaps no other speech in the English language has been so revered and interpreted. Upon examination of such criticisms, it becomes evident the extent to which Lincoln's masterful use of rhetorical invention led to the timelessness of this oration.

When preparing a rhetorical address, a primary concern of the speaker is the audience to whom he will be speaking. If one delivers a speech which does not relate to the personal experiences, opinions, and perspectives of the audience, one's message will often be misconstrued and evaluated improperly. The question then becomes, "to whom was Lincoln intending to speak when formulating the Gettysburg Address?" Criticisms tend to answer this inquiry in two ways: the people of the United States and the people of Britain.

(ten times), *here* (eight times), *to* (seven times), *a* (seven times), and *and* (six times). Lincoln's experience as a politician and as an attorney undoubtedly taught him the value of such simplicity and repetition. He also utilized anaphora, the poetic devise of repeating the same word at the beginning of successive clauses, in the lines "we can not dedicate - we can not consecrate - we can not hallow this ground," and those beginning "It is for us" and "It is rather for us" (Stevenson, 1990). Continuing with the poetic theme, Lincoln uses extensive parallelism of word and thought to create a poetic rhythm to the entire Address in such conjunctions as "Four score *and* seven years," "so conceived *and* so dedicated," "fitting *and* proper," "living *and* dead," "to add *or* detract," and "will little note *nor* long remember." This sense of rhythm is combined with rhyming sounds in the terms *score* and *seven*, *four*, *fathers*, and *forth*, and *continent*, *conceived*, and *created* (Stevenson, 1990).

There are a variety of planes upon which the Gettysburg Address has been discussed. On a paragraph by paragraph basis, one may get a sense as to how the mood and perspective of the address is masterfully manipulated to relate universal themes. Regarding the specific audiences of the speech, each paragraph has a unique focus. The first is a call to the ages, by which Lincoln refers to the birth of a nation and a process of democracy begun. The principles therein are universal and simple, as compared to another great introduction of the same characteristics, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Black, 1994). The second paragraph recounts the history of the Civil War up to that point, with corresponding reference to the purposes of the nation's genesis. The nation was founded on particular ideals, the Civil War was intended to uphold these ideals on the battlefield, and now those in attendance were called upon to recognize those who died for those ideals through the dedication of the battlefield. The third paragraph shifts the focus from a justification for the dedication to an explanation of the moral obligation that the living have to those who died. The word "But" at the opening of this paragraph allows the necessary shift of focus from the war to the audience itself. In addition, the word "here" is used often in this paragraph, having the effect of "tolling like a bell" as well as providing a conceptual contrast for the true concern of the address, *there* (the future) (Black, 1994). Edwin Black (1994) also asserts that "here" might be intended as a pun on the word "hear," by which Lincoln implores the audience to listen and heed what he is saying. It is noteworthy that Lincoln never separates himself from his audience through the use first-person singular "I" references. He never asks the

First, let us consider the proposition that the populous of Great Britain was the focus. Less than a century before the U.S. Civil War, our nation struggled out from beneath the oppressive rule of the British aristocracy via the American Revolution to forge an independent nation free from such international influence. Now, with the Southern states in rebellion, the United States was faced with the proposition of being forever divided into a democratic sovereignty in the North and an aristocratic sovereignty in the South. Britain, too, was divided, in that opinions on the war ranged from vindicative anticipation of the undermining of our ideological assertions to zealous concern for the success of our nation considering that it might have been the world's last hope for democratic principles. In addition, most of the British, with slavery having already been abolished in their country, saw the "peculiar institution" as an abhorrent disregard for the rights of humanity and feared the development of a nation based on such a principle. Therefore, some scholars insist that it was the opinions of the British that Lincoln had intended to sway.

Westwood (1982) asserts that the basis for Lincoln's concern dealt primarily with Rebel attempts to utilize Great Britain as a means of acquiring a substantial fighting navy. The North had been using its own fleet of wooden ships in an attempt to prevent the Southern states from receiving various armaments and other supplied from foreign destinations. Despite the fact that there were numerous high quality ports along the Southern shores which could receive such supplies, the Northern blockade was significantly effectuaive in thwarting the Rebels' attempts to receive aid. Complications arose, though, when Lincoln and his constituents received word from operatives in London that British contractors had begun the construction of fighting vessels for Confederate use. In fact, two ships, named *Florida* and *Alabama*, had already been built and delivered. Considerable concern rested in two new iron-clad ships which were being assembled and equipped with large iron battering rams. These rams, posed a serious threat to the Union fleet, in that they could easily sink and remove the wooden ships of the Union blockade. As late as September 1863, the British government had acknowledged the construction of the vessels but insisted that they were intended to be used by some party other than the Confederacy. Then, on November 3, the very day many historians argue that Lincoln was invited to speak at Gettysburg, an ally of John Bright, the leader of the advocates of popular democracy in Britain, met with the President and implored him to recognize the fact that he and Bright represented the hope for democratic principles across the entire globe. Therefore, Westwood (1982) argues, the urgency

and necessity of emphasizing the importance of democracy was brought to the forefront of Lincoln's consciousness. By reinforcing democratic ideals, Lincoln could consequently solicit the support of the British masses and cause the government to stifle any private attempts to aid the rebellion. In fact, in the subsequent months, the British government did opt to purchase the rams for their own navy, thus dismissing the Confederate plans.

