


1-1-2012

Lessons from Libya: A Situational Approach to the Generic Criticism of President Obama's March 28, 2011 Address to the Nation on Libya

Amy L. Schumacher
schumacher.amy.l@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://mds.marshall.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schumacher, Amy L., "Lessons from Libya: A Situational Approach to the Generic Criticism of President Obama's March 28, 2011 Address to the Nation on Libya" (2012). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. Paper 425.

LESSONS FROM LIBYA: A SITUATIONAL APPROACH TO THE GENERIC CRITICISM
OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S MARCH 28, 2011 ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON LIBYA

A thesis submitted to
the Graduate College of
Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

Communication Studies

by

Amy L. Schumacher

Approved by
Dr. Stephen Cooper, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Camilla Brammer
Dr. Cynthia Torppa

Marshall University
December 2012

©2012
Amy L. Schumacher
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Generic Rhetorical Criticism	2
Rhetorical Discourse.....	2
Rhetorical Situation.....	6
Generic Criticism	14
Situational Approach to Generic Criticism.....	20
Presidential War Rhetoric.....	29
Presidential Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Presidency.....	29
The Presidential War Rhetoric Genre	31
Methodology	37
Analysis.....	41
Situational Constituents.....	42
Scene	42
Purpose	46
Actor	47
Act.....	49
Agency	50
Dominant Subject Areas.....	
America’s Role in the World.....	50
Clarification of Libya Mission	53
Rhetorical Strategies	
Narrative.....	54
Sugarcoating.....	56
Refutation.....	57
Response to Context	60
Audience	61
War Rhetoric Elements	66
Thoughtful Decision.....	66
Narrative.....	67
Exhortation to Unanimity.....	67
Investiture.....	68
Strategic Misrepresentations.....	69
Discussion	70
Conclusion	73
Bibliography	77
Appendixes.....	84
Text of Obama’s Address to the Nation on Libya	84
Letter from Marshall University Institutional Review Board	91

ABSTRACT

Many scholars have called the utility of the generic method of rhetorical criticism into question. Adopting a situational approach to generic rhetorical criticism increases the value of the method considerably. By analyzing situational constituents (scene, purpose, agent, act, agency, and audience) surrounding a discourse, a critic gains a holistic understanding of that text. When coupled with generic comparisons – whether the critic proceeds inductively or deductively – he or she can then trace the recurrent rhetorical strategies across time and place and, simultaneously, highlight the elements unique to the particular rhetor and discourse. I demonstrate this approach through an analysis of President Barack Obama’s March 28, 2011 Address to the Nation on Libya, in which he explained the U.S. military intervention in the Libyan Revolution that unfolded during the Arab Spring uprisings.

Introduction

On March 19, 2011, the citizens of Benghazi, Libya – many of whom had participated in pro-democracy protests against dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi – were sitting ducks as pro-regime forces closed in around the city ready to inflict what outsiders believed would be a massacre. President Barack Obama ordered the U.S. military to launch airstrikes against Qaddafi's forces in a mission termed Operation Odyssey Dawn in which America was joined by an international coalition. This mission would transition into NATO's Operation Unified Protector (OUP) (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012).

In the preceding two years, Obama had followed through on his promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq and began the process of drawing down the U.S. presence in Afghanistan – facts that construct an interesting backdrop to his commitment of U.S. troops to another conflict in the region especially because it was the only Arab Spring country in which the U.S. overtly intervened. The President's handling of the Libya crisis and the mission itself were met with criticism from the American public and Congressional members alike.

Analyzing the strategies Obama employed in attempt to explain and justify U.S. military engagement in Libya to the American people can unearth important insight and implications particularly when considered in comparison to previous presidents' rhetoric concerning military action. Accordingly, I will conduct a generic rhetorical criticism of President Obama's speech defending U.S. engagement in Libya. I will first review relevant literature about the generic rhetorical criticism approach and present the assumptions that will underpin my analysis. In this

section, I will propose and defend a situational approach to generic rhetorical criticism based on a modified version of Lloyd Bitzer's conception of the rhetorical situation. Second, I will examine the Presidential War Rhetoric genre and the characteristics that define it as theorized by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Finally, I will analyze the Obama-Libya case in particular through a situational generic criticism and then discuss the case's fitness within the Presidential War Rhetoric genre and relevant theoretical and practical implications.

Literature Review

Generic Rhetorical Criticism

Edwin Black, author of one of the seminal works on generic rhetorical criticism, argued that presuppositions underpin every approach to rhetorical criticism, "and these assumptions ought to be disclosed as candidly as possible" (Black, 1965). Being aware of one's biases enables the critic to overcome them if necessary or embrace them if not, and it enhances the reader's ability to understand and replicate the analysis. The result is a more scientific method. Therefore, in this section, I will examine other scholar's perspectives and present my own by defining terms and explicitly identifying and subsequently explaining the assumptions that will serve as the foundation of my analysis.

Rhetorical Discourse

Although the terms discourse and situation are ubiquitous within scholarly rhetorical criticisms and theoretical arguments, their meanings are far from

standardized. Accordingly, I will detail my understanding of these concepts and present alternative viewpoints as necessary.

First, when I refer to *discourse*, I mean it in the linguistic sense of using words to convey meaning whether written or oral. It is worth noting that I am focusing my attention on rhetorical discourse because that is the category under which the artifact I chose for analysis falls. This concentration is in no way intended to imply a belief that discourse is the only kind of act that can be considered rhetoric or that it is the only type of rhetoric apposite for generic study. However, although there will be overlap in the elements that constitute rhetorical discourse and visual rhetoric or behavioral rhetoric (i.e. propaganda of the deed), discussion of the peculiarities of these non-discursive forms is beyond the scope of this paper.

Although, for the most part, Foucault viewed discourse differently from rhetoricians, Clayton Whisnant's summary of the Foucauldian understanding of how it operates is an enlightening reminder that there is much meaning behind discourse even as simplistically as I defined it. The four basic operations include creating a world, generating knowledge and "truth," granting insight into the speaker, and betraying societal power systems (Whisnant, 2012).

What, then, is meant by discourse that is rhetorical? Black defined rhetorical discourse as "that which is intended to influence" (Black, 1965). I appreciate the simplicity of this definition and the wide net it casts. However, the emphasis on rhetor intent excludes two important sets of rhetorical discourses: those that definitively influence despite either a rhetor's lack of intent to persuade or with so large a discrepancy between the intended and actual influence that the rhetor's

original intent becomes irrelevant. An example of the former type would be when First Lady Michelle Obama appeared on “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno” on November 16, 2008 and, in response to a question about her wardrobe, noted that her outfit was from J. Crew. She was simply stating a fact to answer Leno’s query, but she inadvertently persuaded a significant number of viewers to also shop at the clothing outfitter (Clifford, 2008).

The latter case of results directly contrary to the rhetor’s intent occurs with much greater frequency though. For instance, while speaking at a private fundraiser in Boca Raton, Florida on May 17, 2012, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney commented, “There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what...who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims...These are people who pay no income tax...and so my job is not to worry about those people. I’ll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives” (Christoffersen, 2012). Romney believed his audience was solely comprised of the fundraiser attendees, and he used this line in his appeal for their votes because he presumed they would agree with the statement.

Unfortunately for Romney, his speech was recorded and that line became the infamous 47 percent gaffe, which was characterized as evidence of Romney’s elitist aloofness and not only impacted his poll numbers that immediately followed, but may have also contributed to his eventual loss in the election (Christoffersen, 2012). In other words, the statement had the exact opposite impact that Romney intended. This case, then, is a clear instance in which a discourse warrants critical attention

because of its outcome and the concomitant need to unearth how that impact irrupted despite the rhetor's alternative – often, but not always, more innocuous – intent.

It is also possible that discourse which is not persuasive *per se* can serve as supporting material in a rhetorical discourse, at which point it could be analyzed as a rhetorical tool, but would still not be considered rhetorical discourse itself. For instance, a lab report from a scientific experiment is not intended to influence; it is a mere observation of the facts. However, researchers can use the findings in a grant application or lawmakers can cite the evidence in a policy proposal. In those cases, one could analyze why the application was approved or denied or why the policy passed or failed and could look to the strategic choice to cite the study's findings and the potential impact it had, but the study would still be an ancillary, dependent part of the rhetorical act as a whole.

Given these considerations, I define *rhetorical discourse* as that which is intended to influence or has significant influence regardless of the rhetor's intent. Importantly, when the rhetor's intent is to persuade, the discourse produced is rhetorical regardless of suasory success or failure. Discourse that has only the exact effect the rhetor desired is anomalous. Accordingly, the reason I included “significantly” in the second part of the definition is to highlight that, although it is the effect that produces the rationale for analyzing those sorts of rhetorical texts, such prompting should only occur when there is an effect considerable enough to warrant critical analysis. It is an obviously vague parameter, but other critics should be able to determine proper distinction in relation to their specific texts and

authors. In these cases, attention must be paid to how a text came to be rhetorical and/or produce certain consequences despite the rhetor's lack of or alternative intent. Additionally, present and longitudinal effects should be considered whenever possible.

The nature of the influence rhetorical discourse has or endeavors to achieve is an important point of discussion. Rhetorical discourses contain a variety of proofs in order to convince a particular audience to come to a certain understanding of a subjective truth, one that cannot be objectively verified. Walter Fisher put it well when he said, "Rhetorical discourse is advisory; it says how one should think, feel, and act in a given case where certainty cannot be achieved" (Fisher, 1979).

Rhetorical Situation

Next, it is crucial to explain my view of the rhetorical situation and the role it plays both in actual rhetorical transactions and in theoretical and critical analysis. When Lloyd Bitzer published his pivotal article "The Rhetorical Situation" in 1968, he asserted that "no major theorist has treated rhetorical situation thoroughly as a distinct subject in rhetorical theory" (Bitzer, 1968). If his aim was to reverse that paucity, he has had overwhelming success: over the subsequent decades, countless scholars have granted thorough consideration to the subject. Although Bitzer's article has received a fair amount of praise, it has also generated a substantial amount of criticism and modification. Because of the critical impact his conception of the rhetorical situation had in the my formulation of the model I propose, it is

important to understand the criticisms his views received in order to both clarify and defend my own.

The debate has been so expansive that it would be impossible to adequately attend to its many players and arguments. Instead, for the Bitzer's view, I will primarily rely upon the original text, and, to address the criticisms, I will controvert the arguments leveraged by Richard E. Vatz, who published "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation" in the same journal in which Bitzer's article premiered five years earlier. I chose Vatz to represent the opposition for two main reasons: the issues he raised are typical of the concerns held by others in his camp and Bitzer and Vatz engaged in a public extension of their debate in the pages of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, which elucidates their differences of opinion and enables buttressing of each side in a way unique from most of Bitzer's other polemics. I endeavor to present my conception of the rhetorical situation as a clarified, slightly amended version of Bitzer's perspective.

Bitzer contended that discourse is rhetorical only when it is invited by a rhetorical situation in effort to alter an exigence and is then delivered to a rhetorical audience that has the capacity to modify that exigence. Accordingly, he defined rhetorical situation as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (Bitzer, 1968). He further posited that rhetorical situations are composed of five constituents: exigence, audience, constraints, orator, and discourse. The latter two

become constituents only after the rhetor accepts the situation's invitation to create discourse. Each of these five elements of the rhetorical situation will be examined in greater detail in the later section on generic criticism.

Finally, Bitzer explained five characteristics of the rhetorical situation: “[1] Rhetorical discourse is called into existence by situation; the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse...[2 Rhetorical situation] invites a *fitting* response...[3] Situation must somehow prescribe the response which fits...A situation which is strong and clear dictates the purpose, theme, matter, and style of the response...[4] The exigence and the complex of persons, objects, events and relations which generate rhetorical discourse are located in reality, are objective and publicly observable historic facts in the world we experience...[5] Rhetorical situations exhibit structures which are simple or complex, and more or less organized” (Bitzer, 1968).

Vatz's chief criticism of Bitzer and his conception of the rhetorical situation was that, as a realist (objectivist), Bitzer asserted that meaning inheres in objects and events *per se*. Alternatively, Vatz's idealist (subjectivist) orientation contends that meaning is constructed, attributed and, therefore, cannot be objectively observed as Bitzer proposed in his fourth characteristic of the rhetorical situation. The discrepancies between the two scholars' viewpoints can be best understood through an illustrative example.

Every problem has a most effective solution, but the way the involved parties understand the problem dictates the way they will respond to, that is, the solution they will choose. For instance, Anne is consistently late for her job at Macy's, but,

because she is incredibly productive during the whole of her shift, she justifies her tardiness. Therefore, because she does not see it as a problem, she does not seek a solution. Her manager, Tom, on the other hand, values promptness and interprets Anne's habitual lateness as problematic. He pursues the solution he perceives as most effective – a formal reprimand.

In this scenario, Anne's tardiness exists in reality. It is observable, and, for Tom, it amounts to an exigence to be overcome by discursive means; indeed, the situation is rhetorical and invites a response aimed at persuading the rhetorical audience – Anne – to modify the exigence. Conversely, Anne did not interpret that same observable fact or other situational variables as constituting an exigence needing correcting, so she did feel compelled to craft a response. The elements of the situation, then, are objectively observable, but Anne and Tom's different reactions to them raise the question of if the *meaning* of the situational elements is observable as well.

Here, I argue that Anne *should* have recognized her behavior as a problem – either rhetorical and able to be solved through discourse or nonrhetorical and able to be solved behaviorally or through other means. Vatz would reject this latter claim on the dual basis that I am imposing my own viewpoint and that meaning is not laden in things. However, I contend that meaning *does* “emanate from the thing” (Bitzer, 1968), insomuch as the thing has been socially and historically impregnated with a particular meaning and, therefore, circumscribes the range of discourses that are appropriate in response. Meaning, then, is technically subjective due to its reliance on socio-historical factors, but it assumes a de facto objectivity at a

particular moment in time. Society determines what is “true” at a given moment, which, for our purposes, constricts a rhetor’s discursive options in terms of what would constitute a “fitting response.”

Returning to the workplace example, when I assert that Anne should have seen her tardiness as a problem, I am, in effect, saying that her response was not a fitting response to the socio-historically-defined exigence. This argument stems from my understanding of the American work culture, which maintains a monochronic orientation to time, viewing it as a commodity. This sentiment is reinforced through punishments for tardiness and inefficient uses of time. Insofar as that value is generally held in American society, it must be understood in order to function effectively within it. Thus, society has dictated that the meaning inhered in tardiness is a waste of time and money and, therefore, intolerable in the workplace. By the same token, a worker in an Arab nation that holds a polychronic view of time comes to understand that, in that society, schedules will be more fluid and punctuality will not be a highly valued trait. In that context, then, imbued meaning in an employee’s lateness would not define it as a problem for the employee or manager and, thus, the tardiness would not be an exigence inviting discourse.

It is important to note that the fact that a given rhetor does not respond fittingly to a situation does not mean a fitting response was not invited. But, just as we frequently misunderstand problems and/or enact ineffective solutions, a rhetor may improperly understand a situation and, consequently, produce a rhetorical discourse that is unfitting.

By examining the hypothetical employment situation, I aim to come to a middle ground between Bitzer and Vatz's views of meaning and situation: meaning is not as objectively or permanently inherent in objects and events as Bitzer claimed, but societal rules, values, and interpretations generate generally held meanings that are far less subjective than Vatz claimed. Therefore, a situation, understood through the lens of the meaning a particular culture has instilled in its elements at that time, does dictate the response.