Most scholars acknowledge, though, that the audience for the Gettysburg Address was indeed those at the cemetery and, on a larger scale, the entire nation. Around 15,000 people came to the cemetery that day; many to see the dedication's principal attraction, Edward Everett, whom was considered to be the nation's finest orator (Braden, 1985). It is often alleged, in fact, that Lincoln himself was invited only as an "afterthought" to give "a few appropriate remarks" at the ceremony (Bloom, 1981). Nonetheless, those in attendance were fortunate enough to witness a speech which spoke to the inherent democratic philosophies of every American in that time and for generations to come. In order to determine what rhetorical attributes led to this oration becoming so memorable and influential, we now turn our attention to the critical and systematic analyses of the Address.

Five written drafts of the Gettysburg Address are said to have been composed. In order of their genesis, these five are known as the John Hay version, the John Nicolay version, the Edward Everett copy, the George Bancroft copy, and the Alexander Bliss copy (Stevenson, 1990). For the purposes of most analyses, including this one, reference is made to the final Alexander Bliss copy (see Appendix A). The speech consists of three paragraphs, ten sentences, and 271 words. Some critics, such as Edwin Black (1994), provide a complete structural analysis of the Address, complete with mathematical computation of syllabic effect, mood pivots, and occasional transcription into blank verse form. These efforts are not our concern here, though, as the semantic implications of Lincoln's message are the key to its effectiveness.

One important factor of Lincoln's funeral oration is the simplicity of its words. Lincoln spoke that day to an audience of simple rural people. Lincoln himself had been reared in such an environment and he therefore was quite aware of the type of messages they would appreciate and follow most closely. Such messages had to be easily comprehended, thus, simple. An extensive portion of the text, 251 words to be exact, consists of only one or two syllables. Also, some of the plain and ordinary words which reappear often include *that* (thirteen times), *the* (eleven times), *we*

public to support *him* in the war effort, which would essentially be a call for subordination. Instead, he puts himself on the same level as his audience, imparting upon them the directives that "we" and "us" must undertake to preserve democracy (Bloom, 1981).

Black (1994) points out that Lincoln effectively uses temporal, visceral, and respirational considerations as well in the Address. On a temporal level, the oration begins in the past, moves to the present, and concludes with the focus on the future. The term "Now" beginning the second paragraph effectively departs musing over the fathers of the nation to speak about matters of his own generation (Stevenson, 1990). The indefinite future comes into play in with the final paragraphs reference to "the task remaining before us" (Stevenson, 1990). Visceral impacts proceed from contraction and tension, to tightening and strain, followed by release and exhilaration (Black , 1994). Contraction begins with Lincoln's reverential portrayal of the nation's founders and the historical propositions upon which this nation was conceived. Tightening and strain result from Lincoln's insistence that it is impossible for those at the ceremony to adequately consecrate the ground to any degree greater than those who fought and gave their lives at Gettysburg had already done. But then the strain and tension are released when it is revealed that reverence to the dead can be accomplished through self-dedication to the principles of democracy and not allowing them to have died in vain (Black, 1994). The building strain is compounded by a series of contrasts between the living and dead which portray the living as inferior to the deeds of those who died (e.g. we can not consecrate - they have consecrated; we have unfinished work - they have nobly advanced work; we take devotion - they gave devotion) with release finally given by the enunciation of the means by which the audience can achieve a "moral equilibrium" (Black, 1994).

Black (1994) points out two cycles which are developed in the brief Address. The first cycle, obviously enough, is that of birth and death. The nation is described being conceived in the first section and by the end of the oration there is a call for the nation's rebirth. The idea of birth and living is also inherent in the linking of the social tasks of the dead soldiers and the audience. The soldiers lived and died for the continuance of the democratic country and now it is the task of the audience to allow their the soldiers' ultimate goals to go on living. The second cycle, more subtly imbued, is that of decay and regeneration. The argument is made that Lincoln, raised in the rural farmlands, cleverly incorporated the subconscious theme of soldiers giving their lives as "fertile organic matter" in order to provide the soil and nutrients for the growing nation. This is

undeniably an interesting and powerful use of imagery.

Lincoln's use of negative tones in the Address is somewhat surprising given the ceremonial situation and the overall inspirational mood of the piece. Such negativity manifest itself in the comments "we can *not* dedicate this cemetery," "the dead shall *not* have died in vain," and "that people's government shall *not* perish." He utilizes this terminology masterfully, though, to allow a transcendence of the common boundaries of a funeral oration. By explaining how the living are unable to dedicate Gettysburg, he puts the soldiers who died on a level of such magnitude that mere words can not surpass their deeds. Insisting that the dead not have died in vain asks that the audience move beyond words in order to ensure their deaths will be ultimately justified. In addition, such negativity reflects Lincoln's own conservatism, whereby he insists that the intentions of the nation's founders were correct and part of some grand design which must be allowed to take its course (Black, 1994). Thus, the political agenda of the United States is affirmed, ironically, through negativity.

Such irony may be found throughout the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln professes that his word are inarticulate but his very concession is of the highest eloquence. He dismisses his words into obscurity only to have them gain celebrity. The dead are commemorated by an obligation being placed upon the living. He conquers the funeral oration genre by attempting to retreat from it. He provides the ultimate dedication by claiming to protract it (Black, 1994). Such ironies create a subtle poeticism that the impact of Lincoln's words are realized on both the conscious and subconscious planes.

Many critics assert that Lincoln's words have an inherently Biblical tone to them which adds a spirituality to the theme of the address. The first statement of "Four score and seven years" mimics the Old Testament line "the days of our years are three score and ten" (Stevenson, 1994). This is in contrast to the terms he had used in previous speeches to refer to the nation's founding, "eighty odd years since" (Bloom, 1981). Spiritual energy is found in the terms *conceived, created, resting place, consecrate, hallow, living and dead, nobly, honored dead, devotion, new birth, shall not perish, under God,* and *in vain*. These words are repeated often, giving the oration somewhat of a sermon-like quality to it (Stevenson, 1994). In the phrase "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom," the direct reference to God was apparently inserted as Lincoln arose to speak, being that it was not included in any of his earlier drafts (Bloom, 1981). With these

simple words, Lincoln was able to reinforce the premise that our nation was founded and ismaintained by some transcendent power; thus, to die for it implies death for a spiritual end (Bloom, 1981). Spirituality is also necessarily part of the theme of birth and rebirth. It is important to note, though, that Lincoln never over steps his bounds as President by presuming to offer any degree of spiritual immortality to the dead soldiers. He speaks only of the contributions and memories of the dead, but does not address their souls (Black, 1994).

The uniqueness of the Gettysburg address lies in the fact that it resembles the structure of no other funeral oration, yet accomplishes its task with unequivocal success (Black, 1994). Stevenson (1994) draws extensive comparisons between the oration and that of Pericles in 431 B.C. over the Athenian soldiers then killed in the Peloponnesian War, but even that critic admits the superior clarity and lasting imagery of the Gettysburg Address. But what of the audience at the scene itself? How did they receive the now famous words of President Lincoln? Apparently the answer to that question rests in whom one believes. Some accounts reported a sustained ovation following the speech while others relate sporadic and hesitant applause predicated by surprise over its brevity (Braden, 1985). The truth is that accounts tended to differ based on the political conservatism or liberalism of the source (Holtzer, 1988). Conservative newspapers reported evaluations such as "the [Address] will live among the annals of war," "his little speech is a perfect gem," and "[it is] the most elaborate, splendid oration." Conversely, liberal newspapers made comments like "we pass over the silly remarks of the President," "the imposing ceremony [was] rendered ludicrous by President Lincoln," and "Lincoln acted the clown" (Holtzer, 1988). Whatever the criticisms at the time, the eloquence, the flow, and the sheer genius of Lincoln's invention of the Gettysburg Address is the reason why it is still critiqued as one of the most compelling orations on the directives of the Civil War, the nation, and the very premise of democracy that this country, and perhaps the world, has ever known.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" Speech

In more recent history, another rhetorical address proved to be a pivotal oration in the American political tradition: Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. King had as his purpose the discontinuance of the reality of oppression in the United States and an adherence to the self-professed principles of our nation's concept of democracy. That being, of course, the ideal

that, under God and the law, all men are created equal and should be treated as such. Rhetorically, the speech was both political and inspirational, relying heavily on patriotic and Biblical tropes and schemes.

The audiences for King's compelling speech were those in attendance at the March on Washington, the United States Congress, and the American public at large. The address was delivered on August 28, 1963 at the Washington Mall before over 100,000 people. The director of the march, A. Philip Randolph, founder and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, termed the march "the largest demonstration in the history of the nation." King, too, some allege, was astonished by the enormity of the crowd, as evidenced by the jerky nature with which he delivered the first half of his speech, only beginning to feel comfortable closer to its peroration (Mills, 1988). The march was held in an effort to encourage Congress to pass the civil rights legislation before it while avoiding violent demonstrations which would be potentially detrimental to the cause (Alvarez, 1988). Analyses of the speech tend to agree that King was able to accomplish his goals and epitomize the Black civil rights effort through vivid Biblical and national imagery delivered in a distinctly Black pulpit sermon style.