Additionally, Vatz argued that because "one never runs out of context," it cannot be used to determine rhetoric (Vatz, 1973). Bitzer claimed a discourse is only rhetorical when it responds to a situation of some kind. If that is true, the complex of situational elements that invite that response may, as Vatz contended, be infinite, but they will converge in a particular way at a specific point in time that will create a reality in that moment that invites a response to those unique conditions, which, of course, are underpinned, by historical and societal factors. The infiniteness of "facts to describe a situation" (Vatz, 1973) does not preclude the salience of several of them. And, if, as Vatz posited, rhetors shift and choose from among them, this fact does not mean that the chosen elements do not dictate the rhetorical response to the exigence they construct in a given situation. Robert Cox conveyed a similar view when he said: "*Actors' definitions of the situation (DS)* emerge in their symbolic interactions with their environment...Actors come to know a situation, therefore, by making indications to themselves" (Cox, 1981). Rhetors' references in their rhetoric to selected contextual elements betrays the strategies

they thought would be most fitting in response to the exigence, not the other way around (elements mentioned/chosen defining the exigence).

If the rhetors choose – consciously or not – from among the contextual variables that have meaning in order to understand the situation and respond accordingly, then part of the critic’s task is to identify those variables. When a critic does so, he or she is not constructing the elements, but unearthing them, not imposing a viewpoint, but interpreting one. Sure, as Amy Devitt noted, not every aspect of the context is important and the critic will choose which elements of the situation are relevant to the type of insight he/she is attempting to garner or produce (Devitt, 1993). Critics always approach an artifact with a bias, and their approach to situation is no different, but that does not mean that the elements discussed were not there for discovering.

Vatz was further mistaken in dichotomizing meaning as either in a situation or created by a rhetor and rejecting the former in favor of the latter. Meaning is inhered in situation, but the rhetorical discourse a rhetor produces has a meaning of its own, although grounded in the contextual elements. This fact should be obvious; if the rhetor is using discourse to persuade the rhetorical audience to modify the exigence, then he or she certainly strives to impart a certain meaning in the audience’s mind, but that aim is distinct from (but related to) the meaning in the situation, which begot the exigence that invited and shaped the discourse. That is, returning to the employment scenario, elements in a rhetorical situation (an employee’s tardiness) have meaning (lateness is bad) which produce an exigence (the employee’s unpunctual behavior must be changed) that invites discourse (a

formal reprimand) which contains its own meaning (the employee's tardiness has repercussions) in attempt to persuade the rhetorical audience (employee) to modify the exigence (come to work on time).

My understanding of the rhetorical situation should now be evident, and hopefully it is now clear that such situations contain an inherent meaning. But, even if one doubts this perspective' verisimilitude, who or what defines the situation – if it has intrinsic meaning, is socio-historically endowed with meaning, or the speaker constructs its meaning – is less important than the role situation plays in the rhetorical act. Regardless of from whence the meaning in a situation is derived, it is always interpreted – correctly or not – by the rhetor. In turn, the rhetor's interpretation of the situation will control his or her discourse. For example, when George Washington was elected as the first president of the United States, there existed a new situation. Stephen E. Lucas noted that Washington's inaugural address "was shaped above all by his personal beliefs and by his view of the rhetorical situation as he assumed the presidency. His response to that situation, however, appears to have been modulated by...inaugural speeches of Virginia's colonial governors, and perhaps, from the accession speeches of eighteenth-century British monarchs" (Lucas, 1986). Washington interpreted the situation's meaning and shaped his rhetoric according the address he saw. And, because the socio-historical elements at the time imbued the similar meaning in his election to the presidency that it did included in assumption of colonial governorships and the British crown, his speech resembled the discourses invited by those analogous situations.

Generic Criticism

Having established my theoretical perspective of rhetorical discourse and the rhetorical situation, we can now turn to the generic approach to rhetorical criticism. I will first survey the theorists and arguments instrumental in both the development of the method and in shaping my understanding of it. Then I will explain how my situational perspective and my conception of generic rhetorical criticism converge in what I propose ought to be the method of both generic criticism and categorization.

First, there is the matter of what is meant by “genre.” Very generally, *genre* is a grouping of like things into one of multiple categories subsumed by some taxonomy; it refers to a means of classification. For example, rhetorical discourse is a larger category divided into categories ranging from Apologia to Presidential Inaugural Addresses. A related concept that often arises in the theoretical consideration of genre is form. Edwin Black succinctly distinguished these two terms and the relationship between them: “Genre refers to the place of the thing in the universe...Form refers to the constitution and individuality of the thing...It is reasonable to suppose that the elucidation of either aspect of an artifact would stand to elucidate the other” (Black, 1978). *Form*, then, is the amalgam of characteristics present in a thing, that is, what makes a thing a thing. Significantly, I take form to encompass all a text’s characteristics, ranging from its content to its organization. If a certain discourse solely contains arguments derived from metaphors, then those arguments and metaphors comprise that discourse’s form. If

other discourses employ the same strategic use of metaphor, those items might be grouped into a genre of rhetorical discourses.

Devitt seemed to incorrectly equate *genre* with *strategy*, such as when she mentioned, “a writer who shifts genre in the middle of a text” (Devitt, 1993). One cannot shift genre in the middle of a text. The strategies used in the text comprise the *form*, and the genre is derived the recurrence of that form in multiple discourses. If there is a shift in strategy, it becomes embedded in the form and the genre into which the text is categorized should reflect that element. In a similar way, after identifying what they termed a fusion of elements constituting a generic hybrid, Jamieson and Campbell essentially concluded that the combination constituted a new genre when they said that the fusion “stands as a potential kind of response to situations that future rhetors perceive in similar ways” (Jamieson & Campbell, 1982). What, then, of rhetorical genres?

In July 1976, scholars gathered at a conference titled “‘Significant Form’ in Rhetorical Criticism,” whose express purpose was to develop and promote generic rhetorical criticism in terms of theory and research (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). More important than the event itself was the collection of essays by top scholars that followed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, co-authors who have written prolifically on generic rhetorical criticism, were largely responsible for the conference and edited the resulting book – *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*. It was in this volume that Campbell and Jamieson first published their oft-repeated definition of genre.

Through their definition, Campbell and Jamieson aimed to underscore not just the recurrence of discursive elements, but also the fact that these elements fuse together in a way that defines the discourses. They asserted that “genres are groups of discourses which share substantive, stylistic, and situational characteristics...A genre is a group of acts unified by a constellation of forms that recurs in each of its members...a constellation of forms bound together by some internal dynamic” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). For them, the concept of assemblage was key because the elements that comprise a constellation may be present in discourses belonging in other genres, but the specific way in which they’re configured in a given constellation will only be found in discourses of one particular genre.

Relatedly, Herbert Simons contended that “to be considered part of a genre, it must be possible to compare and contrast the rhetorical acts to like and dissimilar acts” (Simons, 1978). Understanding the way the elements in a set of discourses are unified into a constellation characteristic of their genre enables comparative analysis across genres. Additionally, “A critic can use genre conceptions both to explain why a given work has the shape and content it does and to evaluate that work by comparing it to others of the same generic class” (Conley, 1979). Therefore, once a critic understands the elements that constitute a genre, he or she can use that constellation to analyze both discourses that fall within the genre and those that ought to be classified elsewhere.

Concerning the character of rhetorical genres, Amy Devitt and Carolyn Miller view them dynamic and consider them actions (Devitt, 1993; Miller, 1984). In my view, genres are dynamic in that new ones are constantly being proposed and old

ones are continuously being tested, redefined, etc. with the consideration of new texts. The genres themselves, however, are not actions. Instead, they are the culmination of actions. That is, they detail the actions taken by a rhetor (and perhaps the audience), but do not act themselves. Therefore, genres are not static, but they are also not actions.

Edwin Black was the first to theorize about a genre-based approach to rhetorical criticism in his 1965 book *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*. He spent the vast majority of the book analyzing the Neo-Aristotelian method of criticism – the predominant one at the time – and articulating its flaws. He concluded that the approach “is founded upon a restricted view of human behavior, that there are discourses which function in ways not dreamed of in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, and that there are discourses not designed for rational judges, but for men as they are. It is the task of criticism...to see [discourses] as they really are” (Black, 1965).

Finding himself in want of an alternative method, Black raised four assumptions that would underpin a generic frame of reference: “[1] There is a limited number of situations in which a rhetor can find himself...[2] There is a limited number of ways in which a rhetor can and will respond rhetorically to any given situational type...[3] The recurrence of a given situational type through history will provide the critic with information on the rhetorical responses available...[4] Although we can expect congregations of rhetorical discourses to form at distinct points along [a] scale, these points will be more or less arbitrary” (Black, 1965). Because Black did not formally propose the generic criticism as a

new method or articulate ways in which one should be done, but, rather, conducted an example criticism, his assumptions have been the element most oft-cited and the most useful for theory-building and, thus, his greatest contribution to the approach.

William Benoit summarized the generic approach to rhetorical criticism as “based on the idea that observable, explicable, and predictable rhetorical commonalities occur in groups of discourses as well as in groups of people” (Benoit, 2000). Since Black’s seminal work, there have been many advocates and critics of the method. A main point of contention between the two is on the approach’s utility; opponents of the approach view it as little more than a classification system that offers no real insight into the texts. For instance, John Patton argued, “Generic criticism results in classification without substantive clarification, diminishes the distinctively human dimension in language, and undermines the foundation for assessing the responsibility of communication” (Patton, 1976).

There are several worthy arguments that repudiate Patton’s assertion. For instance, Campbell and Jamieson contended that the generic approach to criticism would “permit the critic to generalize beyond the individual event which is constrained by time and place to affinities and traditions across time” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). Thus, not only does the approach, as mentioned earlier, elucidate the discursive elements in a particular text and the way they fuse together, but it also enables the critic to trace the recurrences throughout history.

Furthermore, identifying the similarities of texts within a genre simultaneously distinguishes the dissimilarities. In his analogic analysis of a Nixon and a Truman speech, L.W. Rosenfield commented, “Where we discover similarities

in the messages, we have grounds for attributing those qualities to the situation or the genre rather than to the individual speaker. Because the surface conditions of these two speeches are so similar, the critic will be alert to the distinctive qualities of each...the individual speaker's artistry" (Rosenfield, 1968). Thus, the approach does result in substantive clarification in regard to both a specific discourse and similar texts throughout history in response to recurring situations. And, when the critic's eye is pulled to a rhetor's choices that deviated from or added to the elements in a genre, there is an obvious focus on the human element of communication, so responsibility can be duly assigned to the rhetor.

Clearly, there is substantial insight from and great worth in the generic approach to rhetorical criticism. But, although it has a paradigm and assumptions, there is no prescribed method of conducting a generic rhetorical criticism, no standard set of steps to follow. Ernest Bormann explained that critics choose which path to take based on a "specialized set of assumptions...[that] will relate to such questions as whether or not a critic should have a clearly structured set of concepts to guide the opening of a study...whether some general notions will do, or whether a critic should, as Rosenfield suggests, 'release himself, letting the phenomena 'speak to him' through their luminosity'" (Bormann, 1978b).

Following on this idea that choice of an appropriate methodology is at the critic's discretion, Bormann elsewhere claimed, "If communication is a rule-governed game, then we need to understand how the rules of the game come into being, to what extent players abide by the rules, what happens when they break the rules, why they choose to abide or fail to abide by the rules, the extent to which

these games are played in given historical periods and places, and the tactical choices available to the communicators” (Bormann, 1978a). The generic approach in general is a method particularly well-suited to determining the answers to these questions Bormann raised. And I contend that a situational approach to generic rhetorical criticism is the most effective and enlightening method.

Situational Approach to Generic Criticism

In his editor’s introduction to Northrop Frye’s epochal Anatomy of Criticism, Denham explained Frye’s understanding and operationalization of anatomy, stating, “Anatomizers do not simply dissect; they name and arrange the parts...For Frye anatomizing involves synthesis as well as analysis, or rather analysis in the service of a ‘synthetic overview’” (Denham, 2006). I agree with this belief that naming the parts of a discourse ought to be a means of synthesizing its contents, thereby producing a deeper understanding of the text. The five constituents that Bitzer identified as within the rhetorical situation – which he termed exigence, audience, constraints, orator, and discourse – are apposite elements for a holistic understanding of text in particular and in relation to other discourses. However, rather than maintain Bitzer’s terminology in my approach, I am going to apply the names of the five elements in Burke’s dramatist pentad – act, scene, agent, agency, purpose (Burke, 2000) – and add audience as a sixth.

As Burke said after naming his pentadic elements, “If you ask why, with a whole world of terms to choose from, [I] select these rather than some others” (Burke, 2000), my answer lies in the greater degree of clarity and replicability they

provide. I use the pentadic elements because Burke's dramatist theory is so well known in the discipline that its components are generally recognizable among scholars, and, furthermore, the terms are so accessible that their meaning can be understood *prima facie*. I add audience to the list of constituents in my view of the rhetorical situation because the audience has influence in the construction and consequences of rhetorical discourse and, therefore, a rhetorical situation cannot be fully understood without analyzing the audience.

In borrowing Burke's terminology, I do not mean to imply that Bitzer and Burke viewed the rhetorical situation in the same way. As Miller explained, "Although Burke and Bitzer have both used the term 'rhetorical situation' ...one crucial difference between the two is Burke's use of *motive* and Bitzer's of *exigence* as the focus of situation" (Miller, 1984). I should also clarify that the way I define the elements is different than Burke; specifically, I change the way they function and the relationship they have to each other.

The situational constituents will be translated from Bitzer's terms to Burke's in the following way: exigence to purpose, constraints to scene, orator to actor, discourse to both act and agency, and, again, audience is added as well. I will comment on the considerations that should be included under each of the constituents serially in order to present Bitzer's definitions and clarify my understanding of them and their interdependent relationships.

First, the most important part of the rhetorical situation is the exigence, termed here as *purpose*. An exigence is a problem or, in Bitzer's words, "an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be

done, a thing which is other than it should be” (Bitzer, 1968). Exigences are not inherently rhetorical, but become so when they can be modified through discourse. Bitzer clarified that although there are multiple exigences in any situation, there will be at least one is controlling. It is crucial that the critic identify the controlling exigence because it is a force that dictates how each of the other four elements in the situation behaves once it exists. Specifically, changing the exigence in a particular way becomes the rhetor’s goal or, in other words, a rhetor’s specific purpose is determined by the exigence. Therefore, in order to determine the rhetor’s purpose, a critic must first identify the controlling exigence.

Second, *scene* will encompass Bitzer’s conception of constraints. He specified that constraints include “persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (Bitzer, 1968). I view the constraints that make up scene as elements of the setting that converge in creation of the exigence, and then serve as restrictors of the other situational constituents. Relevant historical and present contextual factors are hugely important elements of scene.

Third, the rhetor in the rhetorical situation is the *actor*. Bitzer did not isolate this constituent, but did mention that Aristotle’s artistic proofs comprise one of two classes of constraints and include those constrictions derived from the rhetor and his or her method such as character and style. Therefore, any of a rhetor’s proclivities that could constrain his or her discourse ought to be mentioned. An inexhaustive list of characteristics potentially worth mentioning includes the

rhetor's position (employment, societal standing, etc.), perceived character, psychological disposition, and culturally-influenced traits.

All of these descriptors of the actor contribute to his or her capacity to use ethos as a rhetorical proof. Michael Halloran explained a perspective of ethos recognized by Isocrates: "A speaker achieves credibility to the degree that he makes present to his audience something of the spirit that binds him in community with them. The rhetor therefore becomes the preserver and shaper of culture" (Halloran, 1978). In that sense, a rhetor must embody the cultural values his or her audience holds. Jamieson extended a similar assertion when she noted that the "rhetor's perceptions of traditions and audience expectations are highly controlling" (). Therefore, comparing the values the rhetor has and/or displays to those held or expected by the audience is important for understanding the potential constraints and effects of them and the degree to which the rhetor matches them.

I am dividing Bitzer's discourse element into act and agency, the fourth and fifth constituents. Describing the *act* entails examining all of the discourse's characteristics except its actual content, that is, its medium, timing, length, delivery, etc. On the other hand, *agency* refers to the actor's rhetorical choices, the actual verbiage of the discourse. Here, the critic should keep an eye for any evident strategies, ranging from literary devices such as narrative and repetition to logical elements such as syllogisms and fallacies.

Finally, the composition and role of the *audience* need to be articulated. The elements of audience composition include demographic, cultural, and psychological. Bitzer distinguished a rhetorical audience from a nonrhetorical audience in that

only the former is capable of modifying the exigence. Aristotle provided a view of the audience that further delineates the role rhetorical audience members play, asserting that they are either judges or spectators (Halloran, 1978). People in the audience are judges when there is a decision to be made, which corresponds to Aristotle's deliberative and forensic speaking occasions. In deliberative settings, the pending decision concerns future action, such as passing legislation, whereas forensic settings require the audience to pass judgment regarding past action, such as rendering a jury vote. In epideictic speaking, on the hand, the audience serves as a critic, meaning their evaluations are manifested in an outcome like attitudinal change, rather than a formal decision.

It is important to note that an audience is capable of modifying the exigence in any of these situations; attitudinal exigences predominate ceremonial occasions, so it makes sense that the audience's shift in attitudes could alleviate them.

Understanding what role the audience is expected to play in the rhetorical situation is important for understanding the constraints its members place upon the rhetor and the effects that the discourse has on them. Therefore, a critic ought to distinguish between those persons who may hear the discourse and those who can influence the exigence, that is, define the rhetorical and nonrhetorical audiences. And, he or she should, further, explain the audience's presumed role and how they can potentially modify the exigence.

Additionally, Burke viewed form as the creation of a desire in the audience for a certain discourse and the subsequent delivery as an attempt to satiate it. He explained, "form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the audience, and the

adequate satisfying of that appetite...If, in a work of art, the poet says something, let us say, about a meeting, writes in such a way that we desire to observe that meeting, and then, if he places that meeting before us – that is form. While obviously, that is also the psychology of the audience, since it involves desires and their appeasements [sic]” (Burke, 1925). In other words, when audience member are exposed to certain cues, they develop particular expectations for how the rhetor ought to continue on that subject, and the rhetor will be successful if he or she leaves the audience feeling as though their expectations were met. Therefore, because an audience has expectations for discourses, a critic should attempt to identify them so he or she can then examine the rhetor’s ability to satisfy them.

Having now examined the six constituents of my situational approach, I want to give attention to reconciling this approach with some of Black’s claims because he first conceptualized the generic approach to rhetorical criticism and his perspective on genre has been cited often in academic literature and was foundational for my personal understanding. First of all, Black defined situation as “the prevailing state of the audience’s convictions, the reputation of the rhetor, the popularity and urgency of his subject” (Black, 1965). Notably, these three elements that Black listed in his explanation of situation are equivalent to the three constituents Bitzer identified as comprising the rhetorical situation until they are joined by the rhetor and his or her discourse.

Black’s focus on audience effects during his discussion of rhetorical transactions does not necessarily, as Miller claimed, mean that for him, “situation serves primarily to locate a genre; it does not contribute to its character as

rhetorical action” (Miller, 1984). Again, two of Black’s assumptions for the generic approach were that “there is a limited number of situations in which a rhetor can find himself” and “there will only be a finite number of rhetorical strategies available to a rhetor in any given situation” (Black, 1965). In explication, if a rhetor strives to produce rhetorical discourse, he or she has limited options specifically due to situational constraints. The situation prescribes certain responses that greatly influence the methods the rhetor will choose and, thereby, substantively impacts the discourse a rhetor produces. For Black, the situation may not define an act as rhetorical or not, as Bitzer would argue, but the rhetorical act would not exist without the situation. Thus, situation is undeniably tied to rhetorical discourse in a capacity much greater than classification. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that Black did believe the situation does contribute to some degree to rhetorical acts’ characterization as such.

Critics such as William Benoit claim that the methodological flaw of generic criticism is its focus on situation to the exclusion of other constituents of a rhetorical transaction: purpose, agent, and agency (Benoit, 2000). However, because my view of situation is holistic, analyzing discourses based on situational constituents does not preclude or discourage consideration of the other factors, but, alternatively, necessitates it. In fact, a critic cannot appropriately conduct a generic rhetorical criticism from a situational perspective as I’ve proposed *without* analyzing each of these elements of the rhetorical transaction. Therefore, not only is a situational approach to generic categorization a natural one, but it also compels a holistic analysis.

What I propose, then, as a situational approach to generic criticism is that critics ought to use the six constituents as a framework when analyzing a text. If a genre has already been theorized and a scholar chooses to analyze a discourse for its fitness within that genre, he or she ought to come to understand the text through identifying the relevant components of the situational constituents before comparing the case to the recurring elements in similar discourses. If a critic undertakes an inductive attempt to develop a genre, he or she should classify the genre situationally. And, because the exigence is the critical element of situation, it ought to be the determining factor in generic categorization; if situation is the very thing that defines discourse as rhetorical, then it logically follows that it would be the factor by which rhetorical discourse is classified. In extension, if an exigence recurs in similar situations and rhetors address it in a constellation of methods that comprise a genre, that exigence is likely to be more general. Analyzing each text from the situational perspective illuminates the more specific exigence that existed in a certain case, which can then perhaps account for variance among that case and the generic generalities.

It is worth noting that this classification system is in opposition to and more preferable than the four categorizations Harrell and Linkugel proposed: *de facto*, structural, motivational, and archetypal classification (Harrell & Linkugel, 1978). Because their recommendation is one of the only answers to the call they raised for an organizing perspective of generic rhetorical criticism, I will spend some time explicating its deficiencies. The biggest problem with the categories is that they are neither mutually exclusive, nor particularly enlightening. Harrell and Linkugel

began by noting that “the classification and analysis of an entity in one genus does not prevent its inclusion in other appropriate groupings,” so it is not surprising that their categories overlap. If organizational lines are fluid, however, they should at least be constructed to guide the critic to highlight the attributes of discourses that will grant the greatest amount of insight.

De facto classification, or categorizing discourses based on an obvious feature such as convention keynote or Memorial Day speeches, could fall under any of the other three; a discourse’s most stand-out feature might be its structure, the motivation behind it, or the archetypes it includes. The category that most subsumes de facto, though, is motivational. Focusing on the controlling motive in an inaugural or Fourth of July address provides more meaningful analysis than the fact that those speeches simply fell on an important day. Analyzing a discourse by paying particularly attention to its structure will likely provide less insight than a discussion of how the structure led a rhetor to a certain degree of success or failure, or how the same structure can provide varied results in different contexts. Either of these latter approaches would explicate the significance of structure, but only when also considering rhetor motivation or occasion with equal level of importance.

Categorizing discourses through archetypal classification would focus the critic on the rhetor’s use of “persuasive images deeply imbedded in the audience’s psyche.” It is unclear why Harrell and Linkugel would isolate archetypes as a stylistic mechanism worthy of its own category; one could argue for categorization by metaphor, or any other linguistic element. Thus, not only does this classification have no clear justification, but, like structural classification, it is only important

when considered as a means to an end, which implies discussion of its ability to achieve a certain purpose (rhetor's motivation). Clearly, the best of Harrell and Linkugel's categories is the motivational classification. However, none of the classifications individually, nor all of them together, constitutes as comprehensive or insightful a categorization as the situational approach.

Presidential War Rhetoric

Now that I have examined generic rhetorical criticism in general, I will review a rhetorical genre in particular, Presidential War Rhetoric, which has been thoroughly considered by Campbell and Jamieson. The co-authors identified five recurring elements constituting the constellation that defines the discourses within the genre. But, in order to better understand the genre and its discourses' features, it is necessary to first clarify the differences between presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency.

Presidential Rhetoric and the Rhetorical Presidency

The academic nascency of the term "rhetorical presidency" stemmed from the 1981 article, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," in which authors James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis, and Joseph M. Bessette argued that a modern presidential doctrine, modern mass media, and the nature of modern presidential campaigns had converged to shift the presidents' *modus operandi* to one of rhetoric-dependent direct appeals to the American people concerning policy matters (Ceaser,

Thurow, Tulis, & Bessette, 1981). This area of study has since received substantial academic attention, but almost exclusively by political scientists.

Scholars active in this subdiscipline generally view presidents' use of rhetoric as a means of emotionally manipulating the American people, or at least an incorrect mode of policymaking. They are most concerned with the *institution* of the presidency and view the Constitution as the ultimate authority and tend to be Constitutional purists. Accordingly, they view the emergence of the rhetorical presidency as hugely problematic for both political efficacy and public understanding and desire a return to the nonrhetorical presidency (Medhurst, 1996). For example, Tulis argued that presently, there are two constitutions American presidents serve: the direct allowances granted by the U.S. Constitution and the indirect duties that developed through combined rhetorical messages and political actions of previous presidents. Arguing that this second constitution is squarely opposed to founders' intent, Tulis claimed it relies on, "active and continuous presidential leadership of popular opinion [and] is buttressed by several extra-Constitutional factors such as the mass media and the proliferation of primaries as a mode of presidential selection" (Tulis, 1987). Tulis laments the demise of the presidency as intended, but sees the shift as correctable.

Scholars of presidential rhetoric, on the other hand, view the rhetoric that presidents produce almost entirely differently. Robert King's 1937 analysis of Franklin D. Roosevelt's second inaugural address was likely the first systematic rhetorical criticism of a presidential speech. However, presidential rhetoric was not viewed as a subdiscipline of speech communication until the early 1970s;

interestingly, “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency” not only prompted political scientists to critically consider presidents’ rhetoric as a relatively new function of the institution, but also inspired rhetoricians to analyze presidential utterances as uniquely constrained discourses in response to dynamic situations (Medhurst, 1996).

The rhetorician’s perspective places foremost importance on the rhetoric *per se*, viewing it as an art and explaining how the president executed linguistic conventions in a particular way (descriptive analysis) and aimed to achieve certain goals, whether or not success was realized (evaluative analysis). Rhetoricians, then, do not view presidential use of rhetoric as a problem, but rather an essential tool of the presidency, which, according to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, is itself a dynamic, constructed institution. They claimed that, whereas the Constitution established the office of the *president* and granted duties thereto, the actual role of the *presidency* has been defined and redefined by presidents’ words and actions (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). Although rhetoricians’ concept of the presidency changing over time due to presidents’ behaviors and utterances appears to mirror the rhetorical presidency viewpoint, the former group neither comments on the virtue of this fact, nor attempts to rectify it. Rather, communication scholars seek to understand presidential rhetoric *qua* rhetoric and the situational elements surrounding it.

The Presidential War Rhetoric Genre

Campbell and Jamieson identified two kinds of evaluation that the generic

approach to presidential rhetoric uniquely presents, which include: [1] how well a particular discourse was tailored to its purpose and [2] the degree of effectiveness at both sustaining the presidency and modifying it in accordance with a change in situation (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). With regard to presidents' war rhetoric, Campbell and Jamieson posited that five recurring characteristics have transcended the changing circumstances from the country's inception to modern times. The veracity of this claim is substantiated in part by the permanency of their own claims, which went unchanged from their original publication in *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance* in 1990 to their repetition in *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* in 2008, despite dramatic, controversial changes in the uses of presidential war powers during that period.

That these defining features of the presidential war rhetoric genre have passed the test of two decades' time validates their inclusion here as the established and generally accepted characteristics of discourses within the genre: "[1] every element in it proclaims that the momentous decision to resort to force is deliberate, the product of thoughtful consideration; [2] forceful intervention is justified through a chronicle or narrative from which argumentative claims are drawn; [3] the audience is exhorted to unanimity of purpose and total commitment; [4] the rhetoric not only justifies the use of force, but also seeks to legitimize presidential assumption of the extraordinary powers of the commander in chief; and, as a function of these other characteristics, [5] strategic misrepresentations play an unusually significant role in its appeals" (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). Each of these features will now be discussed in greater detail.

First, the decision to utilize war powers is presented as a deliberate one. Not only must presidents typically comment on the length of time the decision took, whose counsel they considered, and what alternative measures were sought prior to the decision, but they must also demonstrate the rationality of the choice they have made, often to the explicit rejection of emotional considerations in the decision-making process.

Second, presidents use narratives as a vehicle to reach their justificatory argument for military intervention. This features serves to persuade the audience to adopt the proposed war act based on a story that simplifies events and dramatizes them, meaning that the president invites the audience to reach its decision without full consideration of the facts due to that simplification and the simultaneous promotion of emotional reasoning as evoked by the dramatic elements. Essentially, a president belittles the audience by holding them to a lower standard of deliberation than that to which they held themselves. Of course, the presidents have already made their decision and are only looking for approval, so the easier and quicker means of reaching the “right” conclusion – that which the presidents advocate – serves the presidents well in that aim. In the narratives, the United States is presented as guiltless in stark contrast to the named adversary the U.S. must reluctantly but forcefully combat. A key element of America’s blamelessness is its execution of due diligence to avoid war. Additionally, the people America will save through military intervention are not just its own, but all of humanity.

Third, presidents must exhort the audience to unified action. This element most directly correlates to the presidents' specific purposes of their war rhetoric speeches. Presenting a narrative and conveying a thoughtfulness in the decision process are means to achieve the exhortation objective to persuade the audience to respond in unanimous support.

Fourth, although "commander-in-chief" is often used synonymously with president, the Constitution restricts the presidential assumption of the title to when the Army and Navy are "called into the actual Service of the United States" (U.S. Const. art. II, § 2). The powers granted a president when he or she assumes this title are so puissant that they are easily analogized with dictatorial powers. Through their war rhetoric, presidents aim to legitimize their decisions to use military force, a goal that is intimately tied to the need to also legitimize their role as commander in chief. Presidents can accomplish this task by either seeking allowance to assume the role – as President William McKinley did when he requested that Congress "authorize and empower the President...to use the military and naval forces of the United States as may be necessary" (McKinley, 2004) for military action in Cuba – or approval of their self-appointment made prior to the speech, such as when President Abraham Lincoln addressed Congress on July 4, 1861 asking for ratification of his mobilization of Union forces against Confederate aggressors, a decision he made while Congress was in recess (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008).

When Congress and/or the Courts confirm – explicitly through legislation or a legal opinion or implicitly through inaction – presidents' actions that expand their power, the duty becomes an assumed aspect of the presidency for successors. This

case is particularly recurrent regarding the presidential use of military power, as illustrated by President George H. W. Bush's statement at his signing of the congressional resolution authorizing his order of military force against Iraq: "My request for congressional support did not, and my signing this resolution does not, constitute any change in the long-standing positions of the executive branch on either the President's constitutional authority to use the Armed Forces to defend vital U.S. interests or the constitutionality of the War Powers Resolution" (Bush, 1991).