Mills (1988) points out that the structure of the speech initially mimicked that of the Gettysburg Address (see Appendix B). Ironically, he argues that King's speech tried too hard to follow the development of Lincoln's oration and, in the process, it lost some of the air of spontaneity which characterized the Black sermon. Whereas Lincoln's address heightened both moral passion and historical consciousness, the early part of King's oration, according to Mills, only succeeded in the latter effort. The similarities between the first lines of the two are obvious, as King makes reference to the very individual whom he imitates and before whose memorial he speaks: "Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation." The similarities continue with King's allusions to the Founding Fathers and the principles upon which they signed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He differs from Lincoln, though, when he makes the metaphor of the promises in these revered documents being like a check that, as far as African-Americans are concerned, the federal government has defaulted on, claiming "insufficient funds." Like Lincoln, King then turns his emphasis to the present with his assertions that "Now is the time" for the Black man to arise and cash this check of freedom, making real the principles of democracy and equality for all of the

nation's citizens. With the repetition of the "I have a dream" theme, the movement of the speech shifts to a future in which all peoples, regardless of race or ethnicity, will be accepted and treated as equals, hence collectively working for the good of the United States.

The Black folk pulpit, Miller (1982) contends, is characterized by properties of voice merging and self making, as well as epistemological themes of Southern slave religion that had been developed centuries earlier. These tropes, he contends, utilize identification with Biblical characters and acts of God to produce a relationship by which the audience is associated with them. Such spiritual sermons pointed to both salvation in heaven and to freedom on earth through concepts including God's "deliverance" of individuals related throughout the Bible. Voice merging is the feature exhibited at the conclusion of this genre of sermons whereby the preacher associates his message of self with the identity of the audience. For example, the "I" King refers to in the phrase "I have a dream" signifies not only King himself, but all the members of the African-American race who live under the oppression of American society (Miller, 1982). His voice is merged with theirs and a greater self is created. Miller discusses three major areas of the speech in which voice merging is evident and which also reveal strong ties to Biblical and patriotic imagery. The first involves Amos in the lines:

> "We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.
> We cannot be satisfied as long as out bodies... cannot find lodging in the motels of the highways and hotels of the cities...
> We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote...
> No... we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a might stream.

In the last phrase of this set, King refers verbatim to Amos' cry in the Old Testament of "Let justice toll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream!" Through the term "we," King merges his voice with those of the millions of oppressed African-American and subsequently identifies them with a Biblical call for justice (Miller, 1982).

The second instance of voice merging and Biblical identification comes in reference to Isaiah:

> I have a dream that my four little children will one day.. not be judges by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

> I have a dream today!
> I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted and every hill shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Again, the reference to self through the term "I" is in fact attributed to all the Black people and their collective dream of freedom. The final phrase in this passage is also a direct quote of the words of Isaiah, hence associating God's glorious deeds with the Black struggle for democracy (Miller, 1982).

Regarding national symbolism, a third passage in which voice merging and self making take place involves the song "My Country, Tis of Thee:"

> This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:
> My country, tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing.
> Land where my father's died,
> Land of the pilgrim's pride,
> From every mountain side
> Let freedom ring!
> So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.
> Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.
> Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania...
> Let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia.
> Let freedom ring from the Lookout mountain of Tennessee.
> Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.
> From every mountain side, let freedom ring.

Obviously, this passage uses quotations from one of the nation's favorite songs for the purpose of merging King's voice and the audience's voice with that of the patriotic singer-narrator. With this stylistic device from the Black folk pulpit, he is able to put the African-American demands into the simplest of terms for any American who calls himself a patriot (Miller, 1982).

Additionally, King uses two other trademark aspects of the Black folk pulpit sermons in his oration. The first is the "calm-to-storm" manner by which his theme is developed

(Miller, 1982). He begins with a logical discourse on the foundations of the United States and the realities of injustices inflicted upon African-Americans, only to increase the emotional appeals until the speech is swelling with fervent energy. It is evident in recordings of the speech that the audience responds in accordance with this culmination of feeling. This perhaps gives an indication as to why scholars, such as the one mentioned above, would interpret the audience's early relative lack of applause as resulting from King's own apprehensive stiff or jerky mannerisms. They may have just been reacting as King had anticipated.

Critics of rhetoric relish the fact that King's magnanimous speech is available in both transcript and audio format. It is from these recordings that the analyst is able to consider the impact of the speech in terms of the immediate audience and its jubilant utterances. This where the second additional major aspect of the Black folk pulpit is evident in King's speech: speaker-audience call-and-response (Alvarez, 1988; Keith & Whittenberger-Keith, 1988; Miller, 1982).

Keith and Whittenberger-Keith (1988) offer the most comprehensive analysis of the effect and use of this oratorical device with regards to King's "I Have a Dream" speech. They describe the speaker and audience exchange of words, typical in the style of the Black sermon, as "communication activity." This is discernible from actual communication, being that in communication activity, each statement is not determined by what the audience has said. The speaker has a prepared text and at particular point they are invited to join in with various comments. Two means of eliciting or "calling" for a response from the audience include the use of antithesis, or a phrase where the second part is contrasted with the first, and utilization of a tricolon, or three part list. Therefore, the critics contend, although such responses seem spontaneous and unplanned, they are actually coordinated by the speaker himself. There are numerous instances of King's use of these two devices. For example, in the second passage quoted above in reference to Isaiah, the audience responds in accordance to their assumption that King is using a tricolon. Considering the final phrase to be consisting of five independent messages, the audience begins to respond after the third message (ending with "plain") and enthusiastically replies following the fourth (ending with "straight"). The argument is made that perhaps the brief pause which King inserts after the first message (ending with "exalted") misleads some of the audience to count three down from there, thus explaining why increased participation does not occur until after the fourth message. Examples of where the audience is called to respond

& Linkugel, 1975).

A semantic comparison of Watergate Speeches I and II, performed by Gibson and Felkins (1974), offers interesting insight into the messages Nixon was trying to convey. In Watergate I, the word *my* is used in reference to the situation a total of thirteen times. But in Watergate II Nixon attempts to distance himself from the situation by not once saying *my*, and instead using denials through the term *not* and hiding behind his office with the words *President* and *security*. None of the latter three words appeared at all in Watergate I. *They* makes its debut in Watergate II as well, as Nixon tries to distance himself from the charges. The researchers also analyzed the text on the basis of seven categories into which the terminology fell: difficulty, sensitivity, knowledge, legality, virtue, affiliation, and power. By comparing the speeches in these terms, some intriguing trends are revealed. Legal semantics are by far the most prevalent, but there is a sharp decline in the use of such words in Watergate II. In fact, they are almost halved. It is evident that Nixon sought to reduce emphasis on the legality of his position in terms of the scandal. Power words increase significantly in Watergate II, which is consistent with the assertion that Nixon was trying to bolster himself through virtue of his authority. Knowledge terminology augments a bit in Watergate II as Nixon can no longer insist that he knows absolutely nothing when it is obvious that he does. Nonetheless, he does maintain a low level of power semantics. Through such analysis, it is easy to see how particular semantics can be manipulated for the purposes of creating impressions advantageous to the situation of the speaker; in this case, the apologia of President Nixon.

Another semantic device of evident in the speeches relates to an association with the popular meaning of tragedy. King (1985) addresses the rhetoric of the speeches and their implications of a passive role of the President with regard to a fictitious portrayal of the events in question. King defines tragedy as a "tale" involving a great fall of a hero, where Fate exists as an overwhelming force to which the hero must succumb. In his addresses, Nixon puts the Watergate affair into the language of fiction through words such as "episode," "affair," "incident," "story," and "tragedy." He even further removes himself from the event by referring to himself in the third person on occasion: "It will be totally, abundantly clear that as far as *the President's role* with regard to Watergate is concerned, the *entire story* is there." A sense of finality is created by such fictitious terms. Fundamentally, as a tragic hero, Nixon also implies that the nation should accept the idea that he is in the unyielding hands of fate, and has no control over the circumstances which

president, via structural authority, should be able to shape events in a "crusade for political morality." By allowing himself to be shaped instead by the brewing storm, Nixon exhibited forced reactionism, thus undermining his own power.

Nixon's next nationally televised address took place on August 15, 1973. In the intervening months, Nixon had released only a newspaper statement which again insisted he had no knowledge of the events surrounding Watergate, while also differentiating national security operations from such illegal covert activities. This statement, naturally, only reached that portion of the public interested in political happenings enough to read it (a small fragment of the populous, no doubt). As a result, by the time of the August 15 address, public opinion polls indicated the President's approval rating had dropped phenomenally. Especially considering his refusal to release the White House tapes. First, Nixon began with his now customary denial of any wrongdoing. "I had no prior knowledge of the break-in; I neither authorized nor encouraged subordinates to engage in illegal or improper campaign tactics," he stated. A section of differentiation followed, in which Nixon attributed his failure to detect and confront the supposed cover-up to deception of aides he had thought were trustworthy ("I believed the reports I was getting... I was convinced there was no cover-up, because I was convinced that no one had anything to cover up"). Thus, absolution was the rhetorical posture assumed.

Justification comes into play as Nixon's next strategy in the speech. First, he attempts to bolster the position of the Presidency and the image that comes with along with it. The White House tapes, he explained, although not containing information that would incriminate him, could not be released due to concerns that information on them might breach national security. "The principle of confidentiality of Presidential conversations is at stake in the question of these tapes," he argues. Later, he states "It is essential that we do not overreact to particular mistakes by tying the President's hands in a way that would risk our security, and with it all our liberties." Bolstering also occurs with his insistence that he would "do all that I can to insure that one of the results of Watergate is a new level of political decency and integrity in America." Finally, transcendence is employed when Nixon asks the public to forget about Watergate so that the country can focus on more pressing domestic and foreign affairs issues. Hence, he presents himself as the appointed "guardian" of national concerns which necessitates that he look beyond the concern for the Watergate affair. "These are matters that cannot wait. They cry out for action now" (Harrel, Ware,

surround him.