This precedent previous presidents have set and reinforced concerning executive power and military force to which Bush explicitly referred has two important implications. First, presidents' dominant method of unilaterally deciding to engage U.S. troops can be translated as presidents calling the military into active service, which constitutionally grants them the role of commander in chief. However, that order of events is the exact opposite of that which the constitutional framers intended¹. Instead of being granted commander in chief status by a congressional statement of war, presidents seize it through their actions and pressure Congress for *post hoc* approval. Second, the precedents build upon each other and are continually modified, so they not only allow succeeding presidents greater latitude, but they also provide specific strategies and rationales from which they can choose. For example, McKinley justified his use of American troops in the

¹ Framers' intent is an argument all too often raised without sound reasoning; however, men of all different political persuasions were clear in their personal statements and in the actual verbiage of the Constitution that war is so devastating an event, resorting to it should not be easy, and the president should not be able to declare it unilaterally.

Chinese Boxer Rebellion as having done so to protect U.S. lives and property (Lafeber, 1986), which was then utilized by multiple successive presidents. It is important to remember, however, that prior actions constitute a set of options available to presidents, meaning they have ability to employ, ignore, or redefine them as suits their present situation. For instance, President Harry Truman's address henceforth known as the Truman Doctrine stated, "It must be the policy of the United States to support peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures" (Truman), a policy which has been enacted selectively to say the least.

The first extra-constitutional presidential act concerning war was actually a pacifist one: George Washington declared that the United States would remain neutral in France's war with England. Opponents said that since the Constitution solely grants Congress the power to declare war, the power to declare peace or neutrality should also rest in that body, but, ultimately, Congress legislatively ratified Washington's decision (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008).

Washington's loudest critic on the neutrality matter was James Madison, who, when he had his turn as president, acted strictly within the bounds of constitutional provisions when it came to his handling to the War of 1812. Interestingly, it was this by-the-book republicanism that "diminished the reputation of Madison personally and of the presidency as an office, for despite all the tenets of pristine republicanism the country wanted then, and has always wanted since, to follow a strong leader in a time of crisis," argues historian Abbot Smith (Smith, 1984). Smith essentially claimed that despite the criticisms presidents receive for

their strong actions in response to national security crises, such decisions actually enable them to rise up to and fulfill citizens' expectations. And, perhaps that is why in most cases, history has shown that the presidential actions, though controversial, will be formally legitimized. However, the official legitimization after the fact does not preclude the need for presidents to seek investiture before that point through their war rhetoric.

Fifth, presidents' speeches of war rhetoric contain strategic misrepresentations. This practice stems from the need to exhort to unified response coupled with presidents' exclusive access to classified information, which enables them to selectively relay key facts in terms of content and timing. "Not 10 percent of Congress would have voted the war bill if time had been given to examine the documents" (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008) was a claim made about President James Polk and Mexican-American War, but almost verbatim statements have been made concerning President George W. Bush and the Iraq War.

Methodology

Using a situational approach to generic criticism, I will analyze President Obama's "Address to the Nation on Libya" delivered at the National Defense University on March 28, 2011 to answer the question: how does President Obama's public communication regarding the 2011 Libya intervention correspond with the Presidential War Rhetoric genre? Specifically, I will identify and discuss the six constituents of the rhetorical situation: scene (context), purpose (controlling exigence), agent (rhetor), act (non-discursive elements), agency (rhetorical tactics),

and audience. Next I will determine if Campbell and Jamieson's five characteristics of the Presidential War Rhetoric genre were present in Obama's speech. Finally, I will draw conclusions from my findings and discuss their theoretical and practical implications.

As previously noted, Campbell and Jamieson's framework for the elements found in U.S. Presidents' war rhetoric has persevered without significant change or and challenge for over two decades and, as such, is the definitive model for this genre. I chose to use it for my analysis because of its longevity, but also because of the insight it enables.

Campbell and Jamieson noted that one of the key changes in their thinking about genres from their 1990 book to their revision in 2008 was that genres are "functions that are not necessarily performed or completed in individual speeches. Conceptually, this approach relies on thinking of the rhetorical act" (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). This shift seems to have stemmed two new considerations. First, they expanded their recognition of the importance of historical and contextual elements and the influence they have on the production and reception of individual discourses, which are all begotten and beget. Second, instances in which an exigence is solved through a single speech are rare exceptions, so considering the broader rhetorical act as a whole can be critical for understanding individual discourses. For example, although it is generally recognized that President Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech in which he defended his use of a special campaign fund was effective at absolving him of perceived wrongdoing, L.W. Rosenfield noted that his speech contained no new arguments; each claim and most of the insults were

found in earlier speeches on the matter. This finding led Rosenfield to the conclusion that “the speech in the moment of crisis is most likely to represent a climax, a summing up, of those rhetorical thrusts which seem to have been most effective with the public on previous dry runs” (Rosenfield, 1968). Consideration of Nixon’s minor speeches preceding the major one – that is, examining all of the discourses in the single, composite rhetorical act of defending himself from attacks concerning his campaign finances – unearths crucial information that facilitates a deeper understanding of the Checkers speech and Nixon’s rhetorical strategies applied therein that would be unavailable if the speech were considered singularly.

Despite Campbell and Jamieson’s new claim of the importance of considering rhetorical acts as a whole when utilizing a generic approach, they retained their Presidential War Rhetoric framework completely unchanged. This model is best suited for analyzing the elements present in individual speeches, each of which has specific purpose to address a particular exigence and, therefore, contains strategies peculiar to it. In fact, Campbell and Jamieson demonstrated their framework by analyzing President Lyndon Johnson’s speech justifying airstrikes against North Vietnam and requesting approval for further military engagement in Southeast Asia. No rhetorical discourse occurs in a vacuum, so consideration of contextual and historical variables, including the rhetor’s preceding discourses concerning the topic, ought to be considered, but only to the degree that they provide insight into the speech at hand. Then each address can be examined in relation to the others in the rhetorical act to determine strategic continuities and, perhaps, an overarching

method, which would comprise the rhetorical form that could then be used to classify the rhetoric into a particular genre or construct a new genre.

The discourses that characterize Campbell and Jamieson's conceptualization of Presidential War Rhetoric are speeches addressed to Congress and/or the American public in which presidents discuss U.S. military action, ranging from announcements of the mobilization of troops to solicitations of formal approval for an operation. In each case of military intervention, a president must present several rhetorical discourses that comprise the entire rhetorical act of communicating about the operation.

Although President Obama announced U.S. military action in Libya in on March 19, 2011, his remarks lasted just shy of three and a half minutes and the announcement did not make headlines in *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*. Two days later, Obama sent a letter of less than 700 words to Congress regarding the Libya operations. Conversely, the March 28 address was a televised, 3400-word, primetime speech that received substantial subsequent media coverage. Of the President's utterances on the matter, the latter was clearly the longest, but, more importantly, it was most substantive, had the furthest reach, and was intended to have the biggest impact.

Selecting this single address for my present analysis should in no way convey a belief that it singularly represents Obama's strategy to explain and justify the operation to the American people and lawmakers. I duly recognize that the President's March 28 address was just one element of the whole rhetorical act that was the Obama Administration's strategy of publicly communicating the decision to

militarily engage in Libya. But, although it was just one tool, the speech was definitively the most major one the President used. To analyze the Administration's complete strategy, which would include dozens of statements uttered by President Obama, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, is beyond the scope of this paper. However, analyzing the March 28 address is entirely sufficient to unearth Obama's tactics in communicating the war and to compare his war discourse to that of previous presidents. Furthermore, because I am using the situational approach I proposed, the contextual variables will be necessarily addressed, rather than analyzing the text of the speech in isolation. Hence, not only will my analysis serve to show the strategies Obama used and compare them to his predecessors, but I will also be able to connect them to his contemporary circumstances. Therefore, analyzing the one speech provides a deep understanding of a variety of elements of the rhetorical act.

Analysis

Pursuant to analyzing President Obama's March 28, 2011 Address to the Nation on Libya, I will first discuss the situational elements of the rhetorical discourse and, second, determine if the elements of the Presidential War Rhetoric genre were present in the discourse. For the situational analysis, I will examine each of the constituents: scene, purpose, actor, act, agency, and audience. Again, the analysis of the text will fall under agency, so the bulk of the rhetorical criticism will be found there. I will follow the frames of analysis (situational and generic) with a discussion of the findings and implications.

Situational Constituents

Scene

Because historical factors so greatly influence later events, it is necessary to historically situate Obama's speech defending military intervention in Libya by understanding the background of the Libyan revolution and considering the relevant, recent events that had transpired in America.

Eighteen years after Libya became the first state to declare its independence through the United Nations, Muammar al-Qaddafi and fellow military officers staged a bloodless coup d'état that successfully overthrew King Idris in 1969. With the motto "freedom, socialism, and unity," the new Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) supplanted the monarchic system with a "Libyan Arab Republic." Having led the takeover, Qaddafi soon became the RCC's chairman, which made him the de facto head of state, a position he retained until his death (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Although Qaddafi successfully maintained control of the state for over four decades, the same success cannot be said of the positive, democratic change that was promised. The bullet used to murder Qaddafi on October 20, 2011 ended the reign of the Arab world's longest-ruling and, at that point², arguably most brutal autocrat (Sheridan, 2011).

The endurance of 140 tribes is a significant aspect of Libyan society. The tribal and cultural separations are deeply rooted in the Libyan people, even if being

² In the past year, the ruthlessness of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's actions in attempt to quell the uprising against his regime has arguably surpassed that of Qaddafi.

a member of a tribe is no longer the foremost aspect of their identities (Vira & Cordesman, 2011). Deepening the tribal divide is Libya's geographical division into three regions – splits that have been the sources of conflict throughout the years. Tripolitania is in the northwest, Fezzan lies in the southwest, and Cyrenaica dominates the east (Grannis, 1989). In general, the various tribes occupied their own geographic area within these divisions, although urbanization is changing this reality.

Protests had already shaken Tunisia and Egypt before they reached Libya. On December 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire in order to convey his discontent with the Tunisian government, specifically the abuse he endured from the police while trying to sell produce. That act sparked further acts – massive popular protests that eventually ousted the Tunisian leader, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali (Noor, 2011). Then protestors in Egypt were able to bring an end to the long rule of Hosni Mubarak. Tunisia and Egypt border Libya to the west and east respectively.

Demonstrators first took to the streets in Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city, in mid-January 2011 making many of the same demands as their international neighbors, ranging from better housing to more participatory government systems. The beginning of February brought Libyan human rights lawyer Jamal al-Hajji's arrest, which inspired protests and calls for a nation-wide Day of Rage on February 17 (St. John, 2011). The Day of Rage saw thousands hit the streets in Benghazi, Tripoli, and three other Libyan locations (Libya News - Revolution, 2011). As protests continued, Qaddafi's mechanisms of repression proved so brutal, they led to the passage of two United Nations Security Council resolutions – UNSCRs 1970

and 1973. The latter decision, adopted on March 17, authorized members to establish a no-fly zone and “use ‘all necessary measures’ to protect Libyan civilians,” which prompted the United States to lead the international coalition it assembled in launching airstrikes against Qaddafi’s forces in a mission named Operation Odyssey Dawn that commenced on March 19 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012). The NATO Alliance assumed exclusive control of the international military effort in Libya on March 31 with the launch of Operation Unified Protector (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012).

On the other side of the world, there were several historical and contemporary elements of scene in America that constrained President Obama’s rhetorical options. These factors can be broadly divided into two main categories: military and economic.

First, it is important to consider America’s current and recently concluded military engagements, as well as a related legal topic. At the time of Libya’s uprising, the Obama administration was working towards its goal of, after eight years of occupation, removing U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of 2011 – a deadline imposed by a joint security agreement signed in 2008. As of March 15, 2011, there were still 50,000 American soldiers in Iraq, a nation that had formed a government three months earlier (Healy & Schmidt, 2011). The Administration was simultaneously preparing to begin a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan – set to commence four months later and conclude in 2014 – after a decade-long war there (Bumiller, 2011).

When President George W. Bush launched the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (in 2001 and 2003, respectively), both had substantial, bipartisan support within Congress and among the American public. But, as the conflicts endured, the support plummeted, particularly toward the Iraq War (Jacobson, 2010a). In fact, Obama's pledge to end the Iraq War was one of the key factors that led to his successful presidential election (Jacobson, 2010). The American people spoke with their votes, saying they were tired of what they saw as an unnecessary war. Therefore, future U.S. military action, particularly in that same region, would have a higher bar to surpass in order to gain public support of the mission.

Obama's rhetorical options concerning the Libya mission were additionally constrained legally. The War Powers Resolution, passed in 1973 over President Nixon's veto, established three requirements for presidents concerning their "introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities": [1] a "consultation with Congress" beforehand; [2] submission of a written report outlining "the circumstances necessitating the introduction of United States Armed Forces," authority used to introduce the troops, and "scope and duration" of the mission; and, [3] absent Congressional approval, a withdrawal of troops within sixty days (50 U.S.C. § 1541-1548). Each of these stipulations stands to significantly impact rhetoric produced in response to an international crisis like the Libyan situation.

In addition to war fatigue, Americans were suffering economically. As of March 14, 2011, only 22 percent of Americans reported that they were satisfied with the state of the nation, while 73 percent said they were dissatisfied (The Pew

Research Center, March 16, 2011). Recovery from the 2008 recession was slow and the effects ranged from high unemployment to rising prices. Voters' perceptions that the Democrats – who had been in control of both congressional houses – had failed to adequately address the economic problems resulted in Democrats' loss of the House of Representatives and a surge of fiscally conservative freshman members – many of whom were associated with the Tea Party – in the 2010 Midterm Election (Weatherford, 2012).

These economic and political conditions are important because to intervene in Libya would obviously cost money, which Congress was reticent to spend. Additionally, the American voters elected those freshman members expressly because of their frugality, so lawmakers would not be the only ones to potentially disapprove of the expenditure. In fact, in a Pew Research Center survey conducted from March 8-14, 2011, a slim majority of respondents indicated they were in favor of lowering defense/military spending in order to reduce the deficit (The Pew Research Center, March 16, 2011).

Purpose

At a press briefing three days prior to Obama's address, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney previewed an upcoming speech to the nation by saying Obama "believes it's vitally important, it's part of his role as President and Commander-in-Chief to speak to the American people about an operation like this" (Carney, 2011). That statement implies that Obama viewed assuming the role of commander in chief as compelling him to not only communicate with Congress – as legally obligated by

the War Powers Resolution – but also to similarly address the American public. But, what of the specific objective for that audience? The answer lies in Obama’s understanding of the exigence.

Polling data – which will be detailed in my later consideration of the audience – indicated that Obama lacked strong support in both the approval of his decision to launch the airstrike mission in Libya and in the belief that the U.S. had a clear mission in Libya. In a preview of Obama’s speech, the New York Times stated that “administration officials said Mr. Obama would provide a progress report on the fighting, an update on the handoff to a NATO-led command, and an explanation of his administration’s rationale for intervention” (Shear, 2011). This statement of intent before the speech and the strategies he employed in the address both confirm that President Obama was most concerned with addressing the problem of the American people’s lack of knowledge and understanding of the mission, thus making it the controlling exigence. Obama’s primary objective, then – that is, the purpose of his address – was to increase his audience’s understanding of the mission in Libya and perception of the purpose of that mission as clearly defined.

Actor

The American presidency contains an inherent degree of authority, but, given the democratic nature of the political system, a U.S. president must earn the high degree of ethos necessary to be effective in that office. The significance of Obama’s election alone garnered him substantial legitimacy from the get-go. Political scientist John Kenneth White posited that America experienced four cultural

“revolutions” since the 1950s, which culminated in the conditions that enabled someone like Barack Obama to be elected president: racial, family, gay-rights, and religious (White, 2009). He argued that concomitant with demographic shifts in the composition of the American public were changes in dominant values. Obama was elected in large part because not only did he accord with these values, but as the biracial son of a poor, single mother, he embodied them.

President Obama is additionally known for his oratorical excellence. In fact, his passionate delivery of a well-worded keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention that first propelled him into the national spotlight. And, since that point, some writers have labeled Obama the greatest orator of his generation (Holmes, 2008). Although it is important to recognize the commonly held notion that the President speaks well, it is perhaps more valuable to understand the way in which he understands his rhetorical role in relation to previous exemplars. Rhetoric scholar Ekaterina Haskins explained, “He has certainly studied all of his predecessors, he is quite aware of the rhetorical heritage that he draws on. He clearly sees himself as a descendant of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King.” Because Obama views himself as following the footsteps of rhetorical greats, major discourses he produces while likely be crafted not just for immediate effect, but also for historical significance.

In a poll taken from March 21-27, 2011 – the seven days preceding his Libyan address – 45 percent of the nation approved of President Obama’s performance, 47 percent disapproved, and eight percent reported no opinion (Gallup, Inc.). Although his highest average approval rating reached 69 percent

immediately following his inauguration, President Obama's term average has been 49 percent approving. The average for U.S. presidents from 1938 to 2012 has been 54 percent approving. So, although Obama has is a historic president with characteristics that are representative of the changing face of America and one recognized for his oratorical abilities, he is certainly not without opponents.

Act

President Obama's address was a televised, primetime speech delivered at 7:30 p.m. on March 28, 2011, a Monday. At 3408 words, the remarks lasted 27 minutes (The White House, 2011). Backdropped by the American and presidential flags, Obama spoke from the National Defense University. The setting obviously speaks to attempts to convey a presidential, patriotic tone. The choice to speak to members of the military carried an extra burden of justifying the engagement of U.S. troops, for Obama had to look service members in the eye as he did it, rather than simply a camera lens. However, his words would likely carry more persuasive weight and perceived veracity; if he said that U.S. military efforts in Libya were necessary directly to military members, with the added burden that immediate audience carried because their peers would become actively involved in and potentially put at risk by the mission, then it must be true.

The White House released the full text to news outlets that evening, which was posted on various news websites (The New York Times, 2011). Video footage of the entire speech and fragments of it were also posted on the White House website, news outlet websites, and on YouTube. The President delivered the speech

nine days after authorizing the military action, seven days after sending a letter to Congress informing the members of the operation, and two days before hearings and a classified briefing with Congress (Hulse, 2011).

Agency

President Obama began his address by expressing his purpose – to update the American people on the effort in Libya – and previewing the basic structure of his speech, to include: what was done, will be done, and why it matters to the U.S. Obama followed this general organizational pattern, but his content can be better understood by dividing it topically into two dominant subject areas that were presented alternately throughout the speech: defining America’s role in the world and clarifying America’s mission in Libya. Obama utilized three main rhetorical strategies throughout his discourse: narrative, sugarcoating, and refutation. Accordingly, I will explore the speech’s two focal topics and three rhetorical techniques, and then examine instances when he clearly responded to contemporary contextual elements.

America’s Role in the World

First, Obama defined America’s role in the world by highlighting three of the nation’s attributes: strong global force, creator of coalitions, and compassionate friend of freedom. When Obama said the United States, “as the world’s most powerful nation, will often be called upon to help” (Obama, 2011b), he extended a characterization of America not only as the mightiest nation, but also one internationally recognized for its strength. While this may seem insignificant, it was

a view only half of Americans held; a poll taken two weeks later indicated that Americans were evenly split in their assessment of America as the number one military power versus one of several leading powers (CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, 2011). Obama further expressed America's willingness to exert that strength: "I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally" (Obama, 2011b). Furthermore, in addition to being both puissant and willing, America's military members also have integrity, specifically "courage, professionalism and patriotism."

Despite America's capacity as a strong global force that is willing to act unilaterally, it prefers to build coalitions and act cooperatively, the second trait Obama identified. Initially, the U.S. "led an effort with our allies at the United Nations Security Council to pass a historic resolution," the diplomatic maneuver that authorized the subsequent use of force (Obama, 2011b). Then, the United States took the military lead through airstrikes in which "we struck regime forces...we hit Qaddafi's troops...we hit Qaddafi's air defenses...we targeted tanks and military assets...and we cut off much of their source supply," but "going forward, the lead in enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians on the ground will transition to our allies and partners."

Essentially, the U.S. accomplished the forefront mission that enabled its allies to come in afterwards to do their part, at which point the U.S. "will play a supporting role" because "the burden of action should not be America's alone" (Obama, 2011b). While this implicit concession of American limits could be seen as a weakness contradicting the proclamations of strength, the President framed it otherwise by

claiming “real leadership creates the conditions and coalitions for others to step up as well.” In each of his multiple references to allies and the coalition, Obama presented them as following America’s lead, with the U.S. as the primary actor. Thus, in effect, the manner in which Obama portrayed the coalition-building trait further asserted America’s global leadership role.

The third American characteristic the President used to define the nation’s role in the world is that of a compassionate friend of freedom. Obama analogized America’s revolutionarily-obtained nascency to the “movement of change” in the Middle East and North Africa and declared the U.S. must support the movement (Obama, 2011b). Obama clarified that America does not act in succor of freedom-seekers only to display leadership or achieve its strategic goals when he emphasized its compassionate goals as well: ensuring humaneness and enabling people to achieve their own destinies. Libyans tried unsuccessfully to rise up against Qaddafi in order to “claim their basic human rights,” so America and its allies intervened “to see that the principles of justice and human dignity are upheld by all,” thus enabling the Libyan citizens “to determine their own destiny, and that is how it should be.” Obama then connected this compassion back to American strength: “Wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States. Ultimately, it is that faith – those ideals – that are the true measure of American leadership.” Therefore, Obama used his characterization of America as a strong global force, creator of coalitions, and compassionate friend of freedom to assert that and exemplify the ways in which it is a global leader.

Clarification of Libya Mission

Second, in addition to defining America's role in the world, President Obama attempted to clarify the U.S. mission in Libya. He explained that Qaddafi's forces had surrounded Benghazi and "if we had waited one more day, Benghazi...could suffer a massacre;" accordingly, Obama authorized military action in order to "stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone" (Obama, 2011b). Because that mission had been accomplished by the time Obama delivered the address, mentioning it served to explain the initial motivation to act before he spoke to America's subsequent role in Libya.

Obama made it clear that although U.S. engagement in Libya was not yet complete, with the exception of NATO responsibilities such as "intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance," America's contributions would thenceforth be non-military (Obama, 2011b). He expounded to emphasize that American troops would not be on the ground in Libya and, relatedly, America would not be militarily involved in nation building through removing Qaddafi from power or aiding in the transition once he was ousted. Rather, these goals would be achieved diplomatically. The President explicitly attached the objective of protecting Libyan citizens to NATO and not the U.S.

However, in listing the things the U.S. would not be doing and only mentioning a few specific tasks America would have going forward, Obama presented a muddled view of what exactly the U.S. would be doing. More importantly, Obama did not articulate a clear, concise, overarching mission. Obama ordered Odyssey Dawn with the obvious objective of stopping Qaddafi's forces from attacking Benghazi, and that was achieved; he was very specific when explaining

what that mission entailed. NATO's goal, then, was to protect civilians, but Obama divorced himself from that aim. But, as the U.S. is a key NATO member, did that mean America had to necessarily adopt that mission as its own, even if it chose to not act upon it in a large capacity? And, if not, then what *would* the U.S. mission be instead? The answers were not clear; the U.S. may have been set to continue in a supporting role, but what that would entail was not nearly as specifically addressed as the original American objectives. So, although President Obama tried to define the mission, his scattered statements about the tasks the U.S. would and would not perform left anything but a clear definition.

Narrative

In addition to addressing the main subject areas into which the content of his address can be categorized, Obama also utilized three main rhetorical strategies to make arguments: narrative, sugarcoating, and refutation. First, Obama presented the Libyan revolution in narrative form. The story's hero was the Libyan people, who lived in a "nightmare" for the preceding 40 years, during which time they were gripped by fear while their freedom was divested and their wealth exploited. Finally having enough, they "took to the streets in order to claim their basic human rights" (Obama, 2011b). The adversary, then, was Qaddafi; notably, Qaddafi alone was portrayed as the enemy and the only references to Qaddafi's regime occurred outside the narrative section. Obama defined Qaddafi as a "tyrant," murderer, and terrorist.

Qaddafi's attacks on the protestors comprised the obstacle in the rising action that the Libyan people had to overcome. Obama listed several of the

atrocities, which were so severe they produced a “looming humanitarian crisis” that precipitated the Libyan opposition and Arab League’s appeals to the world to intervene in order to save lives (Obama, 2011b). The narrative’s climax befell when the international community presented Qaddafi with an ultimatum to “stop his campaign of killing, or face the consequences.” He chose the former option.

The narrative’s falling action, then, was the U.S.-led international coalition’s intervention that averted a massacre and weakened Qaddafi’s forces. The story’s dénouement, which Obama presented as a work-in-progress, was Libyans’ empowerment: “With the time and space we have provided for the Libyan people, they will be able to determine their own destiny” (Obama, 2011b). That claim could be interpreted as promoting the U.S. and world’s roles as Libya’s savior, but is more appropriately understood as putting America in a supporting role in Libya’s story as a means to Libya’s self-determination. This perspective is evident when considering the President’s repeatedly stated support for the protestors’ (in Libya specifically and the region in general) will and due recognition that “the United States will not be able to dictate the pace and scope of this change. Only the people of the region can do that. But we can make a difference.” These statements characterize Libyans as the actors in the story with the greatest agency, with the U.S. playing a subsidiary role.

Sugarcoating

In addition to employing a rhetorical strategy of presenting a narrative, President Obama used sugarcoating. What I mean by that is he presented utopian visions throughout his address, providing an ideal ending to every problem. Obama

cautioned that the American mission in Libya presently contained and would continue to include risks. He offered only one example of such risks – a U.S. plane’s crash over Libya due to a malfunction – and concluded it by recounting how the American airman was “met by people who embraced him. One young Libyan who came to his aid said, ‘We are your friends’” (Obama, 2011b). Obama, thereby, mitigated the perceived severity of the risks America faces by using a concrete example when a potential catastrophe ended heartwarmingly.

To the same end, Obama also utilized vague wording and hypothetical scenarios to construct utopian aftermaths. He warned that the transitions occurring throughout the Middle East and North Africa would be rife with challenges ranging from “sectarian war” to “economic concerns” (Obama, 2011b). He conceded these upheavals make it “tempting to turn away from the world,” but advocated for America’s continued protection of “millions around the globe...because we know that our own future is safe, our own future is brighter, if more of mankind can live with the bright light of freedom and dignity.” Essentially, although the world’s changes and conflicts are scary, U.S. actions have and will retain America’s bright future and that of all mankind – an incredibly idealist notion. The two exclusions to the utopian vision strategy were the outcomes Obama predicted would result from either of the two approaches to the Libya situation with which he disagreed.

Refutation

President Obama’s third chief rhetorical strategy was refutation against the polar options in what he termed the “false choice” propagated in Washington concerning the appropriate U.S. response to the Libyan crisis. Obama first

addressed opponents' case for inaction regarding Libya. He presented anti-interventionists' rationale in syllogistic form: there are many cases of brutal governmental oppression throughout the world (major premise), America cannot act in each of those instances (minor premise), and, therefore, it ought not engage in Libya (conclusion). Obama conceded both premises, but rejected the conclusion, arguing that although "America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs...that cannot be an argument for never acting on behalf of what's right" (Obama, 2011b). He then posited a counter-conclusion – the U.S. should engage when it has "a unique ability to stop that violence." In support, he utilized each type of proof: he defined the pre-intervention Libyan situation as having "the prospect of violence on a horrific scale," which the U.S. could uniquely prevent (pathos), targeted American pride through equating ignoring atrocities to betraying Americans' very character and role as a leader (ethos), and noted that there was international consensus to act (logos).

A second argument in this first camp's reasoning was enthymematic: America must address domestic needs and, therefore, should not intervene in Libya. Again, the President accepted the premise – although, implicitly in this case – but negated the conclusion. In rebuff, he completed the syllogism by adding a minor premise: the price of inaction would have cost America more than intervention. He then concluded that America should, therefore, have intervened. He supported these claims with a slippery slope scenario that began with U.S. inaction in Libya and ended with "crippling [the United Nations Security Council's] future credibility to uphold global peace and security" (Obama, 2011b). As an aside, it is ironic that

Obama responded to the fallacy he identified (either/or) by using a fallacy of his own (slippery slope).

At the other end of the spectrum were advocates for an expanded military mission in Libya, who argued that America should “do whatever it takes to bring down Qaddafi and usher in a new government” (Obama, 2011b). Obama validated the claim that Qaddafi should be out of power, but rejected the U.S. use of force as the method of achieving that goal. He claimed that, instead, the Libyan people should realize Qaddafi’s ousting and an effective transition ought to be accomplished through diplomatic means. He presented another slippery slope in reference to the likely results of the proposed expansion of the U.S. mission, contending that, necessarily, U.S. troops would have to be on the ground or large amounts of civilians would have to die in airstrikes. Furthermore, the international coalition would crumble, and the U.S. could experience what would amount to mission creep; to make this latter claim, Obama raised the Iraq War as a concrete example, as opposed to the hypotheticals in the prior slippery slope. By presenting and refuting the cases of the two main schools of opinion on what the U.S. role in the Libya situation ought to be, President Obama framed his chosen path not just as a preferable option, but essentially the only suitable one.

President Obama’s use of refutation is incredibly significant. He could have, as nearly every preceding president in that position did, solely explicated the details of his decision – that is, what the mission would entail – and justify those choices. However, by including a two-sided refutation in which he explained and refuted the opposing arguments and then built his own case, Obama effectively invited the

American people to join in the decision process. In that sense, he encouraged them to reach the conclusion he reached, but on their own accord, using their own dianoia. One reason this tactic is so important is because it is in stark contrast to the trend in presidential rhetoric that Elvin T. Lim found: “The past century has charted the intensified de-intellectualization of American presidential rhetoric, which in its modern mode has exhibited an increased tendency to avoid references to cognitive and evaluative processes” (Lim, 2002).