Although these speeches did minutely increase the President's approval rating, such successes were short-lived; particularly with Nixon's firing of special investigator Archibald Cox over his refusal to compromise on wanting the White House tapes (Alexander & Childress, 1982). Assessments of Nixon's character, trustworthiness, honesty, credibility, and even interpersonal attractiveness dropped noticeably from Watergate I to after Watergate II (Baudhuin, 1974). Nixon's attempts at apologia were simply not effective in reestablishing his damaged ideological and personal integrity until his claim to structural authority was under fire as well. Nixon allowed himself to be shaped by current of the Watergate scandal -- a mistake which his arguably unpersuasive rhetorical addresses could not alleviate. Today, Nixon stands as an example of how political oration, if used inadequately, can lead to the further distrust and apprehension of the public.

The orations for which rhetorical criticism had been reviewed above point to many valid assertions regarding the nature of political speech-writing. Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" uses vivid imagery and an intricate yet seemingly simple design to create a lasting impression of the goals of the U.S. Civil War and the purposes for which the nation was founded. His eloquence and poetic devices take the audience on a thematic ride which is truly inspirational. Perhaps never before has a funeral oration motivated the living in such a manner. Appropriate use of rhythm, anaphora, cycles, and seemingly innumerable other devices makes the Address stand as one of the finest of the modern era.

Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech similarly accomplishes its task while adhering closely to the tradition of the Black folk pulpit. By understanding his audience to such a great degree, King is able to utilize voice merging, self making, call-and-response, and a variety of poetic devices (particularly anaphora) to make his speech a powerful hallmark of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement. Resembling Lincoln's Address in many ways, King is also able to create a rhythm and inventive series of images to make his message undeniably strong. Biblical and patriotic references also cause his audience to see a deeper truth in his messages.

Nixon's Watergate Speeches I and II, on the other hand, fall short in such comparisons. Whereas Lincoln and King gave their famous orations in a public setting, Nixon's image was only

thus shaking his most unappreciated moniker. Naturally, when questions of his integrity and honesty were brought up with the Watergate resignations and indictments, his personal legitimacy once again dropped substantially (Harrel, Ware, & Linkugel, 1975).

Our primary concern is directed at how Watergate speeches I and II were formed in response to Nixon's depreciating bases of legitimacy and which formats of apologia he employed. Harrel, Ware, and Linkugel (1975) offer the greatest insight into these questions. After a series of blows to the Presidency, such as the resignation of two of his close aides, John D. Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman, and continued inquiry into the Watergate affair, Nixon felt it necessary to address the nation in a televised speech on April 30, 1973. In previous speeches, Nixon had expressly denied any role in the alleged conspiracy as well as any wrongdoing of his aides. He had also refused to allow his staff members to testify before inquiry panels, bolstering his actions with the "executive privilege" conferred upon him through the structural legitimacy of the office. By April 30, his personal legitimacy was in question, though, as Nixon had insisted on tying himself to the integrity of his aides in an effort to absolve them. This address exhibits both the use of bolstering and differentiation, thus taking an explanative posture. First, he attempts to bolster his position through structural and ideological appeals. Frequent reference is made to "the great office I hold" and "the integrity of the White House." This is obviously an endeavor to remind the national audience of the authority which the President inherently holds. An explicit example of this aim is the line, "This office is a sacred trust and I am determined to be worthy of that trust." Ideological appeal comes in the statement, "I love America. I believe that America is the hope of the world." Differentiation is necessitated by the apparent inconsistency of Nixon's previously insisting that he knew nothing of the Watergate affair followed by his insistence that his two aides were not involved. If he knew nothing then how would he be able to absolve them? Nixon thus insists that if his aides did do anything wrong that he was not aware of it; hence, differentiating between what he knew and what he should have known. An example of this appeal is Nixon's assertion that he had previously asked "those conducting the investigation whether there was any reason to believe that members of my Administration were in any way involved [and] I received repeated assurances that they were not." With regards to the entire use of apologia in this speech, Harrel, Ware, and Linkugel (1975) consequently contend that the President's deterioration of legitimacy and perceived integrity results from his inability to appear presidential in the time of crisis. That is, a

by the use of antithesis include the statements, "...finds himself an *exile* in his *own land*," "Yes, *black* men as well as *white* men," "Nineteen sixty three is not an *end*, but a *beginning*," and "Of meeting *physical* force with *soul* force" (Alvarez, 1988). At the conclusion of each of the lines, King is met with an affirmative response such as "yes," "my Lord," "that's right," "yes sir" and so on. The point, though, is that the audience participation gives the speech a life and rhythm which is undeniable on recording.