Additionally, the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion predicts that when a listener reaches a conclusion through critical thinking (central processing) rather than through cues surrounding the message (peripheral processing), that opinion will be more deeply rooted and last longer (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Consequently, if the audience accepted Obama’s invitation to individually, critically deduce that his decision to launch the Libya mission was correct, theoretically, the conclusion would be deeper and more enduring than had he dictated the decision, relying on peripheral cues such as his position of authority. On the other hand, if the American people rejected that invitation, Obama would run the risk of not gaining their approval. Therefore, he trusted the American people to rely on logic and reasoning, but he did so at the risk of persuasive failure

Response to Context

It is also worth noting the ways in which Obama addressed contemporary concerns in his speech. As previously mentioned, the economy was of great concern to the American people at the time that Obama delivered his speech, which had led to the election of Congress members committed to cutting spending and reducing

the deficit. Accordingly, spending a substantial amount of money on the Libyan operation was not a politically feasible option for Obama. He was obviously very mindful of this fact, for he included statements to directly alleviate the perception that the Libya mission would carry a hefty price tag.

Obama first explained that the cost to Americans would not be very high: “Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk and cost of this operation – to our military and to American taxpayers – will be reduced significantly” (Obama, 2011b). Then, he asserted that although there would still be a cost, “I am convinced that a failure to act in Libya would have carried a far greater price for America.” Basically, Obama argued that the cost would be small and worth it. When discussing cost, he obviously meant monetary – he specifically mentioned taxpayers – but he also meant it in a much deeper sense.

The military costs Obama mentioned extend beyond fiscal concerns to include the time and lives sacrificed. The President’s reiteration that American boots would not be on the ground in Libya further mitigated the perception that the mission there would involve great military costs like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had; that perception was strong among Americans immediately preceding his speech, with 75 percent of polled respondents stating they thought U.S. military involvement was likely to become a long-term commitment of forces (GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, 2011). Also, when he mentioned the greater price that America would have paid had it not acted against Qaddafi, Obama did not provide any details of what he meant, likely choosing the

polysemic phrase so the audience members could interpret it in terms of what would they would individually consider a great price.

Additionally, Libya was just one of several countries experiencing brutal crackdowns of popular protests at the time. Obama was very clear that Libya was a particular case in which several critical factors converged: there was a United Nations mandate for action, a large international coalition was committed to intervention, the Libyan people and the Arab League both pleaded for action, and the U.S. “had a unique ability to stop that violence” (Obama, 2011b). He implied, then, that America would only intervene when there was an aligning of very specific conditions. In doing so, he simultaneously quelled fears that U.S. intervention in Libya might indicate additional intervention in other nations such as Syria and constructed a defense for not intervening in those places; therefore, he protected himself from potential criticisms from both interventionists wanting more U.S. action in the region and anti-interventionists concerned about the U.S. getting bogged down in more international missions.

Audience

The first words President Obama uttered in his address were: “Tonight I’d like to update the American people” (Obama, 2011b). His subsequent references to “my fellow Americans” confirmed his initial definition of the audience as the American citizenry. Because Obama’s exigence was attitudinal, the whole of the American public had the capacity to modify it and to be persuaded by the discourse. Therefore, the rhetorical audience was comprised of all Americans and they had the

presumed role of spectators, rather than judges. On the other hand, the speech – or excerpts of it – was sure to be disseminated around the world, but neither American allies nor enemies could modify the exigence, so they would have been non-rhetorical audience members.

Of course, more specific audience subgroups would have included as part of the rhetorical audience, including the immediate audience in attendance at the National Defense University, as well as members of Congress. Importantly, although members of Congress would have been included in this group, Obama’s goal for them with this speech would have been the same for other members of the rhetorical audience – to shift their attitudes to view the mission in Libya as a clear one, and to understand what it comprised. Although other exigences existed that Congress could uniquely rectify, Obama did not endeavor to persuade the members to eliminate them through this address. For instance, Congressman Ron Paul – Republican from Texas District 14 – introduced legislation on March 15, 2011, titled “Expressing the sense of Congress that the President is required to obtain in advance specific statutory authorization for the use of United States Armed Forces in response to civil unrest in Libya” (H.Con.Res. 31, 2011). The more appropriate medium for Obama’s response to that charge from Congress was through the letter that he wrote explaining what mission he had ordered and under what authority he did so.

Although American citizens were interested in foreign affairs news in the days leading up to President Obama’s Libya address, they were significantly more concerned with coverage of the Japanese tsunami crisis than they were with Libya.

According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted from March 24-27, the Japan disaster was the one news story 57 percent of Americans followed most closely, and only 15 percent followed the air strikes in Libya most closely (The Pew Research Center, March 30, 2011). Thirty-three percent of Americans followed the Libya crisis to some degree, but that number was surpassed by those following the economy – 36 percent – despite Libya receiving almost seven times the coverage of economic news. In sum, despite substantial media coverage, the American people did not follow news on Libya very closely, meaning they made a conscious choice to focus their attention elsewhere.

Relatedly, a poll conducted from March 24-28, which was before the address, but after the U.S. military mission in Libya had begun illustrates the confusion among the American public concerning that effort. Fifty-four percent of respondents said they approved of the way President Obama was handling the Libya situation, but 50 percent indicated they disapproved of “U.S. involvement in military actions taken in Libya” (GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, 2011). These statements are paradoxical; the majority of Americans cannot disapprove of the military’s involvement and simultaneously approve of the plan that commanded it. Essentially, this poll implies that many Americans were unaware of the specifics of the President’s strategy toward Libya as it had already happened, let alone what the future U.S. roll would entail.

But Americans’ lack of interest in following the Libya situation and lack of knowledge about it does not mean they did not have opinions about the U.S. role in it. The Pew Research Center surveyed these attitudes immediately prior to (March

24-27) and following (March 30 – April 3) Obama’s March 28 address to the nation on Libya. The preceding views can be considered constraints on Obama’s rhetorical choices and the latter opinions constitute a rough estimate of the speech’s effects.

Before Obama’s speech, 47 percent of Americans thought the decision to conduct airstrikes in Libya was the right one, while 36 percent thought it was wrong, and 17 percent did not know. Fifty percent of respondents thought that the U.S. and allies did *not* have a clear goal, 39 percent thought they did, and 11 percent did not know (The Pew Research Center, April 5, 2011). So, when Obama gave his speech, roughly half of the country thought that Obama had made the correct decision in ordering the airstrikes, but that he did not have a clear goal for the mission.

Afterwards, the attitudes toward the airstrikes amounted to 50 percent approving, 37 percent disapproving, and 13 percent unsure. Essentially, four percent of Americans shifted from not knowing to forming an opinion – that shift added three points to the percentage viewing the decision as correct, and one point to those viewing it as incorrect (The Pew Research Center, April 5, 2011). So, at best, the speech accounting for a minute gain in the overall public approval of the airstrikes. A deeper look at the numbers, however, reveals more significant results. The three percentage point total increase in approval was derived from a 10 percent shift in that direction among Democrats countered by a seven percent decrease in the amount of Republicans viewing Obama’s decision as the right one (The Pew Research Center, April 5, 2011). In other words, it was actually 17 percent of Americans who changed their perception of the correctness of Obama’s decision to

launch airstrikes, and the shift occurred along party lines. So, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Obama's speech was able to persuade Democrats, but managed to dissuade Republicans.

Concerning the objectives in Libya, there was a nine-point drop in the number of respondents who thought the U.S. and allies had a clear goal and a seven-point increase to 57 percent of respondents who thought there wasn't a clear goal. This shift occurred among all political groups, but was most pronounced among Republicans, who saw a 15 percent change, compared to the nine and eight percent decreases among Democrats and Independents, respectively (The Pew Research Center, April 5, 2011). This finding is the most significant for evaluating President Obama's rhetorical success. Because his primary objective was to clarify the U.S. mission in Libya, the fact that citizens in all political parties were *less* certain that the U.S. had a clear goal there indicates suasive failure. He may have increased the approval of his decision, but that purpose was subordinate to the aim of defining the mission.

In the same post-speech survey concerning attitudes toward Libya in particular, Pew asked Americans their views on what America should be striving for in the Middle East. Eighty-one percent of respondents said that preventing the spread of terrorism should be a "very important" U.S. goal in the Middle East, whereas only 67 percent said that of preventing attacks on civilians. Interestingly, the goal of keeping oil prices low received the same percentage as the civilian objective. Encouraging the spread of democracy, on the other hand, was only viewed an important goal in the Middle East by 42 percent of respondents (The Pew

Research Center, April 5, 2011). In justifying U.S. military intervention in Libya, President Obama focused on the needs to protect civilians and encourage their pursuit of democracy. He did not link the Libya mission to stopping the spread of terrorism or maintaining a low price of oil. The omission of the oil subject was probably a couth move due to the alleged correlation between President Bush's Middle East wars and a pursuit of oil. However, perhaps if Obama had tied the Libya mission in to the broader goal of the fight against terrorism in the region, his speech would have been more effective at gaining public support of the operation, even if that was only an ancillary aim.

War Rhetoric Elements

Thoughtful Decision

"No decision weighs on me more than when to deploy our men and women in uniform," Obama said (Obama, 2011b). But, this statement – his only mention of the difficulty of deciding to command a military intervention – was not even said in reference to the Libya case in particular. However, the President included information that implies the thoughtfulness of the decision, such as his mention of consulting bipartisan leadership of Congress and detailing of all of the non-military efforts he took before ordering the military action. When his choice not to comment on the difficulty of deliberating the Libya mission is considered concurrently with the manner in which he described the situation there as compelling U.S. action, the resulting conclusion is that the decision may have been weighty, but because the circumstances so necessitated it, the decision itself required little deliberation.

Narrative

As detailed above, Obama conveyed a Libyan situation that necessitated U.S. intervention through narrative form. He presented the Libyan people as the heroes, Qaddafi as the villain, self-rule as the goal, and the international coalition's military intervention as the means of eventuating that objective. Because the narrative was examined earlier, at present it is sufficient to reiterate that it is both a rhetorical strategy Obama used and one of the elements of the Presidential War Rhetoric genre.

Exhortation to Unanimity

The most explicit exhortative instruction Obama included was in his closing statements: "Let us also remember that for generations, we have done the hard work of protecting our own people, as well as millions around the globe...Tonight, let us give thanks for the Americans who are serving through these trying times, and the coalition that is carrying our effort forward. And let us look to the future with confidence and hope" (Obama, 2011b). Obama, thereby, implored the American public to pensively consider the nation's past role as a global protector, citizens' present service (notably, the service was not specified as military), and world's optimistic future. The only allusion to the Libya situation concerned giving thanks to Americans serving; Obama did not overtly encourage a positive evaluation of the mission at any point in his speech. It is not that Obama's address was not exhortative with regard to legitimization of the Libya mission, but that his strategy

of exhortation did not include direct appeals. Rather, he built a case justifying his action and, thereby, implicitly exhorted approval.

Investiture

Interestingly, at several points in the address, Obama used inclusive language in general reference to the choice of military action: “we are naturally reluctant to use force,” “at this point, the United States and the world faced a choice,” “we must always measure our interests against the need for action,” and “we should not be afraid to act” (Obama, 2011b). When it came time to describe actually making the decision concerning intervention in Libya, though, Obama opted for personal pronouns: “I ordered warships” and “I refused to let that happen. And so...I authorized military action”. Then, when referring to the execution of his decision, he reverted back to inclusive language: i.e. “we struck regime forces” and “we’ve accomplished these objectives”.

This linguistic choice may seem trivial, but its implications are significant. Through the initial use of “we,” Obama gave Americans a seat at the decision table, thus reducing the impression that he reached his conclusion unilaterally. But, he both asserted his authority and assumed responsibility in a buck-stops-here manner by burdening himself alone with the ultimate decision. And then by being inclusive concerning the aftermath of the decision, Obama implied both a unified approval of his choice and allowed the American people to share in the mission’s successes, rather than taking the credit himself. Each of these subtexts aims at investiture, at

persuading the citizenry to grant him the ultimate authority that commander in chief status bestows.

But he also explicitly refers to himself in that role as well. Obama first titled himself commander in chief in the third paragraph, but he did so in reference to the ongoing military engagements, which would have already constitutionally granted him the role. The only other time he mentioned “Commander-in-Chief” was when he claimed he had “no greater responsibility than keeping this country safe” (Obama, 2011b). Perhaps his omission of the title with regard to the Libya mission aimed to downplay the commitment there; if he didn’t want the operation to be considered the actual service of the U.S. military, then it would make sense to omit the title that accompanies it.

Strategic Misrepresentations

Many of the strategic misrepresentations that Campbell and Jamieson used to exemplify this element were not understood as such until much later. Considering that the reason presidents misrepresent strategic conditions is because they have unique access to information and can purposefully convey it toward their own purpose, the discrepancies between how the president explained the strategic situation and what the case actually was will not come to light – unless there is a leak –until items are declassified. Nothing in President Obama’s speech has been credibly challenged for untruth, but it is always possible information could later surface that raises such questions.

Discussion

I have now both taken a situational approach in conducting a rhetorical criticism of President Obama's address to the nation on Libya and examined that speech in search of the historically recurrent elements in the Presidential War Rhetoric genre. Because I successfully identified four of the five components that all U.S. presidents have included in their war rhetoric – with the fifth difficult to know at this point – Obama's speech can be appropriately classified within the Presidential War Rhetoric genre. But it should be clear that the situational approach engendered considerably more insight into the President's remarks in terms of historical and present context, strategic choices, and audience effects. Therefore, although the recurrent constellation exists, it does not comprise the meat of the speech, nor appropriately elucidate the intent and execution.

If I had only analyzed Obama's speech from the generic perspective, I would have dismissed crucial parts, such as his use of refutation. However, although discovering these generic elements within the speech was not a very effective method of understanding Obama's address in particular, it does speak to a longer history of the presidency and the impacts presidents' rhetorical choices have on subsequent presidents.

Taking the situational approach enabled me to discover each of the strategies Obama used. Much of the content in President Obama's address was explicitly or implicitly referent to the situational characteristics, thus indicating the way in which they constrained his rhetorical choices. Taking the situational approach, thus, produced a deeper understanding of the context in which Obama spoke and of the

choices he made. And, when I compare those choices to the ones presidents have repeated through history, I am able to deduce which were the unique components of Obama's speech and which replicated previous strategies. Therefore, my method of merging the situational and generic approaches provides a more holistic understanding of the Obama case, the presidency, and the genre.

Thus, what of the President's address? His primary goal was to define the mission in Libya and signify a clear goal for it. Not only does an analysis of that attempt as manifested in the speech indicate a failure to achieve it, but so do the poll numbers that followed. Therefore, the rhetorical discourse Obama crafted in response to the exigence was not fitting to the situation. This finding implies that, in the future, a different strategy ought to be employed. Perhaps he should have explicitly stated, "The U.S. goal in Libya is" and followed it with a specific, concise mission statement. Also the American role should have been more clearly presented, which could maybe have been achieved by some combination of: adding more examples of what the U.S. would be doing, categorizing the American roles, and presenting the acts that the U.S. would and would not be doing closer together. Notably, Obama could have used the ambiguity in mission purposefully in order to allow flexibility to change strategies if need be or protect himself from criticisms of particular tactics. However, if that is the case, it was clearly not an effective choice.

Further, perhaps President Obama's lack of rhetorical success can be partially attributed to a heretofore unconsidered variable – *kairos*, or timing. Bruce E. Gronbeck defined rhetorical timing as "a communication variable representing the temporal intersection of (a) audience expectations, (b) a rhetor with appropriate

ethos, station, or power, (c) a rhetorical message (d) in thus-and-so a form“ (Gronbeck, 1974). As president, Obama clearly had appropriate ethos, station and power to create discourse on the Libya situation, and his choice to deliver a televised address to the nation as his so-called form was likewise appropriate given his position and the context. Since Obama’s controlling exigence was the American public’s lack of knowledge of the American role in Libya and their concomitant perception that the mission was not clearly defined, he chose to craft a rhetorical message that addressed those concerns, as well as bolstered approval for his decision. The only element left of those that Gronbeck asserted contribute to rhetorical timing that necessitates further investigation, then, is the audience’s expectations.