King, like Lincoln, often employs the poetic device of anaphora. At one point, the phrase "Now is the time" is repeated at the beginning of four consecutive lines. "Let freedom ring" appears at the beginning of nine lines. Also, the most famous phrase of the speech, "I have a dream," is used nine times. Other examples of phrases repeated in the form of anaphora include "one hundred years later (four times)," "we can never be satisfied (four times)," "some of you have come (three times)," "with this faith (three times)," and "we will be able (four times)." With the use of such repetition, the audience is taken down a path of themes along which they are able to recognize particular successive lines and respond accordingly. As lines such as the ones above are repeated for the second, third, and fourth times, the audience begins to respond more and more fervently and express their approval over the lines of thought. By being able to predict and have an understanding of the next line before it is even stated, the audience is given a significant feeling of interaction and familiarity with an oration they have never heard (Alvarez, 1988; Miller, 1982).

Two further devices which give King's speech a moving, poetic quality are the use of extended metaphors and periphrasis. Metaphorical allusions to the same concept give the text a vitality and depth which would not be present through simple, banal references to concepts. Light alone is referred to in the context of "symbolic shadow," "light of hope," "flames of withering injustice," "joyous daybreak," and "night of captivity." Banking is described in terms of "promissory note," "bad check," "Bank of injustice is bankrupt," "vaults of opportunity," "cash a check," and "returns to business." Periphrasis, the substitution of more words for less, is utilized in reference to concepts such as a mountain, slave, village, and brotherhood. It's use in reference to mountains is evident in the passage quoted above regarding "My Country, Tis of Thee." Again, such devices effectuate a flow of King's speech which the audience is compelled to follow and become a part of (Alvarez, 1988).

Through the use of devices as Biblical and patriotic symbolism, voice merging, self

making, call-and-response, a "calm-to-storm" development, anaphora, antithesis, the extended metaphor, periphrasis, and others, King crafts in his "I Have a Dream" speech a powerful message to which the audience must relate. Invoking time-honored aspects of the historical Black folk pulpit, King is able to masterfully manipulate his audience's emotions and deductive processes so that his eloquent course of logic bolsters his rhetorical persuasive aims. The oration was so moving and appreciated, that within weeks of its delivery, recordings the oration were made, sold, bootlegged, and resold in an extremely high volume (Eddings, 1993). Today, King's speech stands as perhaps *the* defining oration of the 60's Civil Rights Movement and, thanks to his supremely talented use of invention coupled with a sermon-like delivery, the speech will undoubtedly remain as an inspiration for racial freedom for centuries to come.

President Richard M. Nixon's "Watergate Speeches I and II"

In contemporary political communication, it has become of increasing interest for rhetoricians to study the nature of *apologia*, a speech of self-defense. In such a speech, a political orator is called upon to utilize a variety of strategic means in an effort to disassociate himself from allegations of personal or professional misconduct. One such set of speeches which exemplifies the breadth over which apologia spans are the two "Watergate" speeches delivered by President Nixon on April 30 and August 15, 1973 (referred to as Watergate I and Watergate II, respectively). These televised addresses to the nation are best considered as a whole, in that they each present different strategies of apologia intended to induce specific reactions in the national audience. In contrast to the two speeches presented above, the Watergate speeches need not be analyzed on such a phrase by phrase basis. The poetics applied in inspirational speeches are typically not present in such contemporary speeches of self-defense, being that there is little room for eloquent imagery where one's personal and political integrity are often on the line.

In order to begin our analysis of Nixon's apologia, we first must address some of the fundamentals of the rhetorical form with regards to the nature of politics. Ware and Linkugel (1973) pioneered the study of apologia when they set out to define the subcategories which characterize such discourses. They concluded that four such categories, or "modes of resolution," exist: denial, bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence. Denial, appropriately enough, refers to denying any participation in, relationship to, or positive sentiment toward whatever facts,

sentiments, objects, or relationships there are that repel the audience. The researchers point out that denial is reformative, in that it does not attempt to change the audiences perceptions of whatever repels them, but rather separates the speaker from them. It is an instrument of negation. Bolstering is described at the attempt not to disassociate from an event, but rather to associate oneself with facts, sentiments, objects, or relationships which are favorable. That is, instead of addressing one's relationship to a perceived problem, one instead reinforces a relationship with something beneficial. This is an instrument of identification and is similarly reformative. Conversely, the tactics of differentiation and transcendence are transformative. They attempt to affect the meaning which the audience associates with the manipulated attribute. Differentiation changes the meanings the audience gives to facts, sentiments, objects, or relationships so that such attributes are considered in a smaller context more favorable to the speaker. Unfavorable actions, for example, may be portrayed as being blown out of proportion and as not accurate justifications for the malcontent the audience may feel. Transcendence puts such attributes into a larger context in which the audience does not currently view them. This has the effect of making the persons alleged attributes seem only to be a small part of a much large issue, under which the allegations seem pithy. In short, a speaker may use reformative strategies and deny a charge, may ignore it altogether by bolstering his character, or he may employ transformative strategies and divert the audience's attention and interpretation of the charge through "transcendental abstraction" or "differential particularization."