As previously addressed, a successful rhetor will fulfill an audience’s cultural and substantive expectations for their discourse. According to Gronbeck, rhetors must additionally satisfy an audience’s temporal expectations. He explained that “the rhetor must attempt to capture the ascendancy or intensity of expectations at their peak to give his message maximum impact” (Gronbeck, 1974). President Obama delivered his address to the nation 10 days after authorizing a no-fly zone, thereby enacting the beginning stage of the U.S. mission in Libya. It is quite likely that the American people expected a speech clarifying the mission much earlier than he delivered it. That reasoning would certainly help to explain the speech’s failure to turn attitudes in the way that Obama aimed. Perhaps, then, Obama’s communication strategy regarding the Libya intervention would have been most fitting to the situation had he delivered his discourse more closely to

commencement of the mission, been more specific regarding the U.S. role, and included a more explicit, concise mission statement.

Conclusion

Wayne Brockriede contended that “*useful* criticism, whatever else it may be, must function as an argument,” which will invite response or confrontation and “may begin or continue a process enhancing an understanding of a rhetorical experience or of rhetoric” (Brockriede, 1974). It is my hope that not only has the criticism I conducted achieved that sort of usefulness, but also that the situational approach to generic criticism that I have proposed will serve the same function for other critics analyzing different texts.

The greatest utility considering President Obama’s address to the nation on Libya within the Presidential War Rhetoric genre provided was to demonstrate that the components that have historically recurred were present in his speech as well. The fact that it did not provide greater insight into the particular case seems to lean toward affirming the concerns of scholars who argued that the generic approach to rhetorical criticism amounts taxonomy without substance or illumination. I posit that conducting a generic criticism from the situational approach fixes this elucidation problem.

The fact that the elements in the genre were present but were not critical components of the speech indicates that perhaps those components did not fuse to constitute a constellation that would be unrecognizable without one of the parts. In that case, the recurring aspects could be attributable to chance and not important

for successful war rhetoric. This fact does not signify a complete lack of utility, though, because, again, having a category that allows for a historical comparison is helpful for tracing historical strategies. Classifying genres by situation, specifically exigence, adds further value by assembling discourses that addressed similar problems, but not necessarily in the same way. And, when coupled with the situational method of criticism, the critic can gain particular and historical insight.

Perhaps the Presidential War Rhetoric genre ought to be reexamined to identify a more strongly fused set of elements in the like discourses. For instance, one element that appears to be present in various presidents' statements concerning war is one not addressed by Campbell and Jamieson – the jeremiad. Originally a Puritan sermonic style, the contemporary jeremiad uses secular values in the place of religious ones and social mythology to redefine history in what amounts to a civil religion (Johnson, 2009). Using the jeremiad involves identifying how a group has failed to live up to the values and the consequences of that action and/or the utopia that awaits a return to the “correct” path. In President Obama's address, for instance, he presented a failure to react to the atrocities in Libya as a failure by humanity and intervening as a means to an ideal end. Furthermore, Campbell and Jamieson explained that sometimes presidents adopt the role of national priest, such as when he must present a eulogy in response to a school shooting, but they did not identify this role as an aspect of Presidential War Rhetoric. However, in addition to presenting their decision to militarily engage in a conflict as a non-emotional one, presidents also use emotional appeals to convince the audience the action was necessary. Relatedly, and more importantly, presidents

justify their decisions *morally*, which has definite religious undertones. A moral decision is one that a national priest, not commander in chief makes. Therefore, perhaps a rhetorical choice to assume the role of national priest or use of jeremiad ought to be added to the Presidential War Rhetoric genre.

Additionally, perchance the inadequacies of the Presidential War Rhetoric genre could have been avoided had I chosen a different genre. For instance, I could have examined Obama's address through the lens of presidential crisis rhetoric. Theodore Windt identified three elements that distinguish presidential discourse during times of crisis from other utterances: [1] necessary statement of facts, [2] creation of a good-versus-evil melodrama, and [3] proposal of a policy and attempts to gain approval of it (Kuypers, 1997). These elements could be viewed as comprising the form that recurs in a Presidential Crisis Rhetoric genre. Windt maintained a view of rhetorical situation that is similar to mine; he viewed a crisis as only becoming a crisis when a president applies that label, and the new situation demands a decisive presidential response.

Alternatively, a genre could perhaps be created based on the findings of Elvin T. Lim, a scholar of government, rather than rhetoric. In a quantitative study, Lim found five recurring trends in presidential utterances: "the rhetoric of the rhetorical president is [1] *anti-intellectual*: it makes few references to cognitive and evaluative processes and states and eschews formal word choices for more colloquial ones; [2] *abstract*: it relies significantly on religious, poetic and idealistic references; [3] *assertive*: it is activist, it adopts a 'realist' preoccupation with the language of power and is very confident; [4] *democratic*: it is enthusiastically people-oriented,

compassionate, inclusive, and egalitarian; and [5] *conversational*: it uses a language that engenders an intimacy between the rhetor and his audience, focuses on the trustworthiness of the rhetor, and is highly anecdotal” (Lim, 2002).

Lim drew these conclusions from a content analysis of inaugural addresses and annual messages (State of the Union speeches) delivered from 1789 to 2000. Absent from his analysis, then, were war rhetoric discourses; it is quite plausible, however, that the characteristics he found would be representative of those utterances as well. Therefore, the form the attributes converge to comprise could be categorized as a genre with the general exigence of a president’s need to address the nation. And, specific exigences such as promoting a war or responding to a domestic tragedy could be classified as a war rhetoric and domestic tragedy rhetoric subgenre, respectively. A critic, then, could look for recurrences in manifestation of those characteristics in response to a particular subgeneric exigence.

Using either the Presidential Crisis Rhetoric genre or War Rhetoric subgenre instead of the Presidential War Rhetoric genre would have uncovered different aspects of the rhetoric. Each genre contains different elements that oblige a critic to pay attention to those particular rhetorical strategies. However, regardless of which genre I used, examining the discourse through generic elements alone would not have yielded nearly as holistic an understanding of the text as the situational approach did. Therefore, the most critical element of the generic criticism is not the choice of genre – although, that it obviously important and carries implications – but, rather, the concurrent use of the situational approach to analyze the speech and then compare the individual text to others similar to it in form.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 50 U.S.C. § 1541-1548. *50 USC chapter 33 - War powers resolution*. Retrieved from Legal Information Institute:
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/50/chapter-33>
- Allen, M. (1991). Meta-analysis comparing the persuasiveness of one-sided and two-sided messages. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 55, 390-404.
- Benoit, W. L. (2000). Beyond genre theory: The genesis of rhetorical action. *Communication Monographs*, 67 (2), 178-192.
- Bitzer, L. F. (1968). The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 1 (1), 1-14.
- Black, E. (1965). *Rhetorical criticism: A study in method*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Black, E. (1978). The sentimental style as escapism, or the devil with Dan'l Webster. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 75-86). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Bormann, E. G. (1978a). Generalizing about significant form: Science and humanism compared and contrasted. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 51-69). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Bormann, E. G. (1978b). Rhetorical criticism and significant form: A humanistic approach. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 165-187). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Brockriede, W. (1974). Rhetorical criticism as argument. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 60.
- Bumiller, E. (2011, March 16). Petraeus tells panel July drawdown in Afghanistan may include some combat troops. *The New York Times*.
- Burke, K. (2000). A grammar of motives. In B. Brummett (Ed.), *Reading rhetorical theory* (pp. 762-767). Orlando, Florida: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Burke, K. (1925, July). Psychology and form. *The Dial*, 34-46.
- Bush, G. (1991, January 14). *Statement on signing the resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iraq*. Retrieved from
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=19217>

- Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (1978). Form and genre in rhetorical criticism: An introduction. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 9-32). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (2008). *Presidents creating the presidency: Deeds done in words*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Carney, J. (2011, March 25). Press briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney, 3/25/2011. The White House Office of the Press Secretary.
- Carpenter, R. H. (1978). The historical jeremiad as rhetorical genre. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 103-117). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Ceaser, J. W., Thurow, G. E., Tulis, J., & Bessette, J. M. (1981). The rise of the rhetorical presidency. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 11 (2), 158-171.
- Christoffersen, J. (2012, December 9). Romney's '47 percent' chosen as year's best quote. *Associated Press*.
- Clifford, S. (2008, November 16). J. Crew benefits as Mrs. Obama wears the brand. *The New York Times*.
- CNN/Opinion Research Corporation. (2011, April 14). *CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll: April 9 to 10, 2011*. Retrieved from <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2011/images/04/13/rel6e.pdf>
- Conley, T. M. (1979). Ancient rhetoric and modern generic criticism. *Communication Quarterly*, 27 (4), 47-53.
- Cox, J. R. (1981). Argument and the "definition of the situation." *Central States Speech Journal*, 32, 197-205.
- Denham, R. D. (2006). Editor's introduction. In N. Frye, & R. D. Denham (Ed.), *Anatomy of criticism: Four essays* (Vol. 22, pp. xvii-lxxii). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Devitt, A. J. (1993). Generalizing about genre – New conceptions of an old concept. *College Composition and Communication*, 44 (4), 573-586.
- DeWinter, J. (2006). A bibliographic synthesis of rhetorical criticism. *Rhetoric Review*, 25 (4), pp. 388-407.

- Expressing the sense of Congress that the President is required to obtain in advance specific statutory authorization for the use of United States Armed Forces in response to civil unrest in Libya, H.Con.Res. 31, 112th Cong., 1st Sess. (2011).
- Fisher, W. R. (1979). A motive view of communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 56 (2), 131-139.
- Fisher, W. R. (1980). Genre: Concepts and applications in rhetorical criticism. *The Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 44, 289-299.
- Foucault, M. (1983, October - November). *Discourse and truth: The problematization of parrhesia*. Retrieved from Foucault.info:
<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>
- Foucault, M. (1989). *The archaeology of knowledge*. (T. P. Limited, Trans.) Abingdon, Oxon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Frye, N. (2006). Rhetorical criticism: Theory of genres. In N. Frye, & R. D. Denham (Ed.), *Anatomy of criticism: Four essays* (Vol. 22). Toronto, Canada: Toronto University Press.
- Gallup, Inc. (n.d.). *Presidential approval ratings: Barack Obama*. Retrieved December 17, 2012, from Gallup: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116479/barack-obama-presidential-job-approval.aspx>
- GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications. (2011, March). *The AP-GfK Poll: March, 2011*. Associated Press & GfK.
- Grannis, L. A. (1989). *Center of gravity: Libya 1989*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air War College.
- Gronbeck, B. E. (1978). Celluloid rhetoric: On genres of documentary . In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 139-161). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Gronbeck, B. E. (1974). Rhetorical timing in public communication. *Central States Speech Journal*, 25, 84-94.
- Halloran, M. (1978). Doing public business in public. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 118-138). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Harrell, J., & Linkugel, W. A. (1978). On rhetorical genre: An organizing perspective. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 11 (4), 262-281.

- Healy, J., & Schmidt, M. S. (2011, March 11). Iraqi delay hinders U.S. Planning. *The New York Times*.
- Holmes, S. (2008, November 19). Obama: Oratory and originality. *BBC News*.
- Hulse, C. (2011, March 28). *Congress returns to questions on Libya and budget*. Retrieved from The Caucus: The Politics and Government Blog of The New York Times: <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/28/congress-returns-to-questions-on-libya-and-budget/>
- Jacobson, G. C. (2010a). A tale of two wars: Public opinion on the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 40 (4), 585-610.
- Jacobson, G. C. (2010b). George W. Bush, the Iraq War, and the election of Barack Obama. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 40 (2), 207-224.
- Jamieson, K. H. (1975). Antecedent genre as rhetorical constraint. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 61, 406-415.
- Jamieson, K. H., & Campbell, K. K. (1982). Rhetorical hybrids: Fusions of generic elements. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68, 146-157.
- Johnson, D. (2009). The rhetoric of Huey P. Newton. *Southern Communication Journal*, 70 (1), 15-30.
- Kuypers, J. A. (1997). *Presidential crisis rhetoric and the press in the post-cold war world*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.
- Lafeber, W. (1986). "The lion in the path": The U.S. emergence as a world power. *Political Science Quarterly*, 101 (5), 705-718.
- Leff, M. (1986). Genre and paradigm in the second book of De oratore. *The Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 51, 308-325.
- Libya News - Revolution. (2011, February 25). *The New York Times*.
- Lim, E. T. (2002). Five trends in presidential rhetoric: An analysis of rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 32 (2), 328-366.
- Lucas, S. E. (1986). Genre criticism and historical context: The case of George Washington's first inaugural address. *The Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 51, 354-371.

- McGreal, C., Black, I., Helm, T., & Willsher, K. (2011, March 19). Allied strikes sweep Libya as west intervenes in conflict. *The Guardian*.
- McKinley, W. (2004). *Compilation of the messages and paper of the presidents: William McKinley - messages, proclamations, and executive orders relating to the Spanish-American War*. Sutherland, Juliet; Garcia, David; Online Distributed Proofreading Team.
- Measell, J. S. (1978). A comparative study of Prime Minister William Pitt and President Abraham Lincoln on suspension of habeas corpus. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 87-102). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Medhurst, M. J. (1996). A tale of two constructs: The rhetorical presidency versus presidential rhetoric. In M. J. Medhurst (Ed.), *Beyond the rhetorical presidency* (pp. XI-XXV). College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press.
- Miller, C. R. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 151-167.
- Noor, N. (2011, January 31). Tunisia: The revolution that started it all. *International Affairs Review*.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2012, March 28). *NATO and Libya*. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_71652.htm
- Obama, B. (2011a). *Remarks by the President on Libya*.
- Obama, B. (2011b). *Remarks by the President in address to the nation on Libya*. National Defense University, Washington, District of Columbia.
- Patton, J. H. (1976, Winter). Generic criticism: Typology at an inflated price. *Rhetoric Society of America*, 4-8.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 19). Orlando, Florida: Academic Press, Inc.
- Rosenfield, L. W. (1968). A case study in speech criticism: The Nixon-Truman analog. *Speech Monographs*, 35 (4), 435-450.
- Rutenberg, J., & Thee-Brenan, M. (2011, April 21). Nation's mood at lowest level in two years, poll shows. *The New York Times*.
- Shear, M. D. (2011, March 28). *Will Obama speech address region or just Libya?* Retrieved from The Caucus: The Politics and Government Blog of The New

- York Times: <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/28/will-obama-speech-address-region-or-just-libya/>
- Sheridan, M. B. (2011, October 20). Moammar Gaddafi is captured, killed as last loyalist holdout in Libya falls. *The Washington Post* .
- Simons, H. W. (1978). "Genre-alizing" about rhetoric: A scientific approach. In K. K. Campbell, & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Form and genre: Shaping rhetorical action* (pp. 33-50). Falls Church, VA: The Speech Communication Association.
- Smith, A. (1984). Who declares war?: Madison in 1812. In *The president's war powers: From the Federalists to Reagan*. New York: Academy of Political Science.
- St. John, B. (2011). *Libyan myths and realities*. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College Publishing House.
- The New York Times*. (2011, March 28). *Obama's remarks on Libya*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/29/us/politics/29prexy-text.html?pagewanted=all>
- The Pew Research Center. (2011, March 30). *2011 - the year of foreign news: Public stays focused on Japan as media turns to Libya*.
- The Pew Research Center. (2011, March 16). *Rising prices close in on jobs as top economic worry - Republicans are losing ground on the deficit, but Obama's not gaining*.
- The Pew Research Center. (2011, April 5). *Top Middle East priority - preventing terrorism: Goal of Libya operation less clear to public*.
- The White House. (2011, March 19). *President Obama Authorizes Limited Military Action in Libya*. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/03/19/president-obama-authorizes-military-action-libya>
- Truman, H. S. *President Harry S. Truman's address before a joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947*. Retrieved from Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp
- Tulis, J. (1987). *The rhetorical presidency*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- U.S. Const. art. II, § 2. *Constitution of the United States*. Retrieved from The Charters of Freedom: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html

U.S. Department of State. (2011, July 7). *Background note: Libya*.