In addition to these four categories of apologia, Ware and Linkugel (1973) go on to describe four "rhetorical postures" used by orators of apologia. These are termed absolution, vindication, explanation, and justification. These four postures are combinations of one reformative strategy and one transformative strategy, causing a change in some, but not all, of the constructs an audience holds regarding particular attributes. The absolutive posture consists of both the differentiation and denial factors. In it, the speaker denies doing any wrong while subsequently separating his personal attributes from the subject of the audience's repulsion. Vindication combines the elements of transcendence and denial in order to preserve one's reputation and demonstrate one's superior worth in contrast to his accusers. The explanative posture utilizes bolstering and differentiation to show the audience that, through a better understanding of the situation as a whole, they will not judge the speaker's actions adversely. Finally, the justificative

address consists of bolstering and transcendence through which the audience can both understand the motives behind the speaker's actions and, as a result, only be able to approve of him.

Before turning to the particulars of the addresses in question, one final conceptual consideration must be expressed: the bases of political authority. It is the necessity of maintaining these bases of authority which may force a politician to resort to a speech of apologia. Harrel, Ware, and Linkugel (1975) offer a comprehensive assessment of these bases and apply them to the Nixon Watergate scenario. The bases which form the foundation for legitimate political authority are described as structural, ideological, and personal. Structural legitimacy tends to be conferred upon the President by virtue of the office. Americans have a general respect and faith in the man in the White House from the simple fact that they have entrusted him with their power and expect him to use it appropriately. Ideological legitimacy comes from the degree to which the public agrees with the President's principles and values. The president must uphold these values in order to maintain this ideological legitimacy with his constituents. Personal legitimacy comes from a public appreciation of the President's personality through such attributes as public integrity, personal morality, and, most importantly, honesty. The importance of honesty is compounded by the fact that a President thought to be dishonest may be thought to have deceived the public regarding his ideology as well. The need for a speech of self-defense comes when one or more of these bases of integrity is affected by the association of the President with some facts, sentiments, objects, or relationships which repel the audience.

The public's perceptions of President Nixon regarding each of these bases varied over time. Even early into his second term, Nixon was able to retain a large degree of his structural legitimacy in the public's perception. He had exhibited powerful decision-making skills and, before suspicion began to rise regarding his potential role in the Watergate affair, the public was willing to reinvest him with the authority of the office. Ideologically, Nixon had been strongly associated with the "law and order" theme ever since the 1968 campaign. This is one base where Nixon's inaction and implicated role in the scandal led to serious deterioration. By refusing to enforce the ideology attributed to him, the public became distrustful and support waned. Personal legitimacy was always a concern of Nixon. Initially, Nixon had been perceived by the public as being rather crafty and shifty, earning him the nickname "Tricky Dick." The effort of the 1972 campaign had been to portray a "New Nixon" who demonstrated personal morality and integrity,

available on the television screen. He could not manipulate the audience's reactions as did Dr. King. Also, the nature of apologia did not allow him to embellish his imagery to the heights of Lincoln or King. His speeches were performed out of a necessity to respond to public suspicion and his seeming lack of knowledge regarding what his audience might have responded positively to led to a severe decline in support.

Perhaps, then, the key to effectively using *inventio* does lie in understanding one's audience. Lincoln and King integrated the concerns of their audiences into the concepts developed in their orations. King, in particular, used aspects of a specific genre of oration, the Black sermon, to bring his audience practically to an emotional peak. Nixon, on the other hand, tried to deceive his audience and did not address their main concern: whether he was guilty or innocenct. Nonetheless, these rhetorical addresses stand as examples of how rhetoric may be effectively or ineffectively used by those involved in politics. Hopefully, future speakers in the public spotlight will find them as useful references for how to properly invent an oration.

Appendix A

"The Gettysburg Address"
by President Abraham Lincoln
Delivered November 19, 1893

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave there lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Excerpted from Black (1994).

Appendix B

"I Have a Dream"
by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Delivered August 28, 1963

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; one hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.

So we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capitol to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check; a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Appendix B (continued)

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content, will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. This offense we share mounted to storm the battlements of injustice must be carried forth by a biracial army. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for whites only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you come here out of excessive trials and tribulation. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi; go back to Alabama; go back to South Carolina; go back to Georgia; go back to Louisiana; go back to the slums and ghettos of the northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can, and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

Appendix B (continued)

So I say to you, my friends, that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed -- we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all the flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all God's children will be able to sing with new meaning -- "my country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountainside, let freedom ring" -- and if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that.

Let freedom ring from the Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from the Lookout mountain of Tennessee.

Appendix B (continued)

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountain side, let freedom ring.

And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children -- black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro Spiritual: "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we are free at last."

Taken from King (1992).

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