Vatz, R. E. (1973). The myth of the rhetorical situation. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 6 (3), 154-161.

Vira, V., & Cordesman, A. H. (2011, June 20). The Libyan uprising: An uncertain trajectory. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies.

Weatherford, M. S. (2012). The wages of competence: Obama, the economy, and the 2010 midterm elections. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 42 (1), 8-39.

Whisnant, C. J. (2012, November 9). Foucault & discourse: A handout for HIS 389. Wofford College.

White, J. K. (2009). *Barack Obama's America: How new conceptions of race, family, and religion ended the Reagan era*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Zyskind, H. (1950). A rhetorical analysis of the Gettysburg Address. *The Journal of General Education*, 4 (3), 202-212.

APPENDIX A

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 28, 2011

Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya

National Defense University
Washington, D.C.

7:31 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Tonight, I'd like to update the American people on the international effort that we have led in Libya — what we've done, what we plan to do, and why this matters to us.

I want to begin by paying tribute to our men and women in uniform who, once again, have acted with courage, professionalism and patriotism. They have moved with incredible speed and strength. Because of them and our dedicated diplomats, a coalition has been forged and countless lives have been saved.

Meanwhile, as we speak, our troops are supporting our ally Japan, leaving Iraq to its people, stopping the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and going after al Qaeda all across the globe. As Commander-in-Chief, I'm grateful to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and to their families. And I know all Americans share in that sentiment.

For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use force to solve the world's many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act. That's what happened in Libya over the course of these last six weeks.

Libya sits directly between Tunisia and Egypt — two nations that inspired the world when their people rose up to take control of their own destiny. For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant — Muammar Qaddafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and

abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world — including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents.

Last month, Qaddafi's grip of fear appeared to give way to the promise of freedom. In cities and towns across the country, Libyans took to the streets to claim their basic human rights. As one Libyan said, "For the first time we finally have hope that our nightmare of 40 years will soon be over."

Faced with this opposition, Qaddafi began attacking his people. As President, my immediate concern was the safety of our citizens, so we evacuated our embassy and all Americans who sought our assistance. Then we took a series of swift steps in a matter of days to answer Qaddafi's aggression. We froze more than \$33 billion of Qaddafi's regime's assets. Joining with other nations at the United Nations Security Council, we broadened our sanctions, imposed an arms embargo, and enabled Qaddafi and those around him to be held accountable for their crimes. I made it clear that Qaddafi had lost the confidence of his people and the legitimacy to lead, and I said that he needed to step down from power.

In the face of the world's condemnation, Qaddafi chose to escalate his attacks, launching a military campaign against the Libyan people. Innocent people were targeted for killing. Hospitals and ambulances were attacked. Journalists were arrested, sexually assaulted, and killed. Supplies of food and fuel were choked off. Water for hundreds of thousands of people in Misurata was shut off. Cities and towns were shelled, mosques were destroyed, and apartment buildings reduced to rubble. Military jets and helicopter gunships were unleashed upon people who had no means to defend themselves against assaults from the air.

Confronted by this brutal repression and a looming humanitarian crisis, I ordered warships into the Mediterranean. European allies declared their willingness to commit resources to stop the killing. The Libyan opposition and the Arab League appealed to the world to save lives in Libya. And so at my direction, America led an effort with our allies at the United Nations Security Council to pass a historic resolution that authorized a no-fly zone to stop the regime's attacks from the air, and further authorized all necessary measures to protect the Libyan people.

Ten days ago, having tried to end the violence without using force, the international community offered Qaddafi a final chance to stop his campaign of killing, or face the consequences. Rather than stand down, his forces continued their advance, bearing down on the city of Benghazi, home to nearly 700,000 men, women and children who sought their freedom from fear.

At this point, the United States and the world faced a choice. Qaddafi declared he would show "no mercy" to his own people. He compared them to rats, and threatened to go door to door to inflict punishment. In the past, we have seen him hang civilians in the streets, and kill over a thousand people in a single day. Now we saw regime forces on the outskirts of the city. We knew that if we wanted -- if we waited one more day, Benghazi,

a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.

It was not in our national interest to let that happen. I refused to let that happen. And so nine days ago, after consulting the bipartisan leadership of Congress, I authorized military action to stop the killing and enforce U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973.

We struck regime forces approaching Benghazi to save that city and the people within it. We hit Qaddafi's troops in neighboring Ajdabiya, allowing the opposition to drive them out. We hit Qaddafi's air defenses, which paved the way for a no-fly zone. We targeted tanks and military assets that had been choking off towns and cities, and we cut off much of their source of supply. And tonight, I can report that we have stopped Qaddafi's deadly advance.

In this effort, the United States has not acted alone. Instead, we have been joined by a strong and growing coalition. This includes our closest allies -- nations like the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey -- all of whom have fought by our sides for decades. And it includes Arab partners like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, who have chosen to meet their responsibilities to defend the Libyan people.

To summarize, then: In just one month, the United States has worked with our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition, secure an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and establish a no-fly zone with our allies and partners. To lend some perspective on how rapidly this military and diplomatic response came together, when people were being brutalized in Bosnia in the 1990s, it took the international community more than a year to intervene with air power to protect civilians. It took us 31 days.

Moreover, we've accomplished these objectives consistent with the pledge that I made to the American people at the outset of our military operations. I said that America's role would be limited; that we would not put ground troops into Libya; that we would focus our unique capabilities on the front end of the operation and that we would transfer responsibility to our allies and partners. Tonight, we are fulfilling that pledge.

Our most effective alliance, NATO, has taken command of the enforcement of the arms embargo and the no-fly zone. Last night, NATO decided to take on the additional responsibility of protecting Libyan civilians. This transfer from the United States to NATO will take place on Wednesday. Going forward, the lead in enforcing the no-fly zone and protecting civilians on the ground will transition to our allies and partners, and I am fully confident that our coalition will keep the pressure on Qaddafi's remaining forces.

In that effort, the United States will play a supporting role -- including intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance, and capabilities to jam regime communications. Because of this transition to a broader, NATO-based coalition, the risk

and cost of this operation -- to our military and to American taxpayers -- will be reduced significantly.

So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: The United States of America has done what we said we would do.

That's not to say that our work is complete. In addition to our NATO responsibilities, we will work with the international community to provide assistance to the people of Libya, who need food for the hungry and medical care for the wounded. We will safeguard the more than \$33 billion that was frozen from the Qaddafi regime so that it's available to rebuild Libya. After all, the money doesn't belong to Qaddafi or to us -- it belongs to the Libyan people. And we'll make sure they receive it.

Tomorrow, Secretary Clinton will go to London, where she will meet with the Libyan opposition and consult with more than 30 nations. These discussions will focus on what kind of political effort is necessary to pressure Qaddafi, while also supporting a transition to the future that the Libyan people deserve -- because while our military mission is narrowly focused on saving lives, we continue to pursue the broader goal of a Libya that belongs not to a dictator, but to its people.

Now, despite the success of our efforts over the past week, I know that some Americans continue to have questions about our efforts in Libya. Qaddafi has not yet stepped down from power, and until he does, Libya will remain dangerous. Moreover, even after Qaddafi does leave power, 40 years of tyranny has left Libya fractured and without strong civil institutions. The transition to a legitimate government that is responsive to the Libyan people will be a difficult task. And while the United States will do our part to help, it will be a task for the international community and -- more importantly -- a task for the Libyan people themselves.

In fact, much of the debate in Washington has put forward a false choice when it comes to Libya. On the one hand, some question why America should intervene at all -- even in limited ways -- in this distant land. They argue that there are many places in the world where innocent civilians face brutal violence at the hands of their government, and America should not be expected to police the world, particularly when we have so many pressing needs here at home.

It's true that America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs. And given the costs and risks of intervention, we must always measure our interests against the need for action. But that cannot be an argument for never acting on behalf of what's right. In this particular country -- Libya -- at this particular moment, we were faced with the prospect of violence on a horrific scale. We had a unique ability to stop that violence: an international mandate for action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves. We also had the ability to stop Qaddafi's forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground.

To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader and — more profoundly — our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are. Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.

Moreover, America has an important strategic interest in preventing Qaddafi from overrunning those who oppose him. A massacre would have driven thousands of additional refugees across Libya's borders, putting enormous strains on the peaceful — yet fragile — transitions in Egypt and Tunisia. The democratic impulses that are dawning across the region would be eclipsed by the darkest form of dictatorship, as repressive leaders concluded that violence is the best strategy to cling to power. The writ of the United Nations Security Council would have been shown to be little more than empty words, crippling that institution's future credibility to uphold global peace and security. So while I will never minimize the costs involved in military action, I am convinced that a failure to act in Libya would have carried a far greater price for America.

Now, just as there are those who have argued against intervention in Libya, there are others who have suggested that we broaden our military mission beyond the task of protecting the Libyan people, and do whatever it takes to bring down Qaddafi and usher in a new government.

Of course, there is no question that Libya — and the world — would be better off with Qaddafi out of power. I, along with many other world leaders, have embraced that goal, and will actively pursue it through non-military means. But broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake.

The task that I assigned our forces — to protect the Libyan people from immediate danger, and to establish a no-fly zone — carries with it a U.N. mandate and international support. It's also what the Libyan opposition asked us to do. If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would likely have to put U.S. troops on the ground to accomplish that mission, or risk killing many civilians from the air. The dangers faced by our men and women in uniform would be far greater. So would the costs and our share of the responsibility for what comes next.

To be blunt, we went down that road in Iraq. Thanks to the extraordinary sacrifices of our troops and the determination of our diplomats, we are hopeful about Iraq's future. But regime change there took eight years, thousands of American and Iraqi lives, and nearly a trillion dollars. That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya.

As the bulk of our military effort ratchets down, what we can do -- and will do -- is support the aspirations of the Libyan people. We have intervened to stop a massacre, and we will work with our allies and partners to maintain the safety of civilians. We will deny the regime arms, cut off its supplies of cash, assist the opposition, and work with other nations to hasten the day when Qaddafi leaves power. It may not happen overnight, as a

badly weakened Qaddafi tries desperately to hang on to power. But it should be clear to those around Qaddafi, and to every Libyan, that history is not on Qaddafi's side. With the time and space that we have provided for the Libyan people, they will be able to determine their own destiny, and that is how it should be.

Let me close by addressing what this action says about the use of America's military power, and America's broader leadership in the world, under my presidency.

As Commander-in-Chief, I have no greater responsibility than keeping this country safe. And no decision weighs on me more than when to deploy our men and women in uniform. I've made it clear that I will never hesitate to use our military swiftly, decisively, and unilaterally when necessary to defend our people, our homeland, our allies and our core interests. That's why we're going after al Qaeda wherever they seek a foothold. That is why we continue to fight in Afghanistan, even as we have ended our combat mission in Iraq and removed more than 100,000 troops from that country.

There will be times, though, when our safety is not directly threatened, but our interests and our values are. Sometimes, the course of history poses challenges that threaten our common humanity and our common security — responding to natural disasters, for example; or preventing genocide and keeping the peace; ensuring regional security, and maintaining the flow of commerce. These may not be America's problems alone, but they are important to us. They're problems worth solving. And in these circumstances, we know that the United States, as the world's most powerful nation, will often be called upon to help.

In such cases, we should not be afraid to act — but the burden of action should not be America's alone. As we have in Libya, our task is instead to mobilize the international community for collective action. Because contrary to the claims of some, American leadership is not simply a matter of going it alone and bearing all of the burden ourselves. Real leadership creates the conditions and coalitions for others to step up as well; to work with allies and partners so that they bear their share of the burden and pay their share of the costs; and to see that the principles of justice and human dignity are upheld by all.

That's the kind of leadership we've shown in Libya. Of course, even when we act as part of a coalition, the risks of any military action will be high. Those risks were realized when one of our planes malfunctioned over Libya. Yet when one of our airmen parachuted to the ground, in a country whose leader has so often demonized the United States — in a region that has such a difficult history with our country — this American did not find enemies. Instead, he was met by people who embraced him. One young Libyan who came to his aid said, "We are your friends. We are so grateful to those men who are protecting the skies."

This voice is just one of many in a region where a new generation is refusing to be denied their rights and opportunities any longer.

Yes, this change will make the world more complicated for a time. Progress will be uneven, and change will come differently to different countries. There are places, like Egypt, where this change will inspire us and raise our hopes. And then there will be places, like Iran, where change is fiercely suppressed. The dark forces of civil conflict and sectarian war will have to be averted, and difficult political and economic concerns will have to be addressed.

The United States will not be able to dictate the pace and scope of this change. Only the people of the region can do that. But we can make a difference.

I believe that this movement of change cannot be turned back, and that we must stand alongside those who believe in the same core principles that have guided us through many storms: our opposition to violence directed at one's own people; our support for a set of universal rights, including the freedom for people to express themselves and choose their leaders; our support for governments that are ultimately responsive to the aspirations of the people.

Born, as we are, out of a revolution by those who longed to be free, we welcome the fact that history is on the move in the Middle East and North Africa, and that young people are leading the way. Because wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States. Ultimately, it is that faith -- those ideals -- that are the true measure of American leadership.

My fellow Americans, I know that at a time of upheaval overseas -- when the news is filled with conflict and change -- it can be tempting to turn away from the world. And as I've said before, our strength abroad is anchored in our strength here at home. That must always be our North Star -- the ability of our people to reach their potential, to make wise choices with our resources, to enlarge the prosperity that serves as a wellspring for our power, and to live the values that we hold so dear.

But let us also remember that for generations, we have done the hard work of protecting our own people, as well as millions around the globe. We have done so because we know that our own future is safer, our own future is brighter, if more of mankind can live with the bright light of freedom and dignity.

Tonight, let us give thanks for the Americans who are serving through these trying times, and the coalition that is carrying our effort forward. And let us look to the future with confidence and hope not only for our own country, but for all those yearning for freedom around the world.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America. (Applause.) Thank you.

END

7:58 P.M. EDT

APPENDIX B



Office of Research Integrity

December 10, 2012

Amy Schumacher
916 10th Street
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Ms. Schumacher:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract to conduct a generic rhetorical criticism of President Barack Obama's March 28, 2011 Address to the Nation on Libya. After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study consists of publicly available data it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director
Office of Research Integrity

WE ARE... MARSHALL.

401 11th Street, Suite 1300 • Huntington, West Virginia 25701 • Tel 304/696-7320
A State University of West Virginia • An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer