

Historical and Close-Reading Analysis of State of the Union Addresses
Examining Two Approaches in Rhetorical Analysis

by

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ABSTRACT

This research conducts two methods of rhetorical analysis of State of the Union Addresses: 1. Computational linguistic analysis of all State of the Union Addresses from 1790-2007, and 2. Close-readings and rhetorical analyses of two addresses: one by President Truman and one by President Reagan. This research shows the following key findings: 1. I am able to see general shifts in the authors' approaches to the State of the Union Address through historical computational analyses of the content of all speeches, and 2. Through close readings, I can understand the impact of the author's ethos and the historical context on the addresses, something that would not be readily revealed in a computational analysis. This study starts with a historical computational linguistic analysis of all State of the Union Addresses between 1790 and 2007. The study follows with close-readings of two State of the Union Addresses from the early and late Cold War period in-context: 1. Harry Truman's 1951 Address and 2. Ronald Reagan's 1986 Address. The main conclusions drawn from this research are that close-readings of State of the Union Addresses cannot be replaced by computational analyses, but can work in tandem with computerized text analysis to reveal shifts in rhetorical and topical features. This paper argues that there must be more close analyses in coordination with large-scale text analysis in order to understand the complexities of rhetorical situations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my dear old dog Wallaby who has walked and sat with me through the years of this PhD process. I got her as a pup when I started this process. As I finish this project she snoozes at my feet.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
CHAPTER	
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Literature Review	8
Previous All-Address Studies.....	8
Criticisms of State of the Union Analysis	10
State of the Union Addresses as a Trail of Text.....	13
Discourse Analysis and State of the Union Analysis.....	15
Different Fields and Overlapping Studies	19
3 Historical Analysis.....	22
State of the Union in Context	22
Chronology, Structure, and Form.....	24
Method of Delivery.....	29
Methods of Analysis: Corpus Approach	34
Dealing with Lexical Shifts	36
Results of Corpus-based Analysis	40
Rhetorical Proof Analysis: An Experimental Approach.....	56
Conclusions	65

CHAPTER	Page
4 Truman’s 1951 Address	66
Truman’s Character	69
Context of the 1951 Address	76
Media Response	86
Close Reading of the 1951 Address	95
5 Reagan’s 1986 Address	121
Reagan’s Character	121
Context of the 1986 Address	129
Media Response	132
Close Reading of the 1986 Address	135
6 Analysis through a Utopian Lens	157
Utopian Dreams: Aiming for a ‘Better World’	159
Utopianism and Political Ideology	163
Technology and Utopia.....	167
Religious Views and Utopia	169
Necessity of Utopian Visions in Political Discourse	172
7 Conclusions.....	176
References	181

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Methods of Delivery of State of the Union Addresses.....	30-31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Percentage of ‘God’ in State of the Union Addresses	37
2. Religion Indicators (%)	38
3. Military Indicators (%)	41
4. Female Indicators (%)	43
5. Ethnic/Race Indicators (%)	44
6. Economy Indicators (%)	47
7. Health Indicators (%)	49
8. Education Indicators (%)	49
9. Agriculture Indicators (%)	51
10. Patriotism Indicators (%)	52
11. Emotional Appeal Indicators (%)	54
12. Personalization Indicators (%)	55
13. Rhetorical Proof Color Circles of Various Texts	64

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration	Page
1. President Truman’s Official Portrait.....	69
2. Shootout at Blair House	80
3. Newspaper Headlines from the 1951 Address	88
4. Truman’s Schedule on the day of the 1951 Address	93
5. Prior to the 1948 Address	94
6. Truman Giving his State of the Union Address	94
7. In Congress – Truman Giving His Address.....	95
8. Soviet Propaganda Poster.....	115
9. The Space Shuttle Challenger	121
10. New York Times Cover on the Day of the Shuttle Disaster	129
11. “Reagan Writing His State of the Union Address”	131
12. Reagan Delivering his 1986 State of the Union	135

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Text analysis is generally a process whereby Rhetoricians and Linguists examine one piece of writing, one speech, one discourse, or one genre in terms of the author, audience, and context, or in terms of linguistic or rhetorical features. However, there exist rare opportunities to analyze texts that are presented every year – where the text is part of an institution and authors change. I call these types of texts ‘periodic texts’ due to their presentation on a regular basis – usually annually. In this study I analyze periodic texts familiar to many citizens of the United States – the President’s annual State of the Union Address. The President gives this address, as required by the Constitution, to both report on the status of the nation and to set an agenda for the future. State of the Union Addresses are comprised of a trail of text spanning well over two hundred years and over 40 presidents. This study looks at the techniques and problems of analyzing such a broad collection of texts using rhetorical analysis, and conducts two methods of study of periodic addresses.

Background of the Problem. Periodic texts are generally found to come from positions and situations of power. The Queen’s Speech from the Throne, University Commencement Addresses, and the President’s State of the Union Address are all examples of periodic texts. The dynamism with periodic texts is the author, context, and audience change over time. However, over time, the text is still presented from one institution – a seat of power – and projects that power beyond one individual. This shift in author and audience is explained by and accounted for in Rhetorical Analysis because

authorship is social and goes beyond an individual and represents an institution and seat of power. Additionally, State of the Union Addresses, as a whole body of text, represents several million words – from a research point of view we must ask: how does one conduct a rhetorical analysis of such a large and complex collection of text?

An additional problem with the State of the Union Addresses is that the text is an action of an institution coupled with a projection of power of the holder of the seat of power. The holder of power projects his or her own agenda through the institution. The presentation of the text, in the case of periodic texts, regardless of content, is an action in itself – much as Austin (1962) said that speech is an act. The action of a periodic text is to reinforce and perpetuate the legitimacy of an institution and power holders such as the monarchy, university, and presidency. The act of presenting a periodic text coupled with the content and agenda of the speaker allows that speaker, given the chair of power, to use the reinforcement of an institution to project an agenda or motivate a group of people.

Statement of the Problem. Periodic texts offer the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics a unique opportunity to see how power is projected beyond an individual or group of individuals such as a President or Monarch and his or her cabinet. However, there are few studies of periodic texts in the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics. Additionally, due to the lack of very many studies of periodic texts the tools of analysis of these types of texts are not well-developed. There is a gap in the knowledge of how to analyze periodic texts such as the State of the Union Addresses in the field of Rhetoric.

The fields of Rhetoric, Linguistics, and Discourse Analysis need the development of analysis techniques and better understanding of quantitative/qualitative approaches in the

analysis of periodic texts. This study helps fill the gap in knowledge of State of the Union Addresses and periodic texts and offers the validation of two types of analysis.

Purpose of the Study. This study, in order to demonstrate the validity of two types of analysis of periodic texts such as the State of the Union Addresses, does the following:

1. Conduct quantitative all-address study (1790-2007) of State of the Union Addresses looking at overall shifts in the address delivery and topics over time.
2. Examine two addresses as case studies using qualitative analysis and standard Rhetorical Analysis techniques.
3. Compare the two case studies for their forward-looking or agenda-setting rhetorical technique using a utopian lens.

This research is important because it exposes the complex problems of periodic texts such as the State of the Union Addresses. Additionally, this project can help researchers understand how delivery methods changed in history with the advent of media.

Research Questions. This study attempts to answer the question: What methods are useful in analysis of State of the Union addresses? In addition, how do speakers who inhabit the seat of power drive their agenda – what rhetorical techniques do they use and how do rhetorical features change over time?

Hypothesis. The quantitative portion of this study will show that there is a shift in the approach of the speakers with the advent of media – when the State of the Union Addresses went from being presented as a speech only in the Congress to one presented to a wider live audience on the radio and television. The close-reading (qualitative) analyses will demonstrate how a close reading and analysis of two individual State of the Union Addresses reveal more understanding of addresses than a pure computational text analysis.

Research Design. There are two general methods in this study:

1. **Quantitative analysis of all addresses involving 40 presidents and 220 Speeches** – using computational analysis techniques looking at word categories as clusters (rather than single words). The authors are the presidents and their staff – administration members who assisted the President with the writing of their addresses.
2. **Qualitative analysis of two case studies:** 1. Harry Truman’s 1951 State of the Union Address & 2. Ronald Reagan’s 1986 State of the Union Address – using situational rhetorical analysis techniques where I look at the character of the author, historical and political context for the address, press reporting and reaction to the address, and a close reading of the address. The qualitative

analysis is followed by a comparison of the two case studies in terms of the rhetorical strategy of describing the future (future setting).

Theoretical Framework. There are four general theoretical frameworks used in this study. The first is to use the classical rhetorical analysis techniques described by Aristotle where I look at Author (character and presidency), Context/Purpose (historical and political), and Audience (part of which is seen by media responses). Due to the lack of evidence Rhetoricians can only conduct audience analysis by looking at media reactions. This is one of the more problematic parts of an analysis of State of the Union Addresses.

The second theoretical framework is to apply Lloyd Bitzer's (1968) theory of the Rhetorical Situation – especially in the case of the quantitative analysis portion of this study. Bitzer's theory looks at the "Rhetorical Situation" where a speech such as the State of the Union Address is subject to constraints and sits in exigency, a moment of uncertainty, where something must be done or said.

The third framework is to apply the notion of utopianism or forward-looking references as a rhetorical device to an analysis of the two address case studies.

The fourth framework of analysis is to pull from the field of discourse analysis and corpus linguistics using word-category analysis using computational analysis techniques.

Quantitative analysis assumptions. The historical analysis of the State of the Union Addresses assumes that the addresses are all equal in their weight – even with varying lengths in terms of time of delivery and context of delivery – meaning that each address is treated equally on a long-term scale – one per year. It is also assumed that the

addresses represent the administration at the time. Another assumption is that the presidents had similar control of their addresses.

Qualitative analysis assumptions. It is assumed that, because the selected case studies occur in the second term of each president they are not impacted by re-election efforts and, because they occur just after the president was re-elected to the second term they do not take the form of being purely reflections of an out-going president. Additionally, because the addresses both take place during the Cold War and after the advent of media (publicized addresses) they are both media-affected.

Limitations. The quantitative portion of this study has several limitations. One limitation is that, due to the use of general categories we may dilute the importance or impact of certain vocabulary – or word categories. Meaning, perhaps in one era certain words had more impact on an audience than in other eras. Also, certain topics may have more rhetorical impact than in other times – determining impact is highly problematic due to the limit of data. Impact could be measured by analyzing media response – as I do in this study – but there is still a lack of primary data from actual audience members. Another limitation is that the presidents had a varying grip on power and gave the addresses to an audience of varying political leanings. Early addresses were given to only the Congress – some of the congresses were in the political opposition to the president at the time. Therefore, it is possible that some addresses are more constrained than other addresses because the President had varying amounts of political leverage while giving the address.

The case studies (qualitative analysis) also have limitations – one is that the media coverage discovered in the analysis is not exhaustive. Only major news outlets were examined. Additionally, the first case study – Harry Truman’s 1951 address – took place in war time and the second address took place during relative peace so it is difficult to equate the two case studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous historical studies of State of the Union Addresses and presidential speeches (Lim 2002, Teten 2003, Hoffman & Howard 2006) have shown trends in the uses of key words over time, as well as shifts in language use and general structure of the addresses. However, these studies have not yet fully explored the trends of rhetorical structure and policy content of the addresses. Complete studies of every State of the Union address are still rare, but with computational analysis techniques Rhetoricians are now afforded an opportunity to analyze a body of text comprised of over 1.7 million words (equivalent to over 3000 pages of printed text) in a shorter period of time than ever before

2.1. Previous All-Address Studies

Studying State of the Union addresses is nothing new in the fields of rhetoric and linguistics or political science, though all-address studies are rarer. In 1956, William Binkley's study of the President as Chief Legislator suggested several periods of presidential rhetoric. In the early 1960s Seymour Fersh looked at the State of the Union Addresses from 1790 to 1959 and noticed that the address changed from a report or series of reports to a document used to discuss future endeavors by the government (Fersh 1961). John Kessel conducted early computerized text analyses in the 1970s in order to study the behavior of the president (Kessel 1974, 1977). Matthew Moen (1988) conducted a content analysis of President Ronald Reagan's addresses and John Kingdon looked at the State of the Union Address to study how the president sets agendas (1995).

Kim Quaile Hill (1998) looked at reciprocal influence on the public and the president in SUA content. More recent studies of the State of the Union Addresses include Rudalevige's (2002) study of how the State of the Union Address fits in to the president's broader agenda.

Most studies of Presidential Rhetoric focus on limited or selective studies of State of the Union addresses, inaugural speeches, presidential policy speeches, but few analyses have examined all of the State of the Union Addresses for word classes and rhetorical appeal indicators. Lim, in 2002, conducted a study of a combination of State of the Union Addresses and Inaugural Addresses in order to examine changes in the use of certain key words, but the study was limited by the assumption that one could combine two different genres with different goals into one group. Lim's study also focused on occurrences of single words. However, as we will see in this chapter, the occurrences of single words are subject to historical trends in usage and are not necessarily conclusive of change in topic. Word-groups and categories work better to show trends in usage.

Teten, in 2003 studied a selection of State of the Union Addresses and came to a shaky conclusion that the State of the Union Address's history can be divided into three eras: the founding, the traditional, and the modern. He argues that the modern State of the Union Address started with President Wilson. However, his study only randomly selected one of Wilson's speeches. As I show in my study, I see similar results for President Wilson's first State of the Union Address, but his following speeches fall into line with the trends of the time. Teten's study was useful in showing that the nature and word length of the address began to change in the early twentieth century, but as shown in the results, this change was mostly due to differences between spoken and written discourse,

rather than the result of one statesman setting precedents. After examining the previous studies of State of the Union Addresses, I realized that an all-inclusive, structured, and comprehensive study of the State of the Union Addresses needed to be completed since most studies in the past had focused on parts of the history, partial collections of the State of the Union Addresses, or mixed collections of State of the Union, inaugural speeches, and policy speeches.

2.2. Criticism of Studies of State of the Union Addresses

There are some outspoken critics of State of the Union analyses. Some critics have stated that looking at the State of the Union Addresses as one body of text is similar to looking into one's trash can:

SUAs as a source of data have been somewhat maligned as well. They have sometimes been marginalized, disparaged, and occasionally ignored as a source of data. John Kingdon calls them a "classic garbage can"; a whole host of things are dumped into them. George Edwards and Dan Wood are critical of using SUAs as a data source for presidential priorities. Some studies of presidential rhetoric specifically exclude SUA's as a source of data because of their broad nature or because their timing is nondiscretionary. Studying SUAs in their own right as a form of political communication with Congress has received little attention.

(Hoffman & Howard 5)

I don't agree that the State of the Union is a “classical garbage can.” In fact, it represents one of the most periodic and focused records of history, public relations, and rhetoric available for study. However, if researchers see it as similar to sifting through a garbage can, we should still admit that one can learn a lot from sifting through the garbage of society (much as archaeologists do when excavating an old garbage dump from centuries before). However, I would agree that looking at a body of text gathered from over 220 years of history is daunting, but I think that if I take in to consideration shifts in method, context, and audience, I am still able to conduct a study. The first constraint, or caution in a full-scale study is to recognize that State of the Union Addresses cannot be considered as a single genre:

As we noted, the variation among State of the Union addresses is great, so great that it may seem presumptuous to approach them as a genre. Genres do not exist in any fixed and final sense; they are only critics' tools, to be judged by the illumination they provide. In the case of State of the Union addresses, while recognizing their variety, we offer an analysis based on a few key similarities that have existed through time and reveal the functions that this rhetorical act serves for the presidency as an institution (Campbell 54).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the method of delivery has changed over the years. With these cautions in mind, I gathered every address from George Washington to George W. Bush and used a consistent frequency and percentage analysis of key word groups in the texts and kept in mind the conclusions of previous studies that the addresses

are not linear in its nature, but rather have a varied audience, context, and purpose. This study focused on variations in general content as well as indicators of rhetorical appeals.

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When conducting an address-by-address computational analysis of word groups, I observed a shift in structure from impersonal report-type addresses to persuasive speeches that set about to connect with an audience rather than simply report the status of the nation. In addition, analysts can use computational analysis to see how State of the Union Addresses stand out as a genre. Using word classes based on topics and rhetorical appeals I see shifts based on both context and speaker. This study also demonstrates the use of text-based computerized analysis in rhetorical and linguistic studies. Results from this study are rich in meaning and also open more opportunities for studies of rhetoric in history. This study reiterates and reinforces the results and conclusions from some of the past studies as well as reveals how the addresses became more rhetorical over time.

2.3. State of the Union Addresses as a Trail of Text

The State of the Union Address (SUA) was first given by President George Washington on January 8, 1790 in New York City, the provisional capital of the United States. Washington's speech was short, only one thousand words, and was given to a crowd of his fellow revolutionaries rather than a whole nation, but it was the beginning of a series of addresses that has occurred every year (with the exception of inaugural years) for 227 years. Washington, in his first address looked to the future, and highlighted the need for a common defense of the country, a standardized system of measurements, and the advancement of agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing. However, centuries later, addresses still focus on policies, but have become inspirational public relations speeches that attempt to unify the people. On January 31, 2006, President George W. Bush started his speech looking to the past with a reference to history:

Every time I'm invited to this rostrum, I'm humbled by the privilege, and mindful of the history we've seen together. We have gathered under this Capitol dome in moments of national mourning and national achievement. We have served America through one of the most consequential periods of our history -- and it has been my honor to serve with you (Bush, 2006, State of the Union Address)

Bush's speech, one of looking back to history and forward to the future, attempting to unify and direct, a public relations opportunity, was drastically different in purpose, audience, and context than Washington's first State of the Union Address. However, the

two speeches share one common trait: recognition of the duty of the president to report the state of the union to the nation.

The State of the Union addresses are defined not only by differences in history, author, audience, and context, but also by method. In the State of the Union the president has had to take on increasing roles over time:

During the address, presidents will report on executive actions they have taken in their role as chief executive, and may even discuss future executive actions they will take. As commander-in-chief, they will talk about the state of the armed forces. Wearing their diplomatic hat, presidents will address relations with foreign nations (Hoffman & Howard 3)

The 227 year textual trail from Washington's first State of the Union Address offers researchers with an unprecedented opportunity to understand the change in presidential rhetoric of a period spanning across four centuries and numerous policies, wars, depressions, commerce, debates, social issues, and governmental issues. Since the president is required by the U.S. Constitution to periodically make a progress report to the nation, and because each report is different in content and aim, I am able to take the addresses over the last 227 years and analyze them in terms of rhetorical content and topical content, and I am able to note several patterns and shifts in content over time.

In this project I show that through computational analysis of the content of each speech I am able to see general patterns in topics, personalization, and rhetorical methods by the president in the address. This technique coupled with qualitative analysis

techniques – looking at the speaker’s background, political and historical context, and audience reactions can reveal a great deal about the uses of State of the Union addresses. A topical and rhetorically-based computational analysis of the State of the Union addresses can also be used to identify changes in register, changes in usage, changes in rhetorical approach, changes in political subject, and changes in ideology (among others). This study also shows the rise of topic groups such as military words, health related words, female related words, and education words among others that tie well into the findings of previous studies showing that there are several periods of the addresses that are defined by changes in method, purpose, and audience of the addresses. I also demonstrate a method of analysis that takes into account lexical shifts over long time periods. This study must pull on techniques from not just the field of Rhetoric, but from the interdisciplinary field of discourse analysis.

2.4. Discourse Analysis and State of the Union Analysis

A study of State of the Union Addresses requires the tools of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a fairly new field of study. Discourse analysis requires both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Wood and Kroger in their 2000 work examine the concerns and methods researchers can use when conducting studies of discourse. They say: “Discourse analysis entails more than a shift in methodology from general, abstracted, quantitative to a particularized, detailed, qualitative approach” (3). Thus, a study of discourse, such as this study of State of the Union addresses must incorporate multiple methods that connect qualitative and quantitative approaches. Potter, in 1997, defines the way that analysts need to treat discourse analysis:

[Discourse analysis] has an analytic commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices. That is, the focus is not on language as an abstract entity such as a lexicon and set of grammatical rules (in linguistics), a system of differences (in structuralism), a set of rules for transforming statements (in Foucauldian genealogies). Instead, it is the medium for interaction; analysis of discourse becomes, then, the analysis of what people do (Potter 146).

Therefore, with Potter's definition of discourse analysis in mind, when studying State of the Union Addresses researchers must see the addresses as a medium for action – and must analyze what people do with their words in the addresses. This requires a thorough approach of analyzing not just the words themselves, but the background and context of the language. Additionally, this requires researchers to reveal common techniques used in a discourse such as the State of the Union Addresses.

In the proceedings of the 2008 first Conference in the 'Constraints in Discourse' (at the University of Dortmund) Anton Benz and Peter Kuhnlein discuss the previous lack of focus of the developing field of Discourse Analysis. They also point out the importance of rhetorical relations in discourse analysis:

The theory of rhetorical relations is a cornerstone of discourse analysis. In general, it is undisputed that the meaning of text is more than the conjunction of the meanings of its sentences, but there are different

opinions about the cognitive status of rhetorical relations. One position assumes that rhetorical relations are part of the linguistic inventory of language users and therefore of their linguistic competence (Benz & Kuhnlein 3).

The conclusions of the 2008 Constraints in Discourse Conference reinforce the concept that discourse analysis requires more development of rhetorical analysis techniques. This need for better understanding of rhetorical analysis techniques in discourse analysis offers an opening for analysis of a body of text such as State of the Union Addresses.

State of the Union Addresses have varying purposes, but one purpose they share is that they are all used as language of action. Austin, in his series of lectures turned into a book called *How to Do Things With Words* (1962), put forth the theory that language has more use than conveying meaning to an audience. Rather, language is, in itself, an action. Austin offered three features of speech acts:

- a) Their locutionary or referential meaning – what is the language about?
- b) Their illocutionary force – meaning, what does the speaker do with the language?
- c) Their perlocutionary force – how do the speech acts effect their audience?

In terms of analysis of State of the Union Addresses analysts can use Austin's speech act theory to help form an analysis structure of the State of the Union discourse over time.

Specifically, I can look at the content of the language in addresses, what the president hopes to do with the address, and how the audience reacts to the address. In this study, this would translate to the following steps of analysis:

1. Do a content analysis – historical study of addresses
2. Look at the context and issues at stake in the addresses by examining the political landscape and the personality and background of the president
3. Examine the reactions to addresses by certain audiences.

Wood and Kroger also offer the use of conducting discourse analysis – such as an analysis of political discourse. They say in their 2000 work:

Discourse analysis can contribute to change the way that people talk. And again, because talk is action, change in talk is more important not as something associated with change in practice; it is a change in practice. Discourse analysis can point to the ways in which certain practices serve to obscure and therefore perpetuate what is taken for granted (13-14).

Additionally, Wood and Kroger discuss how discourse analysis is a technique that transcends fields of study – it is multidisciplinary. Discourse analysis grew out of the fields of philosophy, sociology, linguistics, and literary theory. “Discourse analysis today is both multi and interdisciplinary” (Woods & Kroger 18).

Other techniques useful in a study of State of the Union addresses, or political addresses of any nature can also include the approach of Glaser & Strauss (1967) who discussed ‘grounded theory’. Also useful to this type of study is the technique of narrative analysis, described by Sarbin in 1986. These approaches require more than methodology, but also involve the analysis of relationships of language to context (Woods & Kroger 27) – essentially coming at the field of Rhetoric from another angle.

2.5. Different Fields & Overlapping Studies

Studying Presidential communication is nothing new. However, because of the multidisciplinary approaches and different fields that overlap in Presidential communication some fields are not always aware of the work in other fields (such as speech communication, linguistics, rhetoric, political science, and sociology – to name a few). Craig Allen Smith and Kathy B. Smith, editors of *The President and the Public*, note the problem of this issue. When critiquing the lack of awareness between the different fields concerned with presidential communication they say:

Having acknowledged that the process of communication is integrally related to the exercise of presidential power, students of presidential power have generally failed to consult the extant research literature in the discipline whose province this is: Speech Communication. At a recent American Political Speech Association meeting, for example, one panelist averred that presidential speech-making remains barely examined – this despite some 226 studies of presidents and their communication published

through 1979 in Speech-Communication journals. Indeed, except for Presidential Studies Quarterly, it is almost impossible to find references to the discipline's journals in the historical and political journals. (Smith and Smith, xiv)

This lack of awareness of the work conducted on similar topics in other fields of study seems to be rampant in academics. With this critique in mind, I can say that studies of presidential communications such as the State of the Union addresses are not rare, but are carried in disciplines. In the field of Rhetoric the study of presidential communications still requires study. However, in this study I will apply techniques of analysis that are familiar in the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics.

Some researchers in discourse analysis point out that individual discourse studies – such as a study of State of the Union addresses – are not privy to just Rhetoric and Linguistics or Speech Communication for that matter. Rather, they use tools from one field to research topics in other fields. Stephen Yarborough in his work *After Rhetoric: The Study of Discourse Beyond Language and Culture*, contends that, in discussions of language and intent researchers are caught in a dilemma of doctrine in our own fields – much as the issue of overlapping study in discourse analysis and Presidential communication mentioned by Smith and Smith (1985). Yarborough (1999) warns:

Depending upon the attitude one takes towards these doctrines and beliefs, they lead to either isolationism or totalitarianism because they feed a false dichotomy: either we share the same codes and conventions, achieving

community but risking exclusivism, or we proliferate differences,
achieving choice and freedom but risking fragmentation and incoherence
(4-5).

Therefore, with Yarborough's contention in mind, I can say that, though the following study uses techniques found in the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics the study of State of the Union addresses using the following techniques is not limited to those fields.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

3.1. State of the Union Addresses in Context

Authorship. In a historical, all address, analysis of the State of the Union Addresses researchers must first consider the varying authorship of the addresses over time. The body of text has over 40 primary authors (i.e. the presidents themselves), but each president is not generally the sole author of the address. Instead of sole-authorship, the addresses are typically written with advisors and members of the administration. However, the authorship of the address is always given to the president in references and the names of staff or writers involved are not usually mentioned. The words in the addresses are usually crafted by a team of people, but the President's name is attached and he is the one who delivers the address (either by speech or in a printed version with his name attached to the document). Therefore, the ultimate responsibility for the address is with the president. The address can be viewed as a product of the presidency rather than one person.

We shall treat the presidency as an aggregate of people, as a corporate entity. From that perspective, an administration encompasses more than a single person, the president. In that sense, the presidency is a syndicate generating the actions associated with the head of state, including those deeds done in words. And whoever the author(s) may be, once the president takes authorial responsibility for them, the words become an integral part of the presidency (Campbell 11).

The address should then be viewed as a representation of an institution of power with a head or chief officer. For example, Gerald Ford's addresses represent the institution of the Ford Administration which was, of course, headed by Gerald Ford, but the words in the address are not solely Ford's and are the result of a collaborative effort of the administration staff, assistants, and president. Ronald Reagan's 1986 Address, which is analyzed later in this project, was written by a team of writers for the president (such as Peggy Noonan and others), but he was the one who presented it and represented the text to the audience. When the press and public responded to the address they only spoke of "Reagan" – rather than his team of writers. Harry Truman's 1951 address was also constructed by a team of writers in conjunction with the president.

As a result, analysts should say that the address represents a group of people or entity from an era with a common goal and standing behind one person with the floor. The ultimate responsibility for the addresses rested on the president – even though they had a team behind them. The president, therefore, owns the text and the text of the address is attached to the speaker.

3.2. Chronology, Structure, and Form of State of the Union Addresses

The State of the Union Address has taken many forms, but generally speaking it takes on the basic form of an essay with an introduction, middle, and conclusion. Also, generally speaking, the address involves three processes:

(1) public meditations on values, (2) assessments of information and issues, and (3) policy recommendations; and each incorporates, to varying degrees, specific characteristics related to each of these processes. In the course of mediating, assessing, and recommending, presidents also create and celebrate national identity, tie together the past, present, and future, and sustain the institution of the presidency (Campbell 54).

The address, when spoken, is not a regular policy presidential speech, but is multi-purpose and multi-faceted. The State of the Union Address unifies, directs, reflects, and predicts, and occurs at a point where the focus of the members of the government and many of the people are on the president – the time of the speech is an event where the president is given attention he is not always regularly afforded.

All presidents seem to follow a basic structure in their addresses. The president starts off by recognizing the audience (members of the Congress and in later times the general public) usually also mentioning the country, for example “our beloved country” (John Quincy Adams) as well as often a religious reference to an origin or a creator (either directly or indirectly referenced), for example the indirect reference such as “devout thanks to a benign Providence” in the case of Andrew Jackson (1829) or “To

express gratitude to God in the name of the people for the preservation of the United States” in the case of Andrew Johnson (1865). The introduction also often includes a reference to the tradition of the speech itself such as “Today marks my first State of the Union address to you, a constitutional duty as old as our Republic itself” in the case of Ronald Reagan (1982). The president also usually reflects on the past and how it leads to the moment. For example, Millard Fillmore (1850), talks of how he had to take over the role of president after the death of Zachary Taylor:

Being suddenly called in the midst of the last session of Congress by a painful dispensation of Divine Providence to the responsible station which I now hold, I contented myself with such communications to the Legislature as the exigency of the moment seemed to require. The country was shrouded in mourning for the loss of its venerable Chief Magistrate and all hearts were penetrated with grief.

In the case of Fillmore, and in all cases where someone has had to unexpectedly taken over, he must recognize his predecessor and how he ended up in the position. Other presidents in less dramatic situations of ascendancy to the presidency have still made references to historic events:

There are singular moments in history, dates that divide all that goes before from all that comes after. And many of us in this chamber have lived much of our lives in a world whose fundamental features were defined in 1945. And the events of that year decreed the shape of nations, the pace of progress, freedom or

oppression for millions of people around the world. (George Herbert Walker Bush, 1990 State of the Union Address)

After reflection, the president focuses on current and future issues facing the nation and incorporates recommendations based on his administration and sometimes his party's desires for the future actions of the government. Often at this point he also discusses fiscal, military, and social issues as well as successes of his administration. The last portion of the address involves making concluding remarks that again reaffirm the presidency, the government, as well as the nation. Often, towards the end of earlier speeches the president would also acknowledge states that had joined the union that year: "In the past 18 months we have hailed the entry of two more States of the Union--Alaska and Hawaii. We salute these two western stars proudly." (Eisenhower 1960). Other presidents have also used this space to recognize the need for further action: "I venture again to remind you that the brief time remaining for the consideration of the important legislation now awaiting your attention offers no margin for waste" (Harrison 1890). In general, the speech could be seen as the president's reaffirmation of the nation, people, and government. Structurally, the address is primarily epideictic rhetoric with some degree of deliberative rhetoric, and is usually delivered in the form of an inspirational essay.

Structurally, the annual message resembles the loosely defined but clearly recognizable form of the essay. Meditations on values lead to assessments, which are frequently of issues that have persisted through time, and those, in turn, lead

to recommendations. The specific facts and policies are the ephemera of U.S. history; the values developed in the public meditations are an enduring record of the creation and development of our national identity (Campbell 54).

The duty of the president to give the State of the Union Address is described in the U.S. Constitution, but the nature and venue are not. The address has been delivered every year (except for inaugural years). Though the periodic timing of the address was not set it was taken to mean once per year. In addition, the address must be given to both houses of Congress. The president, however, wasn't actually required to give the address as a speech in person.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may Adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States (U.S. Constitution, Article 11, Section 111).

Presidents have used the address for a variety of purposes. The address is more than simply a report to Congress, but is also a rhetorical tool – an agenda-setting, inspirational

text used to make changes or to reflect on the past. The address has also become a powerful scheduled and expected opportunity wielded by the president.

Analysts can also see that the address differs in use. Some presidents (Washington and Adams for example) used the speech simply to inspire their fellow leaders of government. However, other presidents used the speech mainly to report numbers and trends (Hoover in his 1932 address for example). The address, can therefore, be described as a legislative tool with a general shape, but with multiple uses.

The SUA has become a major tool of the legislative president. Presidents can highlight both Congress and the public the key items on which they want legislative action and use rhetoric in such a way that encourages action. They bring attention to issues of their choosing, which otherwise might not enter public debate. The SUA has become a power presidents can wield, not just a speech that fulfills the constitutional duties of reporting and recommending measures to Congress, but involves presidents communicating with public as well. The purpose of the speech remains, however, to rhetorically exert influence over Congress and get them to act on the president's recommendations (Campbell 50).

3.3. Method of Delivery

As I show in the results of this historical study, the methods of delivery of the addresses have changed over time and this method has also had implications for the rhetorical approach of the author to the text. My own analysis demonstrates that State of the Union addresses have been presented in three main formats: In the first form, the president discussed current and future policies with members of the Congress and observers in the same room (1790-1801, 1913-17). Many presidents (mostly in the nineteenth century) chose to send their yearly address to the congress to be read by a clerk with excerpts published in newspapers (1802-1913, 1918, 1920s, 1949, 1980). In its third form the address was publicized and broadcast on radio and later on television and the Internet (1920s - present - with a few exceptions). In the variations in delivery I also found shifts in rhetorical structure (as described in the analysis section of this paper).

Analysts also see in a changing role of the president is in conjunction with the change of structure over time. “The move from written communication to oral delivery of the SUA was a key component of how the president came to be viewed as the legislator-in-chief (Binkley 307). Through the changes in method of delivery of the address, researchers can discover shifts in rhetorical methods as well. As “rhetoric is one tool the chief legislator utilizes to accomplish both tasks (legislator and chief)” (Campbell 51) researchers find that the method of delivery reveals that there are reasons for shifts in rhetorical structure of the addresses. In the table below I show how the method of delivery has changed throughout history.

Table 1. Methods of Delivery of the State of the Union Addresses

Dates	Method of Delivery
1790-1801	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress
1802-1912	President Sends Speech to be read by Clerk to Members of Congress
1913-1917	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress
1918	President Sends Address to be read by Clerk to Members of Congress
1919-1923	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress and Speech is first broadcast on the radio (1923)
1924-1932	President Sends Address to be read by Clerk to Members of Congress and excerpts printed in newspapers
1934-1948	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress and Speech is broadcast on the radio and printed in newspapers and on television after 1947.
1949	President Sends Address to be read by Clerk to Members of Congress and excerpts printed in newspapers
1950-1979	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress and Speech is broadcast on the radio, television, and printed in newspapers. After 1965 the speech is broadcast in the evening.

1981	President Sends Address to be read by Clerk to Members of Congress and excerpts printed in newspapers
1983-present	President Speaks Directly to Members of Congress and Speech is first broadcast on the radio, television, and printed in newspapers, and is first broadcast on the Internet (1997).

After reviewing the State of the Union addresses as well as previous studies of the addresses I see several general periods of the State of the Union Addresses in terms of structure. For the purposes of this study I divide the eras of the speeches into the following eras:

1790-1801: Founders speeches (in Person)

1802-1912: Address as a printed report to Congress

1913-1946: Structure shifts from report to inspirational essay

1947-1964: Advent of Media Impacted Addresses

1965-1981: Message to the people and Congress

1982-present: Public Relations and image speech

In the earliest speeches the president's speech was personal and directed towards his colleagues in the same room. Washington always spoke to the people in front of him: "In meeting you again I feel much satisfaction in being able to repeat my congratulations on the favorable prospects which continue to distinguish our public affairs" (1791).

However, after John Adams left office, Thomas Jefferson decided not to give his address in person, but rather have a clerk read it to the Congress. As a result, the address took on the form of a report and was drastically different in nature than the two president's speeches before. It is interesting to note that Jefferson stopped the method of delivering the address in person for the same reason that it would later return to an oral delivery. Jefferson believed that the president was but a humble servant of the country and that the speech more resembled the British Monarch's Speech from the Throne if given in person. "Jefferson deemed the instituted practice of delivering oral annual messages to Congress too monarchical and instituted the practice of sending a written message to Congress" (Hoffman & Howard 22).

For over a century the report form of the address persisted, but with some variation in terms of the recognition of the audience and public as the addressees. Though the addresses during this period were not presented directly to the public by the president, addresses were eventually read by the public in newspapers which may have had some effect on the address's structure as I see from Andrew Jackson's address onward. Andrew Jackson is often acknowledged as the first president who sought "political support directly from the people" (Nelson 83). In his first address he starts off by reminding the Congress of the people they serve:

It affords me pleasure to tender my friendly greetings to you on the occasion of your assembling at the seat of Government to enter upon the important duties to which you have been called by the voice of our country-men (Andrew Jackson 1829).

The report form of the address ended in the early twentieth century. In 1913, President Wilson decided that his first address would be given in person, and his decision to change the format of the address was due to his favorable views towards parliamentary systems of government and to the perception that the president was one of the members of government rather than a ruler.

A month after he took office in March 1913, Wilson broke with tradition by appearing before congress to deliver the annual State of the Union message in person (the first president to do so since John Adams) (Nelson 129).

“Wilson believed that re-instituting the original practice of delivering the speech would allow the executive and legislative branches to work more closely together” (Hoffman & Howard 35). Wilson addresses the issue of his change in format as a break with custom:

I shall ask your indulgence if I venture to depart in some degree from the usual custom of setting before you in formal review the many matters which have engaged the attention and called for the action of the several departments of the Government or which look to them for early treatment in the future, because the list is long, very long, and would suffer in the abbreviation to which I should have to subject it (Woodrow Wilson 1913 State of the Union Address).

It was at this point that we see a shift in the rhetorical nature of the address. For the next couple decades there would be some switching back and forth between the methods (in-

person vs. delivered via a clerk) due to some presidents' lack of comfort with media (Calvin Coolidge didn't like to hear himself on the radio and reverted to the report form of the speech after 1923) until the start of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. However, from 1913 on the address was forever changed because it had henceforth become more personal and subject to the public eye through the advent of the radio, television, and later the Internet. In 1948 the address was first given on television by Harry Truman, moved to an evening time by Lyndon Johnson in 1965 and in 1997 it first appeared on the Internet with Bill Clinton. In the last century analysts have seen the address change from a governmental report to an important public speech and the structure of the addresses matches that change as I show in the following analysis.

3.4. Method of Analysis: Corpus Approach

In order to analyze the State of the Union Addresses (cumulatively amount to more than 1.7 million words of text - equivalent to about 3,000 pages of typed text - and represent over 230 years of political discourse) I needed to use a computer program that could create fast concordances and frequencies of certain word classes or word groups, not just individual words. As I show, individual words, in a study of a historic period, are not accurate measures of topic due to lexical shifts over time. In order to conduct a word-group study it is important to have a great deal of control over the word lists and analysis outputs. In past studies I had looked at several commonly used programs such as MonoConc, but found that for my own purposes I would also need to use something that was more directed toward studying audience-defined word classes (e.g. Economic words, Agricultural words, Personalization, Words of War).

My study was conducted using the following steps:

1. Create a frequency list for all State of the Union Addresses (using MonoConc)
2. Create word lists from the frequency list using the most commonly used words in all State of the Union Addresses (covering over 90% of the discourse in the addresses)
3. Measure occurrences of word classes in each individual address (using Rhetoristics)
4. Plot the addresses chronologically and compare shifts with known-events

As a result of a need for computer aided analysis, I used my own software called *Rhetoristics*. I developed Rhetoristics between 2004 and 2007 first as a program that could be used to look for changes in student writing between the beginning and end of a semester, and then it was used for cross-register rhetorical and corpus-linguistics research, and finally for longitudinal studies of historical political speeches and texts such as this analysis of State of the Union Addresses. Rhetoristics is a frequency analysis program that uses word lists and researcher-assigned values to determine the frequency of word-classes in texts.

With each of these studies I appended and expanded the word types and word classes based on analyses of usage in all addresses. As a result, Rhetoristics can now be used to measure occurrences of whole classes of words in a text rather than just the original measurements of logic indicators, emotional indicators, and indicators of references to credibility. For this project I created 21 word groups to be used in a corpus analysis of the State of the Union Addresses. Each of these word groups included

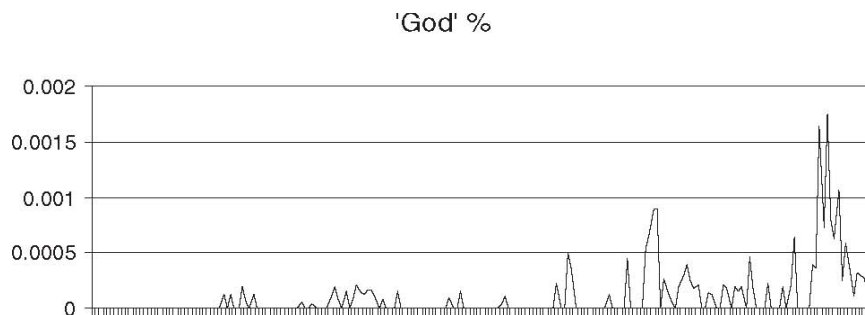
between 4 and 76 identifier words that would result in one count towards the speaker's (and writer's) use of that word group.

3.5. Dealing with Lexical Shifts

One of the problems with the development of the word lists was that when analysts study a period of over 200 years analysts are also dealing with language-use shifts over time. In order to compensate for that I created a word-frequency list for *all* of the addresses and then identified words that could be commonly used to identify a word group. Using the most commonly occurring words on the frequency list I am able to create word class lists that are useful for all of the addresses. For example, in the case of the word group called “Parties” I created a list of political parties that presidents mentioned in *all* speeches. The list had to include now-defunct political parties such as The Federalists, Bull Moose Party, Whigs as well as parties that are still in existence. If I cover all political parties then I can see how political parties made their way into presidential rhetoric over the last few centuries without creating a bias toward parties that only came into existence in the last 145 years (e.g. Republican Party) and I can focus on rhetorical shifts rather than historical changes in usage. Using this corpus-based approach to analysis I ran each speech through Rhetoristics using the word classes created from the all-address frequency list and looked for shifts that I predicted would occur at points where the method of delivery of the speeches shifts. For example, I thought that I would see a shift in the occurrences of rhetorical indicators after the change in method in 1913 as well as with the advent of television as well as a shift between Adams and Jefferson's addresses when the address moved from speech to report form.

Word classes work better than single words due to shifts in usage over time. If I were to examine the use of religious references in addresses over time and only relied on the word 'God,' for example, I would not have a true representation of references to a creator or religion over time. In the case of the single word “God” earlier presidents referred also to the “Divine” and “Providence” as well as “The Creator” and to address God directly was not as common. In his useful study of the State of the Union addresses Lim (2002) shows that there was an increase in references to God. However, this increase could be misleading if analysts don’t take into account lexical shifts over time. I found that this rise in the mentioning of the word 'god' was really due to a rise in the direct reference to God rather than overall religious references (see Figure 1). Lim's results could be misleading because they could imply that the addresses had become more religions in nature:

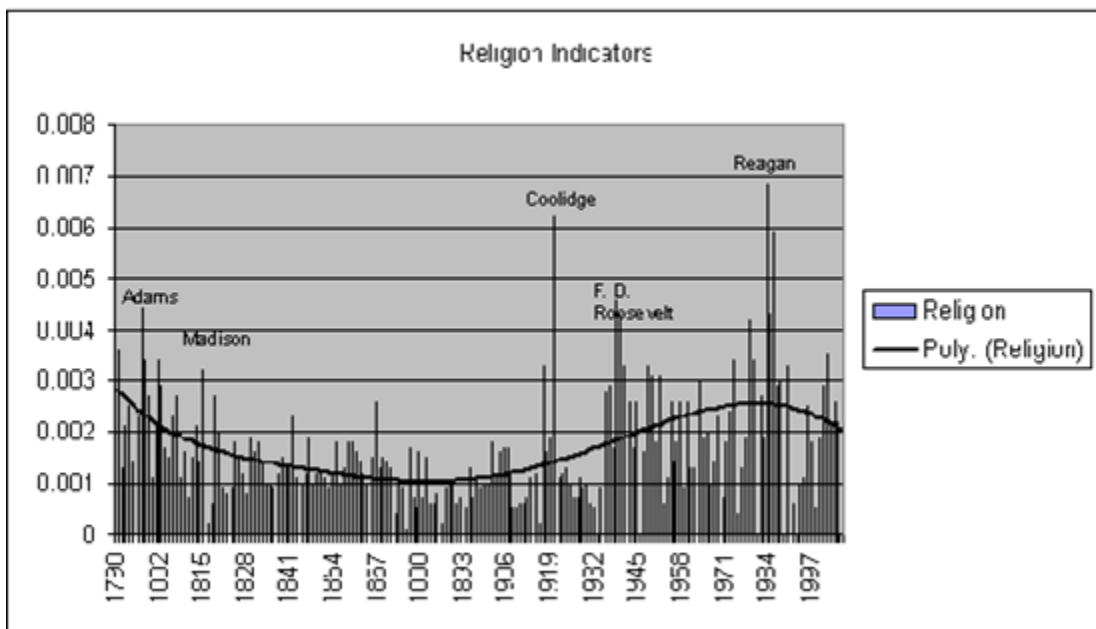
Figure 1. % of God in State of the Union Addresses (Lim 336)



However, if I are to work with word classes rather than single words and create a class for religious references based on a list created for all addresses I get a better idea of the

mentions of religion in addresses. For example, if I use a word group to represent presidents' references to God I end up with a more accurate representation. Using the words 'god', 'divine', 'providence', 'creator', and 'all mighty' I show that mentioning a Creator or God has not risen over time, but has in fact fluctuated depending on the president or era. I also show that some presidents seem to favor mentioning a creator which may tell us something about their personal views and/or policies of their administration.

Figure 2. Religion Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses (1790-2007), N=1,580,433



In figure 2 I show that several presidents stand out in their references to god or a creator. Adams, Madison, Coolidge, F.D. Roosevelt, and Reagan all stand out as relying heavily on religious references. Coolidge's spike also occurs, interestingly enough, during his one

and only publicized address (given over the radio), perhaps indicating that he felt he needed to refer more to religious references when speaking directly to the public.

With a word-class approach to analysis I believe that analysts are better able to see true shifts in attitude, policy, and structure over time that are not swayed by lexical shifts over time and can lessen a skew of the data due to lexical shifts.

In addition to religious references I also created word classes for numerous word types and discuss the following groups: personalization (referencing the audience directly us/we/you), emotional or pejorative language (appealing to the emotions), military references, agricultural references, female references, education health references, ethnic/race-based words (grouping people – e.g. Africans, Asians, Europeans, Slaves), health references, and economic references (further definitions of these word classes are described in the appendix of this paper). With these all-address word groups analysts are able to gather meaningful results when taken in the context of history.

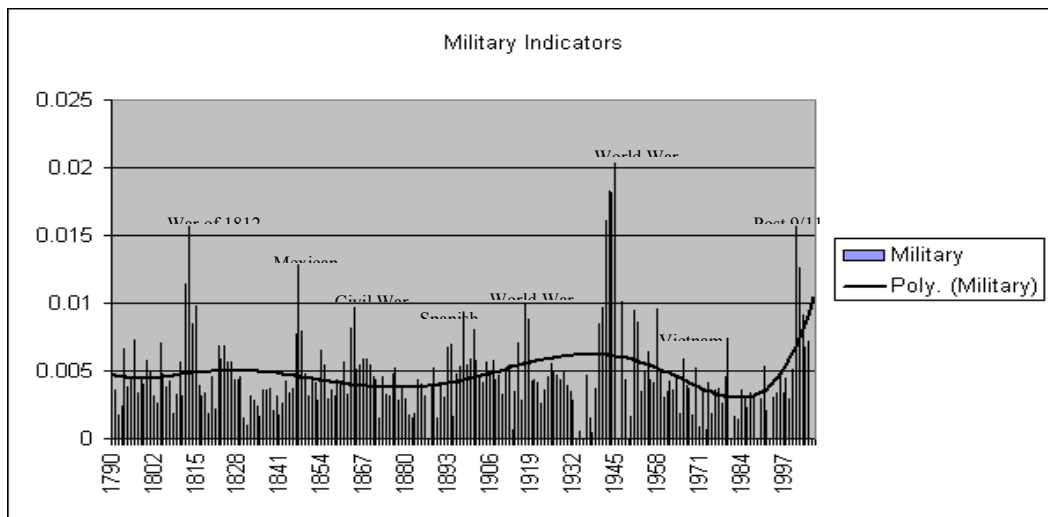
3.6. Results of Corpus-based Analysis

Corpus-based analyses of the State of the Union addresses reveal numerous trends and features that could not be achieved easily by purely reading the texts. In this project, I looked at 22 word categories, and given the scope, will discuss a few of the more interesting and important results from indicators in this study: Military, Female, Ethnic/Race, Economy, Health, Education, Agriculture, Patriotism, Emotional Appeals, and Us/We/You (personalization).

Military Language. One word class that stands out well is the use of military-related language in State of the Union Addresses. Results from this analysis show that heavy occurrences took place during times of war. Though this seems obvious at first it does create a control for this study. If mentioning of the military had been uniform or without historically based pattern then other categories might not be useful. This first category proves that presidents generally favor military references at times of war.

The military category includes the following words: airforce(s), ammunition(s), army(s), armies, base(s), battle(s), casualty, casualties, combat, fight(s), fighting, fighter(s), fought, gun(s), marine(s), military(s), militaries, navy(s), navies, officer(s), sailor(s), soldier(s), soldiering, terrorist(s), veteran(s), vet(s), war(s), warfare, weapon(s), wounded.

Figure 3. Military Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words

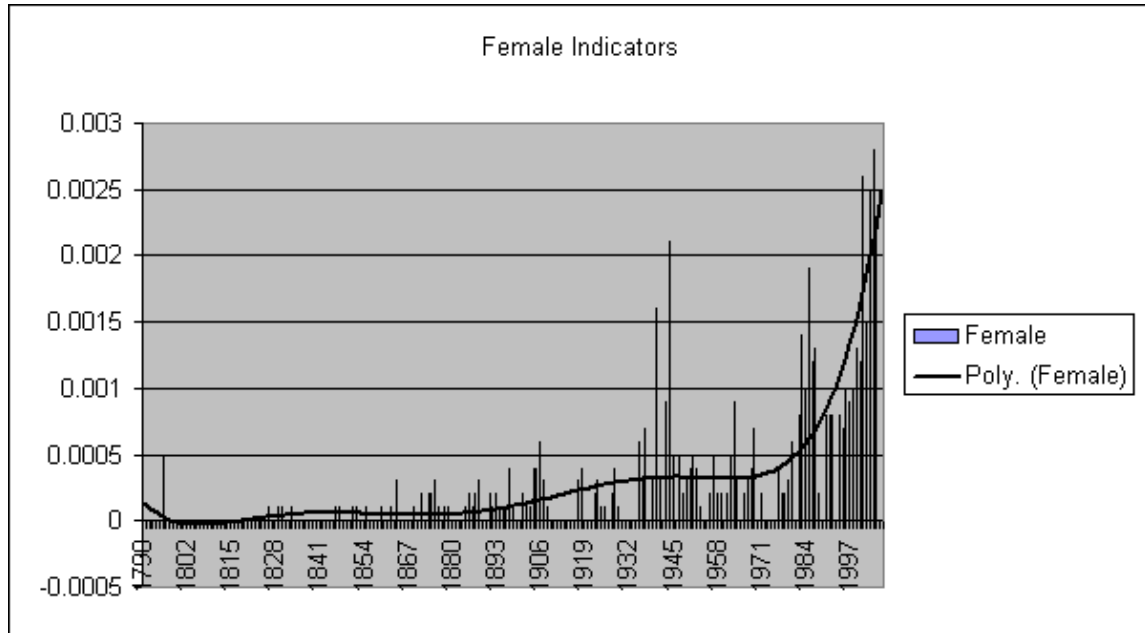


The most pronounced spikes in military indicators occur around the time of World War II and recently after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Interestingly, the Vietnam War does not make a pronounced appearance on the chart. This may be due to the lack of support for the conflict and henceforth less mention of the conflict by presidents, or perhaps that during the Vietnam War presidents referred to it differently than other conflicts. A notable low point in military language in the State of the Union occurs during the Great Depression just prior to World War II, but in the late 1930s and 1940/41, before the United States had become involved in the conflict, there was a significant rise in the mentioning of military-related words, indicating that the war was already an issue to the administration before the United States became officially involved in world-wide conflict.

Female Indicators. The next word-class is of language relating to women (I called this group “female indicators”). Before this study I theorized that greater mentioning of women in addresses would probably appear sometime before or after women received the vote with the passing of the 19th Amendment in 1919 during President Wilson's term. I also theorized that after women's liberation movements following World War II and the 1960s and 70s I would see an increase in the mention of women. However, my theories were only partly true. The indicators used in this portion of the study are as follows: Feminist(s), Feminism, Woman(s), Women(s), Female(s), Girl(s), Suffrage, Suffragist(s), Suffragette(s), She, Her, aunt(s), daughter(s), lady, ladies, mother(s), niece(s).

From a close analysis of the addresses over time I show that prior to the 1950s women were usually mentioned in the phrases “men and women” (often used in FDR's speeches), “boys and girls”, or “ladies and gentlemen,” or when discussing mothers of soldiers. After the 1960s the results show that women mentioned as separately from men as the affects of the womens' liberation movements and feminism seem to have permeated the addresses and the national agendas (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Female Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



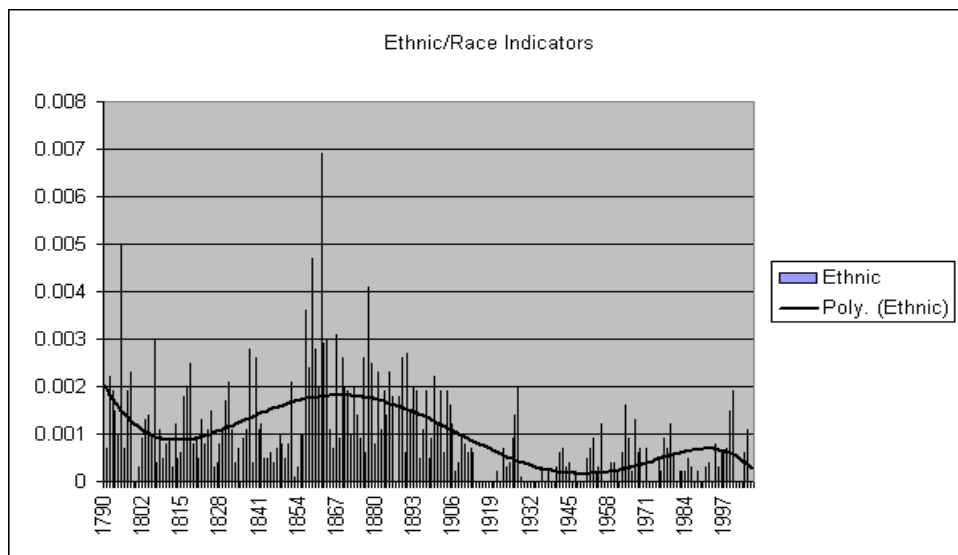
In general, when I look at trends, female indicators show that over the last few decades women's issues have become a much greater concern of the President in State of the Union addresses. I also find a notable spike in the mention of women during World War II. This is due to the greater numbers of women in the workforce during the Second World War as many men were fighting overseas and removed from the labor force.

I find a two decade decline in the mentioning of women after World War II, but a significant rise after the 1970s. Another interesting absence of the mention of women has to do with the women's suffrage movement in the early 20th century. In fact, just prior to and just after universal suffrage in 1920 I see a lack of the mention of women when, as I mentioned earlier I expected to see some mention of this because women's suffrage was a major boost to the voting numbers of the country. It is possible that the president did not

want to take a stand on the issue or appear to be involved in the issue as that was considered a matter of congress and state governments at the time. Or, it is possible that the president did not know how to address female voters of the country. Another possibility is that the administration did not view female voters as important. Perhaps it was a combination of all of these issues. Nonetheless, I see no recognition of the greatly increased voting population due to the nineteenth amendment.

Issues of Ethnicity. I wondered how the notion of ethnic groups and identities was treated in addresses over time. I believed that there would be a general increase of terms relating to ethnic and cultural identities in the late twentieth century (like female indicators) as I thought the president would want to acknowledge all voters in the country. However, the results were different than I expected.

Figure 5. Ethnic/Race Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



In a graph of the occurrences of ethnic/race indicators I see that actually the 19th Century involved more discussions relating to this word group. This seems to be due to discussions of African-Americans prior to and following the Civil War. Discussions of slavery and the fate of slaves and their rights permeated the the topic of discussion in addresses of Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, and Abraham Lincoln. The topic of race or ethnicity at this time was generally connected to the topic of slavery. Following the Civil War and the release of slaves the topic of slavery and the rights of former slaves was prevalent for decades after the war starting with Andrew Johnson's acknowledgment of the seriousness of the issue of slavery:

In exercising that power I have taken every precaution to connect it with the clearest recognition of the binding force of the laws of the United States and an unqualified acknowledgment of the great social change of condition in regard to slavery which has grown out of the war (Andrew Johnson 1865 State of the Union Address).

Prior to the Civil War discussions of slavery were connected to the rights of slave states and escaped slaves. Whereas in the decades following the Civil War I see the attitude and mentions of slavery as a comparison such as in Theodore Roosevelt's comparing of anarchy and slavery:

Anarchy is a crime against the whole human race; and all mankind should band against the anarchist. His crime should be made an offense against the law of

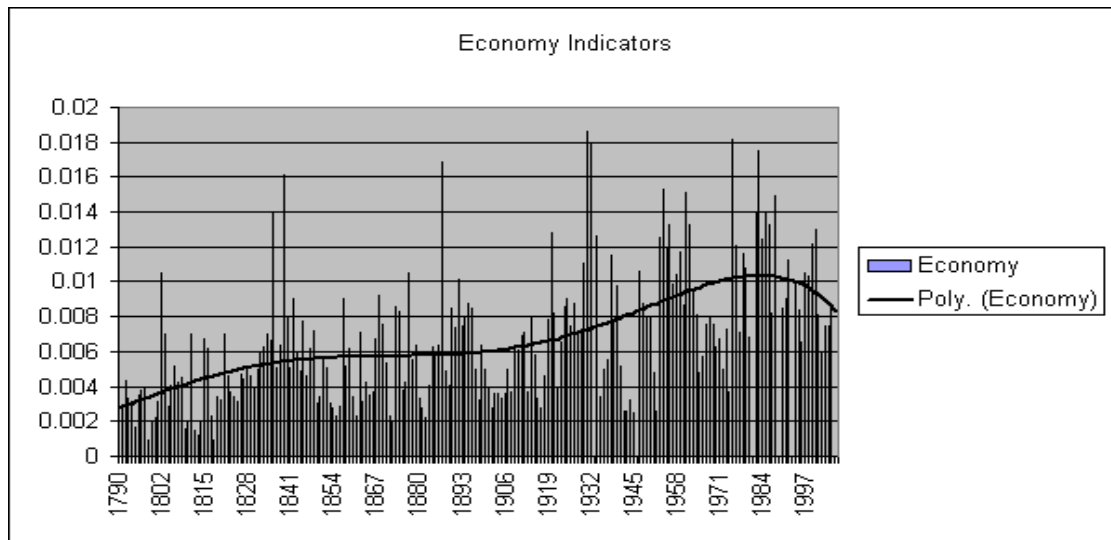
nations, like piracy and that form of man-stealing known as the slave trade (Theodore Roosevelt 1901 State of the Union Address).

Notable absences in the discussion of ethnic/racial groups occur during the presidencies of Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt as well. I can only speculate on the causes of these absences, but I would say that they are due to the attentions of the president towards the world wars and the great depression and that mentions of ethnicity after the second world war are in relation to the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s and in the 1990s more in relation to what I first speculated: a recognition of different voters.

Economic-related Language. Another interesting word group was that of words related to the economy. I examined this group because I thought that this class of words could reveal attitudes towards the economy by presidential administrations and issues of the economy over time. I suspected that during the Great Depression I would see an increase in the discussion of the economy.

Word indicators for this group include the following: Bank(s), banker(s), banking, budget, budgetary, budgets, currency, currencies, debt(s), debtor(s), deficit(s), dollar(s), dow, economy(s), economies, economic(s), economical, economist(s), euro(s), export(s), exported, exporting, fiscal, global, globalize(d), globalization, import(ed)(s), importing, manufacture(s), manufacturing, manufactured, market(s), money, moneys, monetary, owe(s), paid, pay(ed)(s), spend(s), spending, stocks, surplus, surpluses, trade, trading.

Figure 6. Economy Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



Overall I find local rises and falls in the mentioning of words relating to the economy of the country. Notable spikes occur at times I would expect them with the greatest spike occurring in Herbert Hoover's presidency as the country began to be affected by the Great Depression. Other spikes occur in the late 1880s when the United States experiences another recession as well as in the 1830s and early 1980s when other recessions occurred. Notable low points occur during periods of war. During the War of 1812, Civil War, World Wars, and Vietnam, I see dips in the occurrences of economic-related language. Perhaps this is due to the focus of the president on other more pressing topics, or perhaps because the economy was usually doing well during these periods and didn't require attention of the administration. In times of war the economy was often connected to the war effort such as in Franklin Roosevelt's 1942 address:

Our task is hard--our task is unprecedented--and the time is short. We must strain every existing armament-producing facility to the utmost. We must convert every available plant and tool to war production. That goes all the way from the greatest plants to the smallest--from the huge automobile industry to the village machine shop (Franklin Roosevelt 1942 State of the Union Address)

Franklin Roosevelt used his 1942 address to attempt to unify the business and worker communities behind the war effort. This example demonstrates that even in wartime economic discussions the military cannot be avoided.

Health, Education, and Family. Several word classes show a great increase in usage in the late 20th Century. Words relating to health, education, and family all showed dramatic increases. These increases seem to begin around the time of World War II and the advent of a publicized (via radio and television) address. The increase of these terms may be due to at least two causes:

1. The president's attempt to connect with the concerns of the general public, and/or
2. The increase in the importance of these issues in national affairs (see Figures 7 & 8).

Figure 7. Health Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words

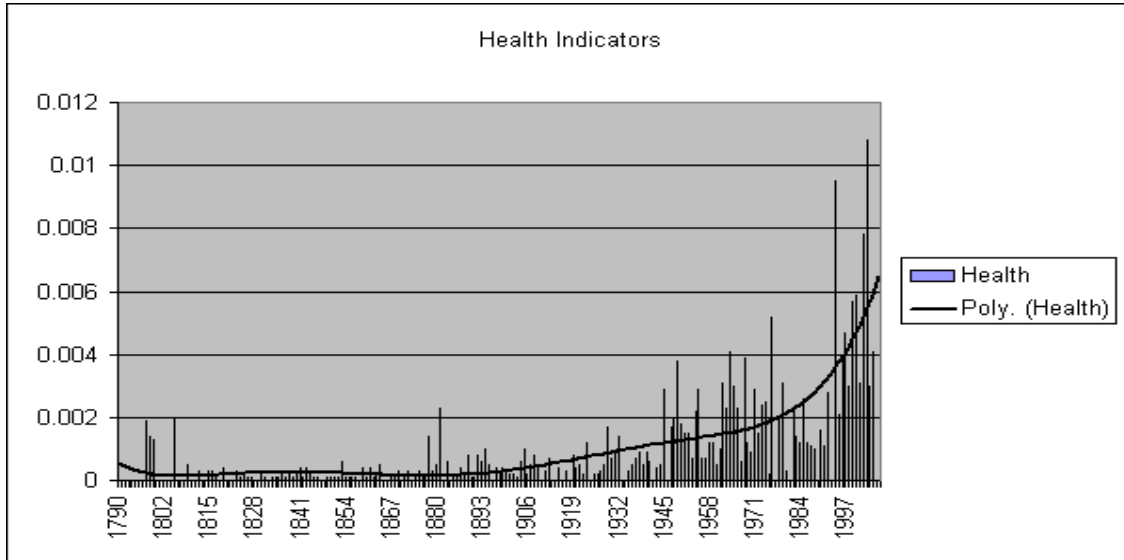
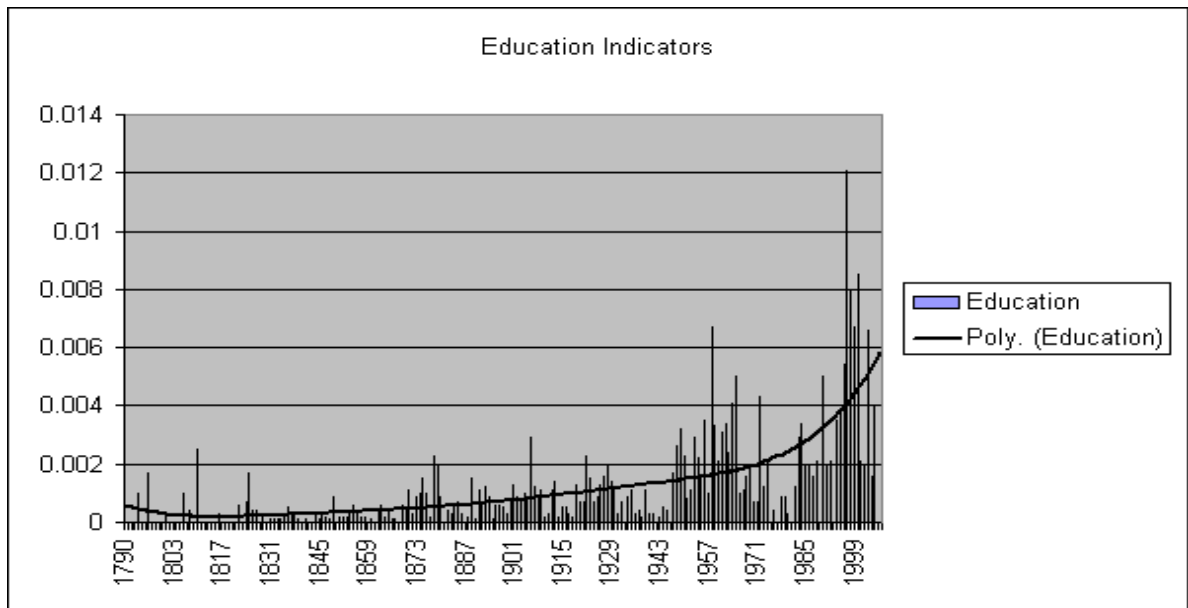


Figure 8. Education Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



In general I see a rise in the mentions of education, but with a notable periodicity. I see a local high just prior to the Great Depression. After the Great Depression I see a drop until I see a another local high in the late 1950s and 1960s when university populations were growing and the nation and the government was committed to increasing technology and science. I then see another rise in the 1980s and into the 1990s with an all-time high during President Clinton's administration. Clinton used the most references to education of any president and this is exemplified by his 1993 address:

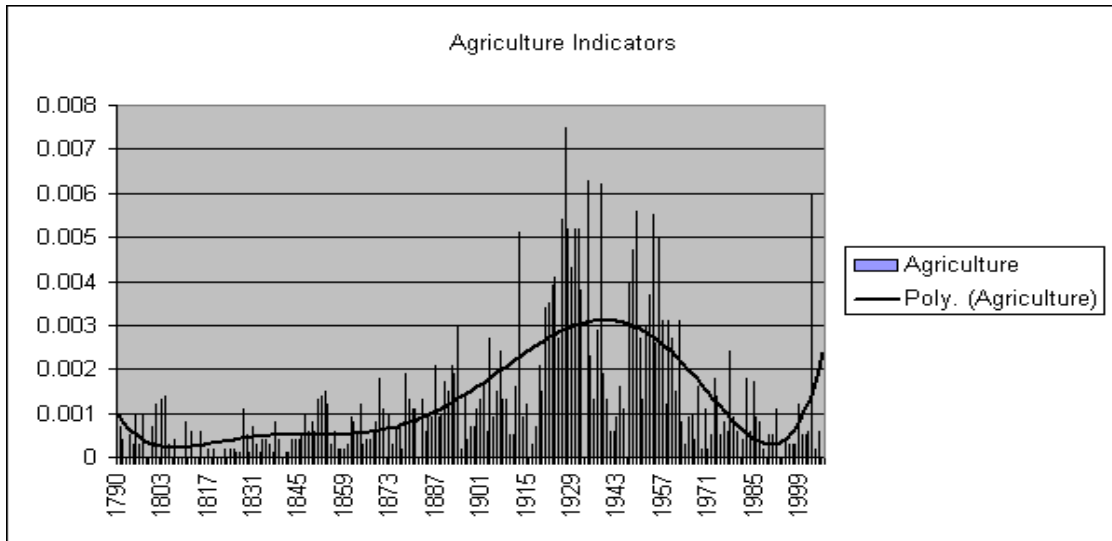
But if we're honest, we'll all admit that this strategy still cannot work unless we also give our people the education, training and skills they need to seize the opportunities of tomorrow. We must set tough, world-class academic and occupational standards for all our children and give our teachers and students the tools they need to meet them (Clinton 1993).

From the war era of the 1940s to the last decade I see an upward trend in the mentioning of education in addresses. This general trend with education indicators seems to be that of increasing occurrences over time, but with local lows and highs. The general increase is likely due to the growing importance of education and push by the Federal government under most presidents after World War II to build universities and education infrastructure.

Decline of Agriculture. Other indicators rise and fall over time. One interesting word group in this study was that of agricultural indicators. I show, in a graph of

agricultural indicators the rise and fall of farming issues in the addresses. A peak occurred around the time of the Great Depression, with another peak in the 1950s. After the 1960s mentions of agriculture drop off with only one speech (G. W. Bush's 2004 address) as an exception to a general decline. The overall rise and fall of agricultural indicators follows the rise and fall of the importance of agriculture and farming in the nationwide agenda – with a peak in the 1920s – a time when most farms were small-scale, family-run, businesses. Though agricultural output has increased since then, the number of farmers has dropped dramatically as large corporations now produce most of the food in the United States. The president's attention to agriculture seems to be impacted more by numbers of farmers rather than agricultural output (see Figure 9).

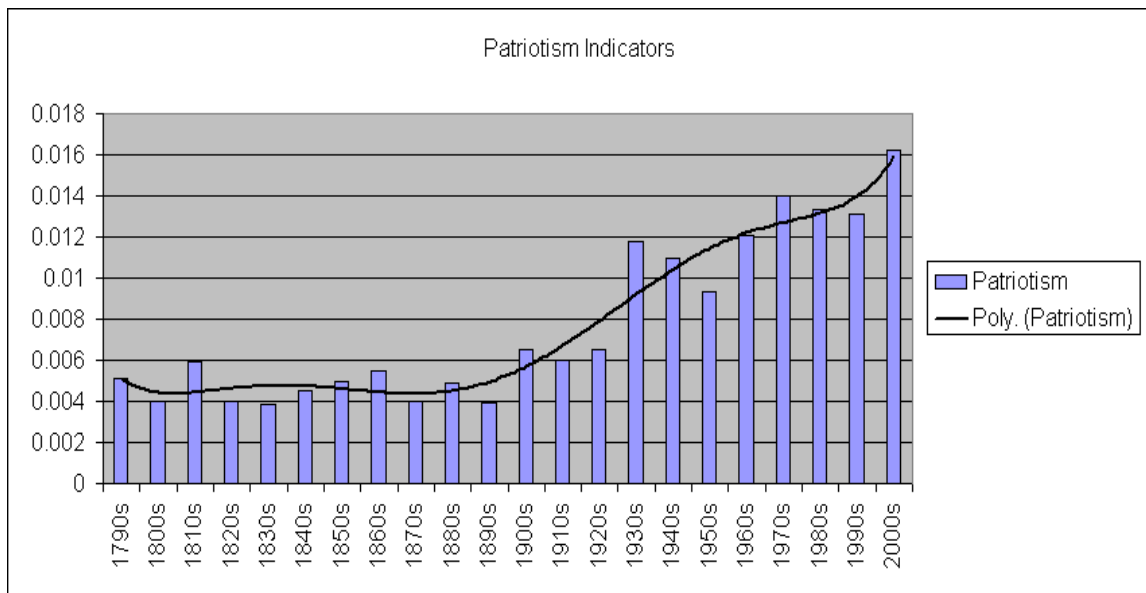
Figure 9. Agriculture Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



Patriotic Language. The last word group I will mention in this study is that of indicators relating to a word class I call “Patriotism.” This group included the following

words: Patriotism: America(n)(ns), Constitution(s), Democracies, Democracy(s), flag, forefather(s), nation(s)(al), republic(s), Patriotic, Patriot, Patriotism. If I take a decade-by-decade average for the use of Patriotism indicators the graph shows a general and drastic increase over time. This increase seems to start around the time of the advent of media and the publicized addresses (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Patriotism Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



I believe that there are a few reasons for the increase in patriotism indicators. First, the president must relate to a nationwide audience and to do so must rely in unitary language – words that unite the audience and make them feel they are part of what the president represents. In addition, this increase occurs during and after two world wars – events that may have required more national unity. Perhaps after the world wars subsequent

presidents saw patriotic language as being part of the tradition of addresses and that the state of the union address was no longer simply a government report, but a unifying speech where the president has an opportunity to rally people behind his causes. The highest number of occurrences of words in this group is found in addresses from the last decade. Though these references are not often direct mentions of patriotism, but in the case of George W. Bush's 2006 address, are connected with his attempt to renew the Patriot Act. This example also demonstrates a shift in the purpose of the State of the Union Address.

Our country must also remain on the offensive against terrorism here at home. The enemy has not lost the desire or capability to attack us. Fortunately, this nation has superb professionals in law enforcement, intelligence, the military, and homeland security. These men and women are dedicating their lives, protecting us all, and they deserve our support and our thanks. They also deserve the same tools they already use to fight drug trafficking and organized crime -- so I ask you to reauthorize the Patriot Act (George W. Bush 2006 State of the Union Address).

Emotional & Personalization Indicators. The last groups of words I would like to discuss from this study are groups of words that I label “emotional indicators” and a group I call “personalization indicators” (us/we/you). Teten, in his 2003 study of the addresses looked at the use of the word ‘we’, but I thought that if I were to expand this to include ‘us’ and ‘you’ a better picture of personalization would emerge. For the emotional appeals indicators I created a list of over 500 words from the corpus-based

frequency list of that I felt were indicators of the president’s attempts to appear emotional in the eyes of the audience (see appendix for full list). I wanted to see, structurally, how addresses changed in terms of emotion. I believe that if I see shifts in the use of emotion of authors I am also seeing a general shift in the rhetorical structure of addresses. I believe that emotional indicators can reveal the pathos (one of the the classical rhetorical appeals) of the authors. I also think that by looking at references to Us/We/You analysts can see shifts in the author's attempt to connect with the audience directly. In a decade-by-decade average the results of these two word groups are as follows in Figures 11 & 12:

Figure 11. Emotional Appeals Indicators (Emotional Proof) in State of the Union Addresses (1790 – 2007), N=1,580,433 words

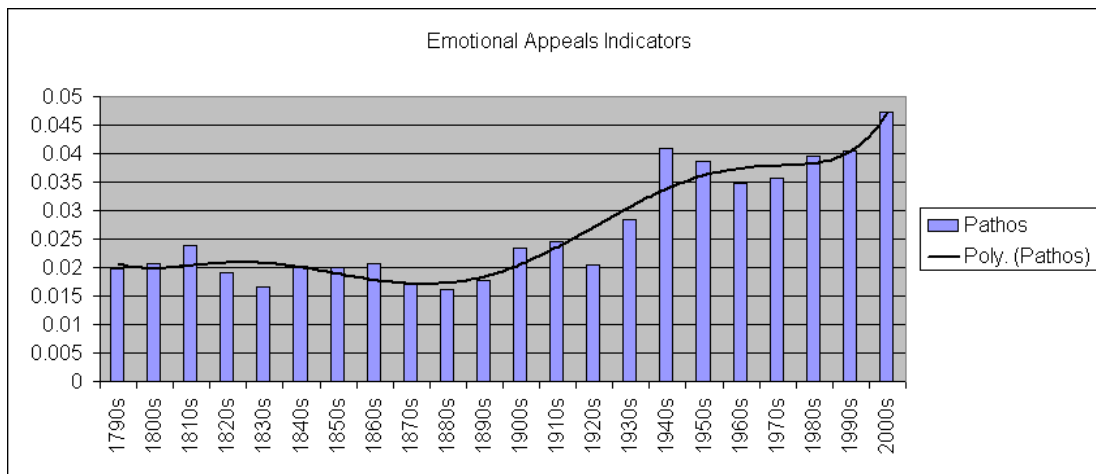
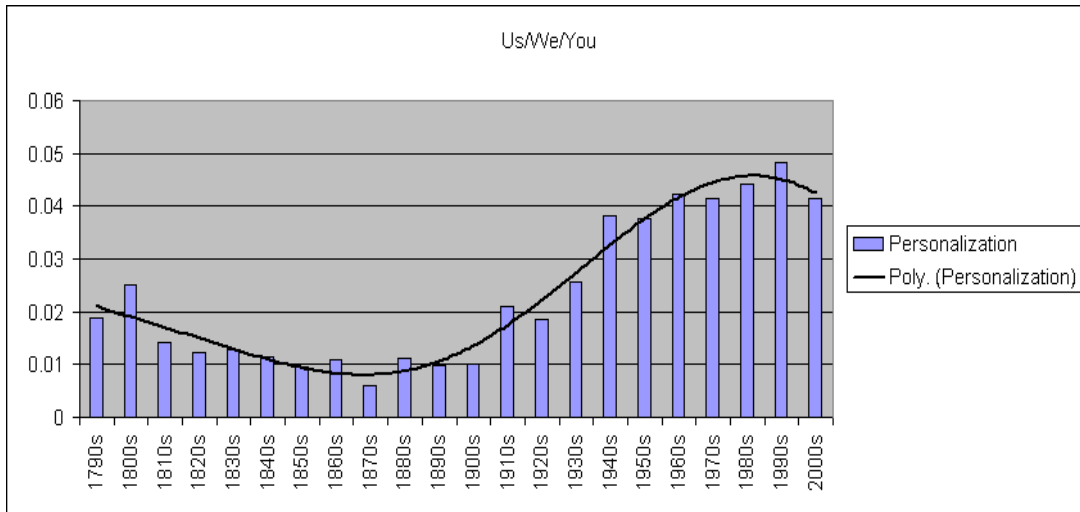


Figure 12. Personalization (Us/We/You) Indicators (%) in State of the Union Addresses, N=1,580,433 words



These two word groups seem to follow the same trend. After the advent of media as well as the public nature of the address the president is impelled to relate to an audience. Prior to the advent of media and the public address the president does not need to relate to a public audience, but only members of Congress. The shift I see is due to a shift from a governmental audience to a general audience. In these results the graph shows a genre-shift from written report (read by a clerk to government members) to a public speech to the nation. I think these results are strong evidence that an author must rely on certain rhetorical methods to communicate with an audience. In essence, the addresses became more rhetorical in nature – the need to sway the audience was greater and the presidencies of the twentieth century reacted to this need by relating more to the audience.

3.7. Rhetorical Proof Analysis of State of the Union Addresses: An Experimental Approach

Before I begin this section I should acknowledge that the following method of analysis can be seen as highly problematic and controversial in the eyes Rhetoricians. However, I believe that such an approach does produce useful results. Over the last few years I tried to figure out if there was a way that I could analyze a text for its rhetorical proof with software that employed audience-defined dictionaries and, if I were able to do that, I wondered if there would be any noticeable differences between different types of texts (registers) or even at the sentence level. In order to do an analysis I first needed to build a computer program that could count and reference words and their uses (an automated rhetorical tagging program). I aimed to complete the following steps in my experiment:

1. Design and build a program for analysis
2. Experiment on registers as well as individual texts first to see if there are or are not differences in audience-specific rhetorical indicators between registers and texts and then to look at differences in context of time or situation.
3. Design and test methods of detection and analysis of rhetorical proofs

Rhetoristics: Analysis Tool. I designed a computer program called *Rhetoristics* that attempts to take a text, break it up into sentences, paragraphs, and words, and tries to make sense of, both visually and numerically, ratios of audience-defined rhetorical components. To start, I looked to the realm of corpus linguistics in order to understand the complexities of computational linguistics and what I would need to do in order to create such a program and I looked at classical views of spoken and written argument and rhetorical methods of persuasion. What started as a simple parser and word counter has since turned into a complex program requiring a fair amount of computing power to get even a hazy view of the rhetorical proofs in texts.

In order to see if rhetorical posturing might exist beyond theory I conducted several experiments using this program. The experiments are designed to observe differences between types of texts (registers) as well as individual texts. However, in order to build such a method of analysis, analysts need to incorporate theories and research methodology from both the fields of rhetoric and linguistics.

Rhetorical Proof Analysis Methodology. The field of Rhetoric is ancient, and is one of the oldest fields continuously taught and studied at universities around the world, but the field has been subject to restructuring and reanalyzing of theory by numerous researchers and philosophers in the 20th Century (Burke, Austin, Derrida, Foucault, Freire, Bourdieu to name just a few). With the assistance of linguistics, corpus-based computerized rhetorical analyses of text can reveal more about argumentation and text than researchers were able to imagine in the past. The field of linguistics is a fairly new field when compared to rhetoric and is responsible for numerous insights into language

use since this field was born out of the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics are often kept separate in universities. Whole departments of Linguistics exist on the same campus as departments of Rhetoric. This situation is often symbolic of the view (or relative lack of a view) of some members of the two fields towards each other's language theories, especially in the linguistic components of pragmatics and semiotics where the two fields share considerable overlap. Roland Hausser explains the situation in his book *Foundations of Computational Linguistics* (2001): "Phenomena of pragmatics have been handled in the separate discipline of rhetoric. This has been an obstacle to integrating the analysis of language structure and language use." (20).

Over the last few decades new development and research grounded in computer-based analysis of text has created an environment where Rhetoric and Linguistics overlap. Computer-based analyses of corpora reveal numerous characteristics in texts (an analysis that was highly time-consuming before computers) that open a new world of study in language where people can benefit from understanding more about why language use and rhetorical content is different across register. According to Biber, Conrad, and Reppen, "In fact, [one] of the strengths of the corpus-based approach is that it can be applied to empirical investigations in almost any area of linguistics" (11). Numerical analyses of word usage differences across register and are just the beginning of what can be found when using computer-based corpus analysis. With accurately designed and tested software it is now possible to measure differences, not only in the frequencies of usage of certain types of words, but also in the rhetorical aspects of language.

Computers are able to examine large amounts of text in a fraction of the time that it would take to read. “Until computers made it possible, there were many questions about large texts that simply could not be answered without enormous effort” (Butler 1). If a person sat down and hand-counted all the uses of the word ‘if’ in Plato’s *Republic* for example, the task would take days or weeks. A computer can now do this job in a fraction of a second. Today, there are currently plenty of computer programs that can count words in text (e.g. *MonoConc*), but perhaps due to the aforementioned occasional lack of cooperation between the fields of rhetoric and linguistics, there are no computer programs that can specifically attempt to gauge the conveyed rhetorical meaning of written text. *Rhetoristics* is a computer program that attempts to measure indicators of rhetorical slant in writing via a series of corpus based frequency ratios. This program, as I show in the following study, allows analysts the ability and technique to see that there are differences in the use of logic across different registers.

The following experiments involve a corpus-approach to analysis and follow Biber, Conrad, and Reppen’s (1998) designation of ‘proper’ corpus-based analysis:

The essential characteristics of corpus-based analysis are:

1. Empirical, analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts;
2. Utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts, known as a "corpus," as a basis for analysis;
3. Makes extensive use of computers for analysis, using both automatic and interactive techniques;
4. Depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. (4)

Assigning rhetorical proof values to words. In a computational analysis researchers must think about how to measure various proofs in texts. Let us consider types of texts and emotional posturing (indicative of pathos). A love letter, for example, would usually be seen by an audience as an emotional text. A love letter usually relies more on emotion than a business letter, and a business letter usually relies on a greater amount of credibility than most poems. If I compare different types of discourse to each other I should be able to see that, in terms of rhetorical appeals, there is some favoring of certain appeals in genres.

The degree to which different audiences are motivated towards a certain appeal by a text is the text's *rhetorical proof*. While rhetoricians would find a linear scale of measuring rhetorical proof highly problematic due to differences in audience interpretation, researchers can still use a general scale to see more general rhetorical shifts in language.

To create a scale I must make general assumptions with the caution that individuals hold and generate meaning from text differently from person to person. However, this type of analysis cannot be entirely discounted due to the fact that a text *is* able to motivate groups of people to the same action. In a general scale I can do the following: If, for example, I write the sentence: "I love spaghetti" I am relying more on pathos than if I write the sentence "I eat spaghetti." Or, if I were to say, "According to Ralph Smith, spaghetti makes an excellent meal" my writing would be viewed by many audiences as less emotional than the original statement: "I love spaghetti." What makes this first sentence more emotional than the others? It is the value of the words by the audience. 21st Century readers usually see the word "love" as having some emotional

value. Though the word eat also has some emotional value attached to it (more for some readers and less for others) it could be seen by many audiences as less emotional than the word “love.” Certain words can be seen as invoking more emotion than others by an audience. These reactions of course differ by audience and context, but for the sake of this type of analysis researchers could have an audience rate certain commonly used words as highly emotional, semi-emotional, not very emotional. The rhetorical proof of the sentence “I love Spaghetti” demonstrates an emotional posturing that could be seen by an audience as more highly emotional (an emotional posturing) than the other two examples. Though the sentence “According to Ralph Smith, spaghetti makes an excellent meal” might be seen as having a posturing evoking ethos more so than “I love spaghetti” (indicated in this example by the reference to Ralph Smith). Whether or not the reference to Ralph Smith is valid an audience might still agree that a reference has been made and in a simple Aristotelian model of rhetoric this implies a posturing in ethos.

I have discussed examples of rhetorical proof at the sentence level, but then how could analysts measure proof in larger texts? In order to measure the rhetorical proof of texts I needed to create a dictionary of assigned values to words. In the cross-register analysis a dictionary of values was created to determine each text or corpus of text's rhetorical proof. At an individual word level I set the values, as a discerning audience, in the following manner: The values assigned to words by an audience (in the case of these experiments I acted as the audience) indicate their value in terms of the three appeals. For example, the word “government” I assigned the following values (scale is 0-1): ethos:1, logos: 0.5, and pathos: 0.25. This means that relatively speaking, to this audience (myself), the word “government” is seen as appealing more to credibility, partially

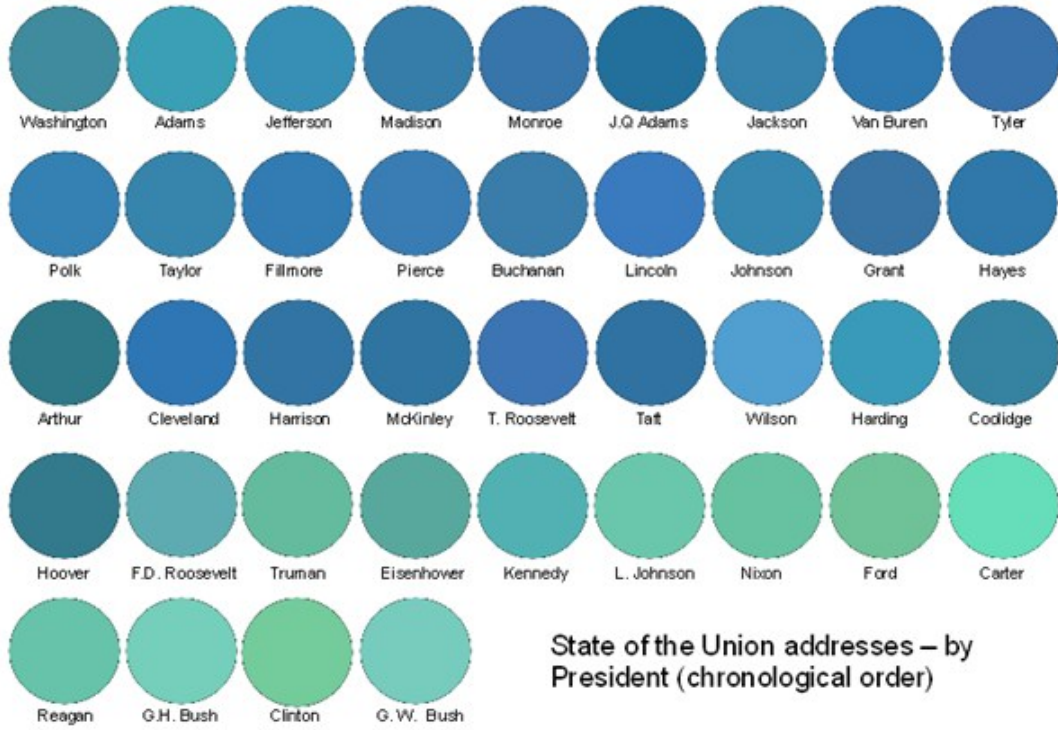
appealing to reason, and slightly emotional. Whereas, the word “home” I assigned the following values: ethos: 0.5, logos: 0.25, and pathos: 1. These values mean that to me, the word “home” is highly emotional, slightly logical, and could appeal moderately to credibility. If, however, one is to add the two words together and form the words “home government” one sees a combination of values and an overall rhetorical proof that is different than the values of the words on their own (see Figure 13). The values are, of course, created by an audience who is subject to his personal and cultural values – context is of course relevant, but in the case of this study analysts can only create a measurement applied to a group of texts and so the measurement represents a current value system of an individual – it is against this word-value system that I compare the texts in the following experiments. If a given audience were to apply his or her values to a set of words I could use that set of words as a personal or cultural scale of measurement of rhetorical proof.

Rhetorical Proofs in State of the Union Addresses. In Figure 13 I show the rhetorical proofs of various texts represented by color circles. The top half of the figure shows the chronological representation of the rhetorical proof of each president who gave an address. When looking at this figure one can see that, for the most part the color circles look similar (i.e. the ratios of ethos indicators, pathos indicators, and logos indicators are similar) until reaching the presidents of the 20th Century. In the 20th Century addresses the results of this analysis show that the proofs color circles become more green and light – indicating a higher degree of posturing to ethos and an increase in pathos. When I compare the body of State of the Union Addresses to the posturing of

other genres and authors one can see that as a group they are fairly uniform – even with a large number of different authors. This indicates that, though the authors' are quite different people they are subject to taking a proof that seems to be standard for State of the Union Addresses – the type of document seems to dictate the rhetorical proof. In addition, when comparing the body of State of the Union Addresses to other genres the results show that the color circles match those of academic lectures and later addresses' posturing is similar to that of opinion articles and perhaps formal letters (e.g. “Mark Twain’s letter to Mrs. McQuiston”).

State of the Union Addresses have a fairly uniform rhetorical slant until the 20th Century and the proofs shift when seeing the advent of media. I can also say that the proofs of the addresses are quite different from those of poems and personal letters. This might be obvious, but when thinking that this analysis is able to achieve this conclusion by using color circles and rhetorical posturing it demonstrates that this method has some success.

Figure 13. Rhetorical Proof Color Circles of Various Texts



State of the Union addresses – by President (chronological order)



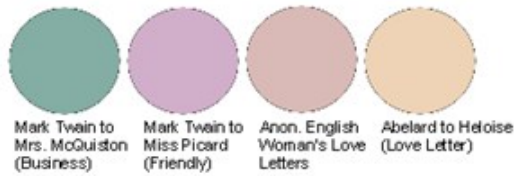
MICASE (Academic Collection)



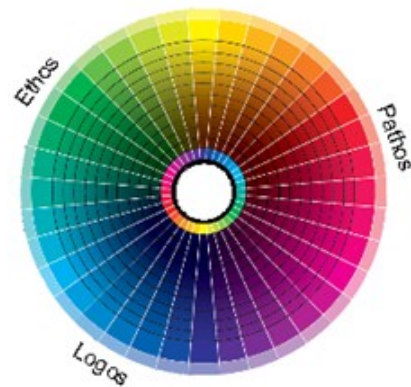
Selected Lord Byron Poems



Newswire & Opinion Articles



Various Personal Letters



Rhetorical Posture Color Wheel

3.8. Conclusions

Results from longitudinal studies are rich in meaning and also open more opportunities for studies of rhetoric in periodic texts. This study reiterates and reinforces the results and conclusions from some of the past studies mentioned earlier (Lim, Teten and Hoffman & Howard) as well as reveal how the addresses became more rhetorical in nature over time. My analysis shows that the addresses are subject to the method of delivery, the trends of the time, and contextual constraints such as delivery type. When addresses were presented in the report form the results show that the content is less personal and the author does not need to relate to his audience. When the addresses are delivered by the president we see a large shift from impersonal to personal style. This shift is evidenced by great increases in personalization, patriotism, and issues relating more to the general public. In addition, analysts can use computational analysis to see how State of the Union Addresses stand out as a genre. Using word classes based on topics and rhetorical appeals one can see shifts based on both context and speaker. This study also demonstrates the use of text-based computerized analysis in rhetorical and linguistic studies. This analysis also shows that the state of the union addresses are a complex web of terms and concepts driven by a reaction to the past and attempt to form the future, yet due to the now public nature of the addresses, are constrained by the public eye – a president can only make change with the acceptance of the public. To do so, a president must relate, convince, and reflect.

CHAPTER 4

TRUMAN'S 1951 ADDRESS

On January 8, 1951 Harry Truman stood before Congress and gave his State of the Union Address – an address that was unlike most before. The 1951 address was situated in one of the most tumultuous times for a US President. This address was different from most other State of the Union Addresses in the past. Instead of being a recap of the current status of the nation's economy, workforce, and domestic concerns, this was a speech designed to push Truman's engagement in a limited war in Korea. Nearly all of the address focused on making an argument that the United States should remain in Korea to stop the spread of Communism. Truman, in this address, used his publicity to position the US as the protector of freedom against Communist aggression. As Rhetoricians, researchers can see Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address as evidence that one person in a position of power is capable of resisting, but not entirely immune to opposition. Additionally, one can see that Truman, as a speaker and person in power is still subject to his or her own character and the constraints of the Rhetorical Situation.

Unlike most State of the Union Addresses, Truman's 1951 address served as a publicity action rather than a report on the status of the country. Truman used the address as a political device in a situation where the president was under attack not only by the invasion of southern Korea by North Korean and Chinese troops, but by many members of the Republican Party who believed that the United States should pull out of Korea. Rhetorically speaking, the speech was a mechanism, used by Truman to stave off opposition to US engagement in Korea as well as to underline that the US was committed

to a long-term war against communism and the Soviet Union beyond the Korean conflict. This chapter examines Truman's address and the following factors: Truman's Character, Public Opinion and Opposition, Press Reaction, and lead-up to the 1951 State of the Union Address, and a close-reading of the rhetorical strategies used in Truman's address.

The press at the time, before, immediately after, and in the weeks following the address was not kind to Truman and his address. Criticism was rampant, but the president managed to forge ahead with his involvement of the US Military in Korea. It is clear both today and in 1951 that if Truman had given in to opponents and some opposing public opinion and pulled the US Military out of the Korean Conflict the entire Korean Peninsula would have been taken over by Communist troops. Harry Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address was, therefore, constrained by three main factors: The Korean War, Republican Upheaval, and Domestic Issues. Truman was successful in the long term as he managed to push off opposition opinions of withdrawal and resisted a Luke-warm public view of the war. He had to sell another war only five years after US engagement in World War II ended.

From a close reading of Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address I show that President Truman uses several rhetorical strategies to make his argument to his audience. First, he uses a process of definition where he frames the United States and allies as the 'free-world' - a force of light in a fight between good and evil. He defines the Soviet Union and communist allies as the opposite side of this conflict. Truman also uses tone and imagery to invoke the emotion of fear and a sense of urgency in his audience. He also employs a utopian vision where he paints a picture of what the 'free-world' is working towards. In addition, he builds on the concept of the duty of the members of Congress

and how they must act now. Truman also attempts to disarm the political opposition in Congress by denigrating them. Effectively, he calls the opposition wimps for shying away from the defense of the US allies. In terms of reasoning with his audience one can see Truman spell out the effect of communists taking over in both Korea and Western Europe. Truman also both threatens the communists and offers grounds for peace. He emphasizes the US Military capacity to fight another World War, but also offers grounds for negotiation in the venue of the United Nations.

In this full analysis of Truman's 1951 State of the Union address I use four approaches to understand the constraints of the Rhetorical situation of the address:

1. An examination of President Truman's character
2. A look at the historical context of the address
3. An exploration of the press reporting and reaction to the address
4. A close reading of the address looking at strategies used by Truman.

4.1. President Harry S. Truman's Character



Illustration 1. President Truman's Official Portrait (National Archives)

President Harry Truman was known as a tenacious and plain speaking man. He was a farmer and a clothes salesman (haberdasher) before entering politics. He usually presented himself as humble and tough, a common trait of his rural Missouri-roots. Truman was prone to cussing in private, and was not shy about stating his opinions. He made friends and enemies and was vocal about who was friend and foe. However, he was well respected even by his political opponents. His character and appearance reflected his persona as a man who had been elevated to the presidency by a situation in history rather than destiny. Franklin Roosevelt, a towering figure in the Democratic Party and the longest serving president in history picked Truman, much to the astonishment of party and press, as his running mate in the 1944 election against Thomas Dewey. Just two and a half months into his Vice Presidency, in the final days of World War II, Truman became the President when Franklin Roosevelt died suddenly in office (Donovan 14).

Truman was considered to be a man of his era. He was not an eloquent speaker, and not a man who restrained his opinions. “Even temperamentally, Truman was well-suited to his time. Lacking both the dour stoicism of Herbert Hoover and the ebullient optimism of Franklin Roosevelt, Truman reflected the ambivalence of his age.” As many contemporary commentators and subsequent biographers have noted, Truman’s scrappy, decisive image sometimes concealed a deep-seated insecurity and sense of inferiority. Like the nation he led, Truman could be cocky and paranoid, generous and petty, visionary and parochial. He was a man raised on nineteenth-century values thrust suddenly into the leadership of a rapidly changing twentieth-century nation” (Byrnes 3).

Truman was known to make decisions and not look back. He believed in his instincts and not second-guessing himself. A famous example of Truman’s characteristic was one of the most momentous events in US history: The August 1945 dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan. Harry Truman always told interviewers that once he had decided to use the atomic bomb, he never gave it another thought. Truman was well known for his decisive character. As Truman biographer Hamby describes Truman's character and importance to the presidency: “His presidency was an important one, but his appeal as a historical figure of mythic proportions rest as much on who we think he was as on what he did. In the American historical imagination, he was an ordinary man who displayed the greatness of our democracy by assuming leadership of it and seeing it through difficult times” (Kirkendall 351). Up until Truman's time, it can be argued, that very few other presidents came from the bottom half of social-economic society. Most of the early presidents were wealthy land owners, and many of Truman's predecessors came from wealthy families and were educated at Ivy League schools. In addition, most presidents

followed successful career paths. However, Harry Truman, in his 30s, was still trying to start a business and sort out his life after working on his Grandparents' farm. Whereas, Franklin Roosevelt for example, while in his early thirties, was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Truman's humble background and struggle in his youth to achieve anything contrasts greatly with most of the wealthy or privileged men who held the positions before him (Byrnes 3).

In his own words. One way to fully understand a person's character is to listen to their candor in a one-on-one conversation rather than in controlled speeches. One-on-one personal conversation allows more freedom of what one will say due to fewer constraints and implications. Additionally, the following excerpts were given by Truman after he served as President, and therefore, not subject to his position of power at the time. Truman conducted numerous interviews after his presidency and from these conversations one can get a sense of what he was like as a person. Two such interviews provide a great deal of insight into Truman's thought-process. The first set of interviews was conducted by Merle Miller in 1960, eight years after the end of Truman's presidency. The second set of interviews is a compilation by collected by Ralph Weber, a professor of history at Marquette University.

Truman viewed his "think tank" conversations to be the most accurate representation of his career. 'His "think tank" conversations, significantly more than other books, bring our Truman's intense pride and manner, especially as he explains bitter political and domestic controversies and foreign policy decisions.' (Weber, xix). In all of

his interviews reflecting on his presidency a clear pattern emerges about Truman: he was firmly loyal to the United States, to his family and friends, and to the Democratic Party. His personal dislike of certain individuals in government and military (such as Richard Nixon, Joseph McCarthy, and Generals Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur) was not hidden, and he had no problem pointing out deficiencies in people's character. This brought him both respect and disdain. In the following interview excerpts and discussion one can see highlights of Truman's opinions on key events prior to his 1951 State of the Union Address.

Becoming President. Harry Truman was often noted as having fallen into the Presidency. His relationship with Franklin Roosevelt was fairly limited. Public criticisms mentioned that prior to becoming President he only met with Franklin Roosevelt twice. Only two recorded official meetings between Roosevelt and Truman took place while Truman was Vice President. However, before Truman became President he had other meetings with the ailing President, but recognized that Roosevelt tried to do everything himself and didn't seem to involve Truman much in day-to-day affairs. Truman was slightly defensive of the view that he had little experience when asked about it:

There were more meetings than that. Those were scheduled meetings, but there were other times...several other times when I wouldn't go in the front way at the White House, but went in. And there were Cabinet meetings. I attended the Cabinet meetings, not that Roosevelt ever did

much at his Cabinet meetings. He did it all himself, which was one of his troubles (*Plain Speaking* 198).

No matter how you look at it, Harry Truman was quickly flung into the Presidency. He was Vice President for just over three months (Jan 20 – April 12, 1945) before assuming the role of President. Prior to becoming Vice President he had served as Senator for Missouri. Roosevelt chose Truman as Vice President replacing the embattled Vice President Henry Wallace who had been seen by members of Roosevelt's cabinet as too socialist. In addition, privately, members of the administration and Roosevelt knew that he might not make it through a fourth term and he should pick a more moderate successor (Dallek 14–16). Nobody could have known that Roosevelt would only live a few more months. As a result, Truman became President without warning and with little preparation. Years after serving, in reflection of the day he became President, Harry Truman recollected a sudden emotional event with a quick swearing in with Mrs. Roosevelt as a witness:

It is a day...it's a time I can even now not think about with very deep emotion. It was an ordinary day in the Senate, and I presided.[...] Before I could even begin a conversation with the half dozen fellows that were there, Sam told me that Steve Early (Roosevelt's press secretary) had called and wanted me to call right back. I did, and Early said to come right over to the White House and to come to the front entrance, and he said to come up to Mrs. Roosevelt's suite on the second floor.[...] And so I went

over to the White House, and Mrs. Roosevelt...Mrs. Roosevelt...she told me that...the President...was dead...I was sworn in-there was a clock on the mantel-and I was sworn in at 7:09. Exactly 7:09 on April 12, 1945, and that's all the time it took for me to become President of the United States (*Plain Speaking* 198-199).

Views on the Presidency. Harry Truman had great belief in the Republic and the future of the country. One historical event that he connected with was the Civil War. He believed that the Civil War was caused by the weakness of the leaders at the time. He believed that the problems in the world are caused by weak leaders, not strong leaders. Truman often stated that if the United States could survive the events of the US Civil War, the nation could survive anything. He blamed the occurrence of the Civil War on the presidents prior to the War Between the States:

That was one of the very worst periods in our history, the twenty years before Lincoln was elected, before the Civil War. And if we hadn't had those weak Presidents, we might not have had a Civil War, although that's just a guess on my part. What I do know is that when you have weak Presidents you get weak results. There's always a lot of talk about how we have to fear the man on horseback, have to be afraid of the...of a strong man, but so far, if I read my American history right, it isn't the strong men that have caused us trouble, it's the ones who are weak. It's the ones who

just sat on their asses and twiddled their thumbs when they were President
(*Plain Speaking* 347).

Many people at the time characterized Truman as a poker player in politics – someone who would take risks and gamble. Truman felt that this characterization was a myth created by the media in order to sensationalize him as president. He felt that rumors were often started in the media and then, since other news agencies repeat information, a rumor would be perpetuated:

I never was much of a poker player. Roosevelt was more of a poker player than I was. But they never wrote anything in the papers about it. But they were always writing about me playing poker. Newspapermen, and they're a bunch of lazy cusses, once one of them writes something, the others rewrite it, and they keep right on doing it without ever stopping to find out if the first fellow was telling the truth or not (*Plain Speaking* 348).

4.2. Context of the 1951 State of the Union Address: Start of the Korean War, Communism, and the Opposition

The United States was shocked in 1949 when, on September 23 Harry Truman announced to the citizens that, “We have evidence that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the U.S.S.R.” The development and testing of an atomic bomb by the Soviet Union resulted in a dread that spread across the country. The cold war took on a new meaning as it became clear that the Soviet threat to the United States was no longer distant, but could threaten people in their own homes (Donovan 101). Before the Korean War began, as a result of the Soviet development of nuclear weapons, the tone of politics and foreign policy shifted to one of a nagging possibility of nuclear war. Truman attempted to use the dread of the Soviets as a way to push his own will through the government. However, this Soviet fear grew out of control into a national paranoia of communists trying to take over the United States from within the country.

Communism & the Korean Invasion. Prior to his 1951 State of the Union Address Truman had already employed fear-invoking rhetoric during his re-election bid in 1948. A nationwide fear of the Soviets had initially developed just after World War II and Truman capitalized on this. However, an approach of politicizing people's fear of communism eventually came back to haunt Truman: “The rhetoric which he used so successfully against Wallace was now directed against the President. The fear which helped unite the country behind the internationalist foreign policy grew beyond his control as events around the world called into question the wisdom of his policies” (Byrnes 74). The

Republicans used the fear of communism against Truman and conducted government-sponsors investigating suspected communists in the government and other walks of life. A heightened sensitivity to communism within the country forced Truman into a corner – he would have to use the same language and approach as the Republicans or risk looking soft on communism.

One of the most decisive moments in Truman’s presidency was the start of the Korean War. Truman’s attempt to focus on domestic issues was quickly shifted to a strong American response to the rise of communism in East Asia. Truman’s hope for a domestic Fair Deal policy was dashed when communist troops took China and then invaded southern Korea. His 1950 State of the Union address included some attention to domestic issues, but this wasn’t to be the case in the following year’s address. When war broke out in Korea, Democrats hoped that the events would fire up the country and result in little opposition to Truman’s policies, but reversals in Korea produced the opposite effect. “The initial rally-around-the-president phenomenon soon gave way to criticism of Truman’s handling of the war [...] McCarthy claimed that the ‘Korean deathtrap we can lay to the doors of the Kremlin and those who sabotaged rearming, including Acheson and the president’ (Donovan 295).

The communist invasions and victory of the People’s Liberation Army in China resulted in the “Red Scare” and gave fodder to the Republican opposition. These events set the stage for the 1951 address as one that would need to focus almost entirely on the threat of communism. Republicans had learned from the 1948 defeat of their candidate, New York Governor Dewy, where his campaign had avoided foreign policy issues. This

time they would make it an issue. Truman recounts the moment he learned of the North Korean invasion of South Korea:

It was about ten thirty on Saturday night, and I was sitting in the living room reading. The phone rang, and it was Dean Acheson calling from his home in Maryland. He said, 'Mr. President, I have serious news. The North Koreans are attacking across the thirty-eighth parallel.' I'd been out to my brother Vivian's farm, and when I got back, a little after I got back, the telephone rang, and Margaret went to answer it. She came back and said, 'Daddy, it's Dean Acheson, and he says it's important.' I went to the phone and said, 'What is it Dean?' And he said 'Mr. President, the news is bad. The attack is in force all along the parallel.' And I said, 'Dean, we've got to stop the sons of bitches no matter what.' He said he agreed with me, and he told me that an emergency meeting of the Security Council was all set for two o'clock that afternoon...The flight took about three hours, and on the way I thought over the fact that what the Communists, the North Koreans, were doing was nothing new at all. I've told you. The only thing new in the world is the history you don't know (*Plain Speaking* 350)

The whole American approach to the cold war altered as a result of Korea. Before the invasion of Korea most US foreign aid was economic in nature (such as the Marshall Plan). Military aid had been a secondary issue before Korea. During the Korean War, those priorities changed places. In 1947, military aid was secondary. In 1950, military aid

by the United States to its allies totaled only \$97 Million, but by 1952, it had jumped to \$2.7 Billion – a near 30 fold increase over a five year period. For the first time, military aid was greater than economic aid. From this point on, a confrontation which began in Europe would be played out all over the world: in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Containment, which was originally conceived as a means of guarding vital American interests in Europe and Japan, became a universal policy which applied to peripheral as well as vital interests. The Red Scare and invasion of Korea also resulted in a significant increase in US Military presence in West Germany as well as rearmament of the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1950, the defense budget stood at \$17.7 billion, but by 1951 it had risen to \$53.4 billion (Byrnes 83).

Assassination Attempt (November 1, 1950)



Illustration 2. Shootout at Blair House. Oscar Collazo of the Puerto Rican Nationalist party lies wounded at the steps of Blair House, the residence of Harry Truman just minutes after the shootout (National Archives).

Truman's tone changed in late 1950 from one of being upbeat to a more serious tone. Just a few months before his 1951 State of the Union Address Truman was confronted with something that would rattle him and make him more suspicious. On October 31, 1950, two men walked into the Hotel Harris in Washington D.C. The two men at the hotel were Puerto Rican terrorists who came to Washington to kill the President ("President Harry S. Truman: Survived Assassination Attempt at the Blair House"). On November 1, 1950, the two Puerto Rican nationalists attempted to assassinate President Truman, killing one of his guards and wounding two others (Byrnes

94). While President Truman was relaxing on the second floor, the would-be assassins made it to the entry of Blair House, and an ensuing gun-fight between the nationalists and the Secret Service took place. One assassin, Griselio Torresola, was killed and the other, Oscar Collazo, was wounded. Truman watched the events unfolding on the street below from a window only thirty feet away (Byrnes 94). Though Truman tried to appear unshaken by the attempt on his life his tone changed significantly from a more positive to a more negative and burdened president. His change in tone after November 1, 1950 shows that he was clearly affected by this event.

While speaking of the assassination attempt Mr. Truman told Admiral Leahy, “The only thing you have to worry about is bad luck. I never had bad luck.” When asked about the assassination attempt Truman said, “Well, I’ll tell you. Getting shot at was nothing I worried about when I was President. It wouldn’t have done the slightest good if I had. My opinion has always been that if you’re in an office like that and someone wants to shoot you, they’ll probably do it, and nothing much can help you out. It just goes with the job, and I don’t think there’s any way to prevent it.” *What did you do afterward...after the attempt?* “Why, I went and got dressed, and I went ahead and went out to Arlington Cemetery and made a speech dedicating a statue out there, and then I proceeded with the rest of my schedule. If you are President of the United States, you can’t interrupt your schedule every time you feel like it. The people who put you there have a right to expect that you will carry through with the job” (*Plain Speaking* 366). While expressing no concern for his well-being, he told his cousin Ralph that “What worries me is that some grand fellow who has two or three kids may get killed – to keep me from that fate. You have no idea how it feels to have a man killed and two others badly wounded protecting

you' (Byrnes 94). It is clear that the attempt on his life was sobering and, though Truman attempted to brush it off, he had been rattled by it.

Opposition, Republicans, McCarthyism, and Robert Taft (R-Ohio). Athan Theoharis, in his essay “The Rhetoric and Politics: Foreign Policy, Internal Security, and Domestic Politics in the Truman Era, 1945-50” examines the impact of McCarthyism on Truman's Administration. “American Politics after World War II poses an intriguing problem for the historian of the Cold War: the emergence of McCarthyism and the effectiveness after 1950 of the senator and his cohorts, the McCarthyites. How does one explain the different political objectives of McCarthy's principal exponents and a major source of his support from the business world, professionals, urban workers, and members of ethnic groups? While the exponents of McCarthyism were anti-progressive and sought to undercut reform, these other supporters rejected attacks that simply disparaged the New Deal. Furthermore, each group had very different reasons for supporting the senator's concern with national security” (Theoharis 196-197). “The success of the McCarthyites' attacks after 1950 poses another paradox in view of their earlier opposition to the Truman administration's foreign policy. Although their rhetoric was militantly anti-communist, most McCarthyites from 1946 through 1949 denounced such containment policies as foreign aid, the Truman Doctrine, the commitment of U.S. Troops overseas, and NATO” (197). “They saw the “communist threat” as primarily domestic and not international.”

One of Theoharis' assumptions is that President Truman's manner of defining the objectives of American policy radically altered the rhetoric of American politics; that Truman's statements and decisions structured the national security debate, affecting the understanding of the American public and thus their expectations and fears (201).

Theoharis also contends that McCarthyism was made possible by the intensification of the Cold War. A heightened concern over national security matters transformed domestic priorities and radically changed many of the basic tenets of American politics. Third, McCarthyism was made possible with a new Cold War rhetoric. Administration policy, both domestic and foreign reacted against disruptive change. Administration policy statements sought scapegoats, not solutions, attempted to preclude, not adapt to, change, and were vague in defining terms like “subversion,” “disloyalty,” and “aggression”. The need for public support resulted in the use of anti-communist symbols “in almost reflex actions” (Theoharis 201).

Confident optimism underlay early 1950 administration foreign policy pronouncements, but this optimism shifted, like Truman's tone shifted in late 1950. In early 1950, the President predicted that relations with the Soviet Union would be normalized and that, with patience and firmness, the United States would successfully preserve the peace. Truman explicitly asserted that as United States resolve and leadership was made clear, and as the people “who stood in doubt” turned to democracy, the “danger of communist domination will dwindle and it will finally disappear” (Ramspeck to Dawson, June 16, 1952, *Friedman Papers*, Loyalty-Security Program). Speaking at Gonzaga University, the President belittled the Soviet Union as a “modern tyranny led by a small group who have abandoned their faith in God” (Truman Papers

1950, 342-344, 374-377). As we see in a close-reading of Truman's 1951 address his view of the Soviets had not changed, but his sense of urgency in dealing with them had.

Truman's administration increasingly emphasized themes of crusading against communism and the Soviets. Truman positioned the Cold War as a war between American purity, freedom, and “Christian values” versus a Soviet atheism and inhumanism pushed by a small elite (the Soviet politburo). However, as Theoharis (201) contends, this painted Truman into a corner in terms of options. As a result, he had a narrow path for conflict resolution with the Soviets. This approach also leads to the inevitability of conflict between the two ideologies. The ideological stance against communism ultimately culminated in the Korean War after several years of wars of words.

Truman had a negative view of Republicans in general. However, he did manage to work with some Republicans, especially in his second term. His view was that Republicans were uncaring of people and self-serving. He believed that his political adversary in the 1948 election, Governor Dewy of New York, never had a plan for the people and wouldn't produce any programs. He also felt that the Republicans looked backwards rather than forwards:

Most of them are smart enough. It's just – this is only my opinion, of course – it's just that they don't seem to know or care anything about people. Not all of them but a lot of them don't” “That fella they nominated to run against me was a good example of that. People could tell he wasn't open and above board, and the more he talked, the more he showed that he didn't have any program at all in mind if he

got elected. Except to set things back a few dozen years or more. So he didn't get elected. It was as simple as that (*Plain Speaking* 255).

However, Truman was not entirely spiteful to his opposition. Though he saw Robert Taft (R-Ohio) as his opponent they were still able to keep a cordial tone between each other. Truman, though not afraid to argue with the opposition, still believed that you could still be friends with someone you disagree with. When asked what he thought would have happened if Robert Taft had been elected in 1952 he said:

Oh, no. I think he would have carried on a program of conservatism, but he would have been as decent and nice to his predecessor as a man could be, because he and I were personal friends on the floor of the Senate. You don't have to fall out with a man because you don't agree with him on politics" (*Talking with Harry* 246-247).

Because of the Republican majority Congress in his first term Truman was able to blame them for any lack of progress in the Congress and present them as uncaring about the average people. Farmers were afraid of cuts in government support and subsidies in a Dewey Administration. Additionally, Truman gained long-term support for the Democratic Party by recognizing the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 and offering wholehearted backing to the fledgling country. A majority of Jews in the United States would support the Democrats because of Truman's support for Israel. "Millions of Americans, though apathetic about new reforms promised by Truman, were determined to retain the major Roosevelt reforms, including Social Security" (Donovan 15).

4.3. Media Reception and Response

Most coverage prior to Harry Truman's State of the Union Address focused on two things: 1. Truman's anticipated response to the criticisms of Senator Robert Taft (R-Ohio), and 2. The Administration's foreign policy relating to the Korean War. Just prior to the address, news articles gave previews of what Truman would mention in his address as well as his reaction to the opposition.

New York Times Coverage. The *New York Times* suggested that Truman was revising his State of the Union address based on comments and criticisms from Senator Robert Taft. "President Truman discussed his message on the State of the Union with Democratic Congressional leaders today and was reported to be making revisions to answer points raised by Senator Robert A. Taft in his foreign policy speech yesterday."

In Taft's criticism of Truman, Taft said that he would rather pull the army from Korea and set up a Formosa-Japan Line of defense. "Senator Robert A. Taft, Republican of Ohio, said today that he favored pulling United States troops out of Korea and setting up a new Pacific defense line based on Formosa and Japan. The Senator also warned that if Russia attacked Western Europe "it means war." He said the land defense of Western Europe was primarily Western Europe's responsibility, not ours, and therefore large contingents of United States troops should not be sent overseas. He voiced the belief that the creation of a large international army in Europe under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower might provoke the Soviet Union into a European invasion" (*New York Times*, Cover, January 7, 1951)

In addition to discussions of Truman's response to Senator Taft's views that the United States should pull troops out of Korea and Europe, newspapers also outlined and predicted what Truman would cover in his address. The *New York Times*, in one front page article said, "With a great foreign policy debate under way, President Truman will appeal for national unity tomorrow in his State of the Union Address to the Eighty-second Congress. He is expected to speak his conviction that this country's allies in the anti-Communist circle, particularly in Europe, will contribute their full share in preparing for defense and that, under such circumstances, United States aid to them likewise would be great." Before the address, the media already speculated that Truman's address would focus mostly on the fight and defense against communism. In addition, critiques from other leaders permeated the news with a suggestion from Yugoslavian Premier Tito: "Marshal Tito called upon the West today to pull its troops out of the "strategically futile" Korea, to think again before rearming Western Germany, and to agree to another four power conference with the Soviet Union to try to avert a third world war." Truman would not yield to Marshal Tito's suggestions in his address.



Illustration 3. Newspaper headlines from the time of Truman’s address representing the overall impression of the 1951 State of the Union Address in the Media

London Times Coverage. Overseas news agencies also reported the address. The *London Times* offered this portrayal of the address: “President Truman pleaded powerfully in his Message to Congress yesterday for the maintenance of the policy of aid for the free world, to which the United States was bound by more ideals – by the ties of self-interest and preservation. He pointed out that, if Western Europe was to fall, the

Soviet Union could impose its demands on the world, without recourse to conflict, simply through the preponderance of its economic and military power.”

Interestingly, overseas correspondents attended the address from the *London Times* and offered their own interpretations of the address: “The President’s annual Message on the state of the Union, which he began to deliver shortly after 1 o’clock this afternoon, was very different from those of previous years. The easy optimism with which he greeted 1949 and 1950 had gone, and in its place was taken by a grim warning of the hardships ahead and the plea to the new Congress to meet them “in a way worthy of our heritage.” He begged “unity in these crucial days,” and explained that by unity he did not mean unanimity and an end to debate. “When I request unity,” he said, “what I am really asking for is a sense of responsibility on the part of every member of the Congress.” Reporting on Truman’s response to his opposition, a correspondent from the *London Times* said, “Mr Truman did not give an inch to his Republican critics of the past few weeks. He mentioned none of them by name, but he answered Mr. Hoover by saying that “no nation can find protection in a selfish search for a safe haven from the storm,” and elicited a weary smile from Senator Taft. Overall, *London Times* coverage of Truman’s address seemed to take a favorable tone, and did not offer criticism like the *Wall Street Journal* and other right-leaning publications at the time.

Wall Street Journal Coverage. The *Wall Street Journal* offered several analyses of the State of the Union Address. Most of their coverage focused on economic issues outlined in the address. While, as I discover in a close reading, Truman’s address hardly mentioned the US economy, the *New York Times* focused on this issue. Perhaps this was

because at the time they were an opposition newspaper. In particular, their front-page coverage on the day after the address looked at tax issues: “Truman may ask further tax boosts that would raise \$8 billion to \$10 billion yearly. In his State of the Union message, the President said “major” tax increases would be requested, but he gave no figures. The Administration’s tax program will go to Congress in the next couple weeks. Top officials assert it will call for increase tax rates on corporate and personal incomes, more excise levies on steeper rates on many items already taxed. The Treasury wants the regular corporation tax rate hiked from 47% to 55%. It also favors lifting to at least 65% the ceiling on regular corporate taxes and excess profits levies combined.”

Much of the *Wall Street Journal* coverage also picked out pieces of the address that focused on economic issues such as: the Economic Stabilization Agency, Commodity Prices, a reduction in Zinc use by the Government, and the Government’s use of rubber. Deeper in their coverage of the address the *Wall Street Journal* discussed labor relations issues and the Taft-Hartley act. “President Truman has abandoned hope of getting the Taft-Hartley act repealed. That’s the word from top Administration officials in Washington. In his State of the Union speech the President hinted at this decision. He asked for “improvement of our labor laws.” But he didn’t mention repeal. Mr. Truman’s decision was dictated mainly by the certainty that the 82nd Congress will oppose repeal. Having failed to get repeal by the more Administration-minded 81st Congress, his advisors note, he could hardly hope to get it erased by the present legislation.” (*Wall Street Journal*, “Labor News”, January 9, 1951).

A *Wall Street Journal* Cover Article (January 9, 1951) summarized Truman’s words: When the Wall Street Journal's Washington Bureau Summarized Truman's

Speech they said that: “It boiled down to this: Rapid build-up of our own military and industrial strength and continued arms and economic aid to this country's allies.

In a *Wall Street Journal* editorial published just one day after the address the editor, Bernard (Barney) Kilgore (1908-1967), bluntly critiques Truman: “when it comes to considering means to achieve those ends, there may be as many opinions as there were parties to the agreement.” Setting up a criticism and accusation of Truman's inability to negotiate with the opposition. The critique makes the GOP argument at the time that the US should withdraw troops from Korea rather than fight China and the Soviet-backed North Korean troops. “Perhaps withdrawal from Korea is the right solution – we are inclined to think so – but the situation scarcely justifies the statement that the “principles for which we are fighting in Korea...are the foundations of collective security and of the future of free nations.” If so, collective security has a crumbling foundation.

The *Wall Street Journal's* editorial attack on Truman began with a light criticism of Truman's general State of the Union thesis that Communism threatens the way of life in the 'Free-world'. Starting off politely, the attack finished with a depiction of Truman's character. The editorial claims that Truman, though offering the floor for debate, is not actually open to any discussion of the matter of Korea. “But the bulk of his message strongly implies that there are already too many things which he considers settled and beyond debate.” Following the editorial's critique of Truman the *Wall Street Journal* editor offers “Another Peace Plan” devised by the British Government as a call for a permanent cease-fire in Korea.

***Time* Article “If Fight We Must” (1/15/51).** *Time Magazine*, just a week after the State of the Union Address, published an article entitled “If Fight We Must.” The article took a more supportive position on Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address and presents Truman in a more positive, though still controversial image. The article starts with a depiction of Truman's character:

Brisk and smiling, President Truman strode into the House of Representatives this week to face a joint meeting of the Congress and read his annual message on the State of the Union. He was speaking to the critics of his foreign policy- though not always too clearly- over their heads, more clearly to the “Soviet imperialists” who were trying to subvert the world with their “destructive works”.

Most of this article and follow-up reporting, in general, focused on the Korean War. There were, however, other topics in discussion. *Time* also took note of Harry Truman's brief mention of the Fair Deal by calling the lines in the address “a fading echo from the past.” They described Truman's reference to the Fair Deal in the way one would describe a eulogy to the deceased: “He paid his respects to it only in a few short paragraphs...”

While most of the article reiterated the main points of Truman's address, I see some evidence of a judgment and purposeful narration of the situation during the address. In this respect, the *Time* article acknowledges the tremendous divide among members of the Congress at the time. “To the Congressmen who listened and who had already sharply criticized his policies, he said: “I ask the Congress for unity in these crucial days...I do not ask or expect unanimity...Let us debate these issues...” *Time Magazine*, also noting

the issue of debate, as recognized in the Wall Street Journal article. The article then ends with Truman's promise to the world: "We will fight, if fight we must."

**Illustration 4. Schedule and Pictures from Harry Truman's State of the Union Addresses
(Truman Presidential Library)**

Monday, January 8, 1951

9:50 am	(General Omar Bradley) OFF THE RECORD
10:00 am	BIG FOUR Honorable Alben Barkley , the Vice President Honorable Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House Senator Ernest W. McFarland, Arizona Congressman John W. McCormack, Massachusetts
11:00 am	(Staff)
12:30 pm	(The President left for the Capitol with Messrs. Matthew Connelly , Joseph Short , John R. Steelman and Charles Murphy .)
1:00 pm	The President delivered his State of the Union Message before a Joint Session of the Congress. [Public Papers : Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union]
4:00 pm	Honorable Leon Keyserling, Chairman Council of Economic Advisors Honorable John D. Clark, Member Honorable Roy Blough, Member (Mr. Keyserling advised Mr. Matthew Connelly that they would be ready to give the President a draft of their report today.)

Illustration 5. Prior to the 1948 State of the Union address. Truman, his wife, daughter, and much of his cabinet (Truman Presidential Library)



Illustration 6. President Truman Giving His State of the Union Address (National Archives)

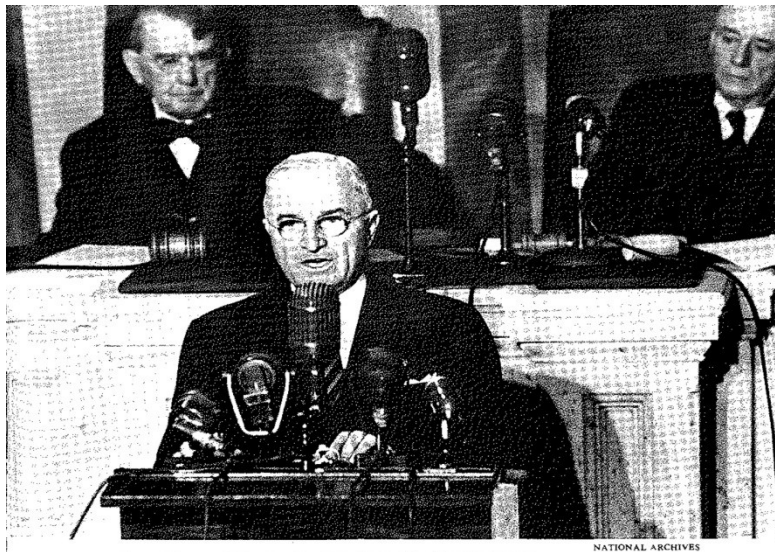
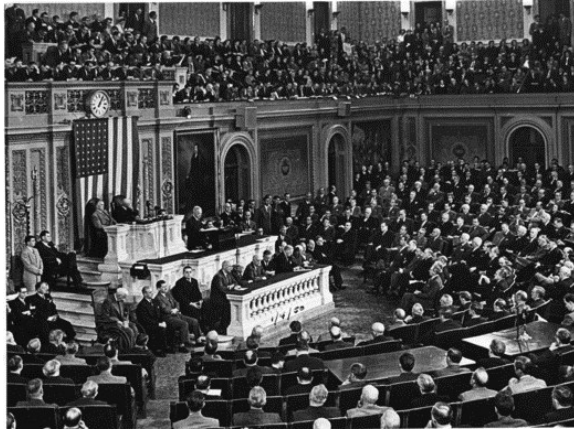


Illustration 7. President Truman Giving a State of the Union Address (Truman Presidential Library)



4.4. Close Reading of Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address

In a close reading of Truman's 1951 address I discover that Truman uses several strategies to defend his action in Korea and the resistance to communism. If I break Truman's address into a chronology of his Rhetorical strategy I see the following:

1. Opening the address: sets a dark tone of the grave task at hand in the frame of nostalgia for the Republic and its place in history.
2. Defines the US and allies as the "free-world" - well-meaning and hard-working protagonists in a fight between good vs. evil
3. Illustrates a utopian vision of the "free world"

4. Defines the Soviet Union and Communists as the antagonists - having a dystopian visions and maniacal goals of world domination and the removal of peoples' freedoms
5. Explains the US connection to Asia and illustrate what will happen with inaction in Korea
6. Illustrates how Korea represents a fight against communism throughout the world.
7. Disarms and denigrate the opposition to intervention
8. Demonstrates US Leadership and the strength of NATO
9. Offers grounds for peace and a venue in the United Nations while framing the Soviet Union as the aggressor.
10. Intimidates the Soviets by underlining US Military capabilities
11. Cautions Congress on the importance of funding the military
12. Brings the audience's vision back to utopian vision of the free-world
13. Calls the Congress and people to action
14. Closes his address

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Congress: **This 82d Congress faces as grave a task as any Congress in the history of our Republic.** The actions you take will be watched by the whole world. These actions will measure the ability of a free people, acting through their chosen representatives and their free institutions, to meet a deadly challenge to their way of life. We can meet this challenge foolishly or wisely. We can meet it timidly or bravely, shamefully or honorably. I know that the 82d Congress will meet this challenge in a way worthy of our great heritage. I know that your debates will be earnest, responsible, constructive, and to the point. I know that from these debates there will come the great decisions needed to carry us forward.

In his opening and introduction of the address I found several rhetorical strategies used by Truman. First, Truman sets an ominous tone for the address with his use of the words “grave task”. South Korea had just been invaded and US Troops were in action and on the retreat. Truman then offers a feeling of nostalgia by recollecting that this situation sits in the “history of our Republic” of which they are the “chosen representatives.” He also begins to set up an image of the United States and allies as the “free” world protagonists. In addition, Truman appeals to the morality of the Congress and American people by saying that their decision will be “worthy” of their heritage. In addition, I see the beginning of his depiction of a dichotomy of a utopian vision and dystopian vision: the “free” world and allies and the non-free world of the communists.

At this critical time, I am glad to say that our country is in a healthy condition. Our democratic institutions are sound and strong. We have more men and women at work than ever before. We are able to produce more than ever before--in fact, far more than any country ever produced in the history of the world. I am confident that we can succeed in the great task that lies before us. We will succeed, but we must all do our part. **We must all act together as citizens of this great Republic.**

At this point, Truman builds his position as the leader of a healthy republic where the “men and women” work hard. The phrasing of the health of the Republic is common in beginning of most state of the union addresses. He also points out the historical significance of the United States and being the greatest economy in the history of the World. Truman paints an image of a strong and robust country that, as I found later, is under attack. He attempts to show that, though the country is doing well, a dark force is over the horizon – as seen in the next passage:

As we meet here today, American soldiers are fighting a bitter campaign in Korea. We pay tribute to their courage, devotion, and gallantry. Our men are fighting, alongside their United Nations allies, because they know, as we do, that the aggression in Korea is part of the attempt of the Russian Communist dictatorship to take over the world, step by step. Our men are fighting a long way from home, but they are fighting for our lives and our liberties. They are fighting to protect our right to meet here today--our right to govern ourselves as a free nation. **The threat of world conquest by Soviet Russia endangers our liberty**

and endangers the kind of world in which the free spirit of man can survive.

This threat is aimed at all peoples who strive to win or defend their own freedom and national independence.

Truman begins to define the Korean conflict at this point. As known, there is significant domestic opposition to the US involvement in Korea. He imagines an antagonist in the battle – the Soviet Union – and how their goal is to “take over the world, step by step.” He essentially portrays the US involvement in Korea as a fight between good and evil, and free and non-free people for the future of the world. In addition, he makes one of only a few religious allusions by including the words “free spirit”. Truman also employs repetition - anaphora - in this passage to hammer in his message with the word “fighting” - used four times in succession. He also creates imagery and uses a strategy of connotation by using the words “courage” and “gallantry” equating the US troops to knights during the Crusades.

Indeed, the state of our Nation is in great part the state of our friends and allies throughout the world. **The gun that points at them points at us, also. The threat is a total threat and the danger is a common danger. All free nations are exposed and all are in peril. Their only security lies in banding together.**

No one nation can find protection in a selfish search for a safe haven from the storm. The free nations do not have any aggressive purpose. We want only peace in the world--peace for all countries. No threat to the security of any nation is concealed in our plans and programs.

In this part of the address I found that Truman expands his definition of the protagonists in the battle to “our friends and allies throughout the world” and “free nations” protecting themselves. The antagonists, the battle between the free nations and the Soviets and Communist forces are represented as a storm that the US cannot hide from. He represents the Republican Opposition to the involvement in Korea as a “selfish search for a safe haven”.

We had hoped that the Soviet Union, with its security assured by the Charter of the United Nations, would be willing to live and let live. But I am sorry to say that has not been the case. **The imperialism of the czars has been replaced by the even more ambitious, more crafty, and more menacing imperialism of the rulers of the Soviet Union.** This new imperialism has powerful military forces. It is keeping millions of men under arms. It has a large air force and a strong submarine force. It has complete control of the men and equipment of its satellites. It has kept its subject peoples and its economy in a state of perpetual mobilization.

Truman then does something interesting with his antagonists – the Soviets. He tries to connect the Soviet Union to the czarist past prior to the communist takeover of the government. He implies that communism is just a front for imperialism and that the rulers of the Soviet Union are acting like czars who they replaced a just a few decades before. He also uses the word “It” to describe the Soviet Union – implying that the Soviet Union acts as an ill-meaning singularity – almost maniacal : “It has complete control of men and equipment...it has kept its subject peoples...in a state of perpetual mobilization.” He also

doesn't recognize the US or allies as imperialists in this statement – demonstrating a us vs. them attitude.

The present rulers of the Soviet Union have shown that they are willing to use this power to destroy the free nations and win domination over the whole world. The Soviet imperialists have two ways of going about their destructive work. They use the method of subversion and internal revolution, and they use the method of external aggression. In preparation for either of these methods of attack, they stir up class strife and disorder. They encourage sabotage. They put out poisonous propaganda. They deliberately try to prevent economic improvement. If their efforts are successful, they foment a revolution, as they did in Czechoslovakia and China, and as they tried, unsuccessfully, to do in Greece. If their methods of subversion are blocked, and if they think they can get away with outright warfare, they resort to external aggression. This is what they did when they loosed the armies of their puppet states against the Republic of Korea, in an evil war by proxy.

Truman then makes an all-out attack on the leaders of the Soviet Union and attempts to demonstrate that they cannot be trusted. The Soviet Leaders will use any methods to win, and are thus unethical. In this passage I also see a further definition of a cunning antagonist who has no morals and will stop at nothing to take over the world. He implies that the Soviet Leaders, once they have taken over another country, will work to suppress the citizens. His accusations at this point in his address were validated through the later actions of the Soviet Union in Eastern Bloc countries. The powerful words

“sabotage”, “subversion”, “disorder”, “poisonous”, and “strife” make an emotional appeal (pathos) to the audience and are a strategy of creating negative imagery of the Soviet Union and Communists. In addition, Truman reasons with his audience by mentioning examples of prior situations where the Soviet Union and communists were successful. He uses examples of their past successful efforts of taking over Czechoslovakia and China, and their unsuccessful revolution in Greece.

We of the free world must be ready to meet both of these methods of Soviet action. We must not neglect one or the other. The free world has power and resources to meet these two forms of aggression--resources that are far greater than those of the Soviet dictatorship. We have skilled and vigorous peoples, great industrial strength, and abundant sources of raw materials. And above all, we cherish liberty. Our common ideals are a great part of our strength. These ideals are the driving force of human progress. The free nations believe in the dignity and the worth of man. We believe in independence for all nations. We believe that free and independent nations can band together into a world order based on law. **We have laid the cornerstone of such a peaceful world in the United Nations. We believe that such a world order can and should spread the benefits of modern science and industry, better health and education, more food and rising standards of living--throughout the world. These ideals give our cause a power and vitality that Russian communism can never command.** The free nations, however, are bound together by more than ideals. They are a real community bound together also by the ties of self-interest and self-preservation. **If they should fall apart, the results would be fatal to human freedom.**

Harry Truman goes back to defining his protagonists, “the free world”, and who they are. He uses the word “we”, reinforcing his ethos, and making his audience feel that they are part of the good side of the fight between good and evil. He also defines his protagonists. His vision of the free world is that they are protagonists who are “skilled and vigorous people” who “cherish liberty” and must “band together” to make a peaceful world. Truman uses an allegory where he imagines the free-world as a utopia that is under threat by a dystopian menace. He also pushes back at his opposition's efforts both domestically and internationally by reasoning that if the US and allies were to remove the troops from Korea it could be “fatal” to humanity. Truman also reminds his audience that the US and allies have a duty to defend freedom and that if they do not band together. In addition, he offers the idea that the free-world offers a cornerstone of world-peace, and that if the menace of the communists is defeated the world could reach a free, peaceful existence – a utopian vision, or reward for their fight.

Our own national security is deeply involved with that of the other free nations. While they need our support, we equally need theirs. [...] If Western Europe were to fall to Soviet Russia, it would double the Soviet supply of coal and triple the Soviet supply of steel. If the free countries of Asia and Africa should fall to Soviet Russia, we would lose the sources of many of our most vital raw materials, including uranium, which is the basis of our atomic power. [...] In such a situation, the Soviet Union could impose its demands on the world, without resort to conflict, simply through the preponderance of its economic and military power. The Soviet Union does not have to attack the United States to secure domination

of the world. It can achieve its ends by isolating us and swallowing up all our allies. **Therefore, even if we were craven enough I do not believe we could be--but, I say, even if we were craven enough to abandon our ideals, it would be disastrous for us to withdraw from the community of free nations.**

In this passage, Truman makes an appeal to logos by reasoning for the US involvement in Korea and Western Europe. It is at this point that Truman reasons what will happen if the Soviet Union is not checked around the world. His first line of reasoning is that if Western Europe were to fall the resources of Western Europe would embolden the Soviet economy and give them an advantage in terms of materials such as coal and steel – the heart of manufacturing. He mentions Africa and Asia and that if those continents were to fall the Soviets would have most of the uranium supplies and could, as a result, bolster their nuclear arsenal. Additionally, I see the mention of manpower, and that if the Soviets expanded they would also increase their overall military size – one that the United States could not match in numbers. He also makes an interesting point by saying that the Soviets would not even have to invade, but, at that point, would only have to pressure the rest of the world with a dominant economy and manpower into subjugation. Truman ends this portion of his address with an indirect attack on his opposition by saying that, “even if we were craven enough I do not believe we could be--but, I say, even if we were craven enough to abandon our ideals” - By using the words “craven” and “abandon” he attempts to define the opposition's attempts to leave Korea as cowardly and fainthearted. This strategy hits hard at the opposition to Korean War efforts – basically calling anyone who would oppose the defense of South Korea wimps.

We are the most powerful single member of this community, and we have a special responsibility. We must take the leadership in meeting the challenge to freedom and in helping to protect the rights of independent nations. This country has a practical, realistic program of action for meeting this challenge. First, we shall have to extend economic assistance, where it can be effective. **The best way to stop subversion by the Kremlin is to strike at the roots of social injustice and economic disorder. People who have jobs, homes, and hopes for the future will defend themselves against the underground agents of the Kremlin.** Our programs of economic aid have done much to turn back Communism. In Europe the Marshall plan has had an electrifying result. As European recovery progressed, the strikes led by the Kremlin's agents in Italy and France failed. All over Western Europe the Communist Party took worse and worse beatings at the polls. [...] They are now ready to use this strength in helping to build a strong combined defense against aggression.

In the next passage, Truman goes on to define the United States within the free-world. In a response to the opposition's contention that the US should retreat from Korea he defines the US role as leader. Additionally, he addresses the Red Scare and Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigations into "subversives" in the country. In retrospect Truman, though also anti-communist, took a more middle-of-the-road approach when compared to Senator McCarthy's intense investigations. Truman argues that strong economics leads to a defense against Communism. He reasons that if people have houses and incomes they will be averse to Communism and "agents of the Kremlin". He reasons

that improved economic conditions in Western Europe halted the Communist Party in Italy and France. He cites the Marshall plan aid as being responsible for the economic recovery, and thus resistance of Western Europe to the spread of Communism.

We shall need to continue some economic aid to European countries. This aid should now be specifically related to the building of their defenses. In other parts of the world our economic assistance will need to be more broadly directed toward economic development. In the Near East, in Africa, in Asia, we must do what we can to help people who are striving to advance from misery, poverty, and hunger. We must also continue to help the economic growth of our good neighbors in this hemisphere. These actions will bring greater strength for the free world. **They will give many people a real stake in the future and reason to defend their freedom.** They will mean increased production of goods they need and materials we need.

Truman then makes a pitch for Economic Aid programs. He argues for the expansion of aid programs from Europe to the Near East, Africa, and Asia. He does this after reasoning that a strong economy and economic condition for citizens is what creates a defense against the spread of communism. He reasons that if people have a stake in the economy of their country they will be more likely to defend freedom.

Second, we shall need to continue our military assistance to countries which want to defend themselves. The heart of our common defense effort is the North Atlantic community. The defense of Europe is the basis for the defense of the whole free world--ourselves included. Next to the United States, Europe is the

largest workshop in the world. **It is also a homeland of the great religious beliefs shared by many of our citizens beliefs which are now threatened by the tide of atheistic communism.**

Truman goes on to explain the need for military assistance. He begins to talk about the need for NATO as a defense for the “largest workshop in the world” (after the United States) using imagery and reflecting previous contentions that the people of the free world are hard-working people. He also, for the first time, directly mentions religion as another factor in the fight against communism. Though he mentions religion he does not use it as a sole reason for intervention, but rather as a shared trait or common ground with Europe. Truman makes appeals to both ethos and pathos in that he says American culture shares common beliefs with those of Europe and that we are united as people in a common culture. This passage attempts to invoke an emotional reaction that the United States is effectively defending family members from an outside onslaught.

Strategically, economically, and morally, the defense of Europe is a part of our own defense. That is why we have joined with the countries of Europe in the North Atlantic Treaty, pledging ourselves to work with them. [...] Our North Atlantic Treaty partners have strict systems of universal military training. Several have recently increased the term of service. All have taken measures to improve the quality of training. Forces are being trained and expanded as rapidly as the necessary arms and equipment can be supplied from their factories and ours. Our North Atlantic Treaty partners, together, are building armies bigger than our own.

[...]The military leaders of our own country took part in working out these plans, and are agreed that they are sound and within our capabilities.

The next strategy in Truman's speech is to address the issue of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He shows that we have willing members of the free-world in Europe. He also defines the members of NATO as being disciplined and with “strict systems of universal military training”. He addresses any concerns or objections that the United States is pulling most of the weight of the defense of the free-world. By stating that, if one adds the other members of NATO together they have more military capability than our own he is countering any arguments that NATO is dominated by US force.

To put these plans into action, we sent to Europe last week one of our greatest military commanders, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. General Eisenhower went to Europe to assume command of the united forces of the North Atlantic Treaty countries, including our own forces in Germany. **The people of Europe have confidence in General Eisenhower.** They know his ability to put together a fighting force of allies. His mission is vital to our security. **We should all stand behind him, and give him every bit of help we can.**

Harry Truman makes an interesting move in the next part of his address. He uses the example of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the leader of the NATO forces. This example is not without strategy. It is, at this point, well-known that Eisenhower is a Republican. In addition, Eisenhower is a well-loved character, not only by Americans, but also by many Western Europeans who saw him as a liberator from the control of the

Nazis just over five years prior to the address. The reference to Eisenhower as the head of the NATO forces is a further strike at the Republican opposition. Effectively, Truman is saying that even other Republicans support his plans for a defense against communism.

Part of our job will be to reinforce the military strength of our European partners by sending them weapons and equipment as our military production expands. Our program of military assistance extends to the nations in the Near East and the Far East which are trying to defend their freedom. **Soviet communism is trying to make these nations into colonies, and to use their people as cannon fodder in new wars of conquest.** We want their people to be free men and to enjoy peace.

Expanding on his argument for the strengthening of the militaries of the free-world Truman argues for sending weapons and equipment not only to Europe, but the Near and Far East countries. He continues his point that the Soviet Union has imperialistic aspirations and intends to make colonies of other nations such as Korea. He also makes an assertion that it is “our job” to do so. Following his reasoning for sending military equipment to other countries he sees a need to explain why the United States should help the peoples of Asia – implying that, even though the United States doesn't share as much of a cultural heritage with Asia there is still a common ground with those nations:

Our country has always stood for freedom for the peoples of Asia. Long, long ago it stood for the freedom of the peoples of Asia. Our history shows this.

We have demonstrated it in the Philippines. We have demonstrated it in our relations with Indonesia, India, and with China. We hope to join in restoring the

people of Japan to membership in the community of free nations. It is in the Far East that we have taken up arms, under the United Nations, to preserve the principle of independence for free nations. We are fighting to keep the forces of Communist aggression from making a slave state out of Korea. Korea has tremendous significance for the world. It means that free nations, acting through the United Nations, are fighting together against aggression.

Truman uses US involvement in the Spanish-American War in the Philippines as evidence of a shared history with Asia. He attempts to counter arguments made by the opposition that the US doesn't need to help people in Asia because Americans doesn't share history with them. Truman talks about a shared history at the turn of the century with the US ejection of Spanish control of the Philippines as an example. He finishes this section of his address focusing back on Korea and reasoning that the Communists will turn Korea into a "slave state" if they are allowed to take over the Korean peninsula.

We will understand the importance of this best if we look back into history. **If the democracies had stood up against the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, or the attack on Ethiopia in 1935, or the seizure of Austria in 1938, if they had stood together against aggression on those occasions as the United Nations has done in Korea, the whole history of our time would have been different.** The principles for which we are fighting in Korea are right and just. They are the foundations of collective security and of the future of free nations. Korea is not only a country undergoing the torment of aggression; it is also a symbol. It stands

for right and justice in the world against oppression and slavery. The free world must always stand for these principles--and we will stand with the free world.

Harry Truman follows his reasoning with examples of when the US and allies had failed to intervene. He reasons that if the US doesn't counter the aggression of communist troops in Korea the US will see the same results as in Manchuria in 1931 with the invasion of the Empire of Japan, Ethiopia in 1935 with the invasion by Italian Fascists, and the Nazi takeover of Austria in 1938. These examples, all less than 20 years prior to the Korean conflict are recent and fresh in the minds of the audience.

As the third part of our program, we will continue to work for peaceful settlements in international disputes. We will support the United Nations and remain loyal to the great principles of international cooperation laid down in its charter. We are willing, as we have always been, to negotiate honorable settlements with the Soviet Union. But we will not engage in appeasement. The Soviet rulers have made it clear that we must have strength as well as right on our side. If we build our strength--and we are building it--the Soviet rulers may face the facts and lay aside their plans to take over the world. **That is what we hope will happen, and that is what we are trying to bring about. That is the only realistic road to peace.**

At this point in the address, Truman begins to conclude and summarize his main arguments in his address. Truman brings up the importance of the United Nations at this point. He offers the option of peaceful negotiations to the end of conflict and implies that

the United Nations offers a forum for this discussion. He places the responsibility and guilt on the side of the Soviet Union. He implies that the Soviet rulers are the ones who can decide to end conflict and “lay aside their plans to take over the world.” Media, at this point paid close attention to Truman's words at the end of this section of the address. The Wall Street Journal took notice of his assertion that the only realistic road to peace is that the Soviets give up their plans to take over the world. The Wall Street Journal likely took note of these lines because they are, in effect, Truman's thesis of his 1951 State of the Union Address – even though his overall thesis appears near the end of his address.

These are the main elements of the course our Nation must follow as a member of the community of free nations. These are the things we must do to preserve our security and help create a peaceful world. But they will be successful only if we increase the strength of our own country. Here at home we have some very big jobs to do. We are building much stronger military forces--and we are building them fast. **We are preparing for full wartime mobilization, if that should be necessary.** And we are continuing to build a strong and growing economy, able to maintain whatever effort may be required for as long as necessary.

Truman realizes that he must not appear as a war-monger in his address. He stresses that his ultimate goals are peace and security in the world. He implies that a fight in Korea is necessary to achieve these goals. However, he also does not want to appear weak to his adversaries. He stresses that the United States is fully prepared for all-out war with Communist forces if it comes to that. The threat, “We are preparing for full wartime mobilization, if that should be necessary” is also noted by the Wall Street Journal at the

time. Attention to this line by the press implies the strong impact it likely had on the audience.

We are building our own Army, Navy, and Air Force to an active strength of nearly 3 1/2 million men and women. We are stepping up the training of the reserve forces, and establishing more training facilities, so that we can rapidly increase our active forces far more on short notice. [...] **On top of this, we will build the capacity to turn out on short notice arms and supplies that may be needed for a full-scale war.** Fortunately, we have a good start on this because of our enormous plant capacity and because of the equipment on hand from the last war. For example, many combat ships are being returned to active duty from the "mothball fleet" and many others can be put into service on very short notice. We have large reserves of arms and ammunition and thousands of workers skilled in arms production. [...] We are concentrating on producing the newest types of weapons and producing them as fast as we can.

Truman, after offering grounds for peace with the Soviet Union and communists, circles back to illustrating the power of the military. He discusses the current status of the US Military and that if the United States is pushed into all-out war the country has the capability to quickly expand. The US military, at the time, had a large "mothball fleet" and "large reserves" of military supplies available. At this point in his address Truman is targeting not just his audience in the Congress, but also his adversaries in the Soviet Union and China. He mentions the United States possession and development of the most modern weapons and that the country will continue to develop these weapons. After

explaining the capability of the US Military to quickly pull mothballed fleets and munitions out of storage Truman attempts to threaten and intimidate his enemies with sheer numbers of the US capacity to produce planes and tanks:

This production drive is more selective than the one we had during World War II, but it is just as urgent and intense. It is a big program and it is a costly one. Let me give you two concrete examples. **Our present program calls for expanding the aircraft industry so that it will have the capacity to produce 50,000 modern military planes a year. We are preparing the capacity to produce 35,000 tanks a year.** [...] We used to think that the B-17 was a huge plane, and the blockbuster it carried a huge load. But the B-36 can carry five of these blockbusters in its belly, and it can carry them five times as far. Of course, the B-36 is much more complicated to build than the B-17, and far more expensive. One B-17 costs \$275,000, while now one B-36 costs \$3 million. I ask you to remember that what we are doing is to provide the best and most modern military equipment in the world for our fighting forces.

Truman's citing military production capabilities of the United States military industry was a reaction. The Soviet Union often displayed its own military power in parades and propaganda posters (see image below). These displays of military power often involved rows and rows of tanks and plane fly overs. The United States didn't generally have public displays like the Soviets and Communist countries. However, Truman would not be outdone by the Soviet displays of military numbers. Truman used

this portion of his State of the Union to say that the United States could meet and surpass the Soviet Union's military output. However, the military production numbers were high estimates and were never actually tested in the Cold War.

Illustration 8. Soviet Propaganda Poster. President Truman responded to Soviet military propaganda by citing US military production ability in his 1951 State of the Union Address. (by artist Gustav Klutsis, 1935)



After giving numerical estimates of the armored tanks and planes the US could produce, if pressured, Truman talks about the requirements by industry needed to make such enormous production increases.

This kind of defense production program has two parts. The first part is to get our defense production going as fast as possible. [...] The second part is to increase

our capacity to produce and to keep our economy strong for the long pull. We do not know how long Communist aggression will threaten the world. Only by increasing our output can we carry the burden of preparedness for an indefinite period in the future.

Interestingly, Truman takes a position that part of the responsibility for the war effort in the Korean War rests on US Industry. Truman, after having experienced the US efforts in World War II only five years before seemed to anticipate that the Korean War would end up playing out like World War II – an all-out conflict requiring massive resources. In the end, however, we find that the Korean War became isolated to the Korean peninsula rather than requiring the massive growth of the US Military. The Soviet Union never entered the conflict directly, but rather supplied the North Korean troops as the Chinese intervened. However, we see in this passage evidence that Truman imagined the Korean War quickly turning into a wider conflict.

The Congress will need to consider legislation, at this session, affecting all the aspects of our mobilization job. The main subjects on which legislation will be needed are: First, appropriations for our military buildup. Second, extension and revision of the Selective Service Act. Third, military and economic aid to help build up the strength of the free world. Fourth, revision and extension of the authority to expand production and to stabilize prices, wages, and rents. Fifth, improvement of our agricultural laws to help obtain the kinds of farm products we need for the defense effort. Sixth, improvement of our labor laws to help provide stable labor-management relations and to make sure that we have steady

production in this emergency. Seventh, housing and training of defense workers and the full use of all our manpower resources. Eighth, means for increasing the supply of doctors, nurses, and other trained medical personnel critically needed for the defense effort. Ninth, aid to the States to meet the most urgent needs of our elementary and secondary schools. Some of our plans will have to be deferred for the time being. But we should do all we can to make sure our children are being trained as good and useful citizens in the critical times ahead. Tenth, a major increase in taxes to meet the cost of the defense effort.

Finally, Truman tells the Congress what he plans to do in the next session of Congress. Truman quickly lists ten items – all of which would be considered major pieces of legislation today – and then moves on. In addition, most of these items are connected to his vision of a national war effort. Most State of the Union Addresses in the past had spent a significant part of the address talking about what would be accomplished in the next session. Instead, Truman has, so far, spent the majority of his address focusing on the threat of communism and the need for unity behind the war effort. This narrowing of time spent on major domestic items emphasizes the impact the Korean War had on the Truman Administration.

The Economic Report and the Budget Message will discuss these subjects further. In addition, I shall send to the Congress special messages containing detailed recommendations on legislation needed at this Session. In the months ahead the Government must give priority to activities that are urgent--like military procurement and atomic energy and power development.[...]The Congress,

therefore, should give continued attention to the measures which our country will need for the long pull. And it should act upon such legislation as promptly as circumstances permit.

I find further evidence that this address is unlike most others. In his 1951 address Truman does not talk about the budget, as most presidents did in past State of the Union addresses. Usually, the president goes through the budget and cites numbers and breaks down costs or give a general overview of the expenses and budget. However, Truman believes that the urgency of the Korean situation should make the budget a minor detail. He defers any discussion of costs to a later report that would be produced and require much less attention than this address.

To take just one example--we need to continue and complete the work of rounding out our system of social insurance. We still need to improve our protection against unemployment and old age. We still need to provide insurance against the loss of earnings through sickness, and against the high costs of modern medical care. And above all, we must remember that the fundamentals of our strength rest upon the freedoms of our people. We must continue our efforts to achieve the full realization of our democratic ideals. We must uphold the freedom of speech and the freedom of conscience in our land. We must assure equal rights and equal opportunities to all our citizens.

Finally, Truman makes a call for action at the end of his address. He calls for unity in the country in the fight against communism and attacks on the 'free-world'. Truman, as noted by the media at the time, makes a symbolic offer to his opposition. He offers his

opposition the ability to debate the policies, and also attempts to counter the position that he is running the country without any care for debate. He also defines what type of debate can take place by saying that there is a difference between sharp and harmful criticism and constructive criticism. Additionally, he reasons that the setup in Korea equates to that of World War II.

I ask the Congress for unity in these crucial days. Make no mistake about my meaning. I do not ask, or expect, unanimity. I do not ask for an end to debate. Only by debate can we arrive at decisions which are wise, and which reflect the desires of the American people. We do not have a dictatorship in this country, and we never will have one in this country. When I request unity, what I am really asking for is a sense of responsibility on the part of every Member of this Congress. Let us debate the issues, but let every man among us weigh his words and his deeds. There is a sharp difference between harmful criticism and constructive criticism. If we are truly responsible as individuals, I am sure that we will be unified as a government. Let us keep our eyes on the issues and work for the things we all believe in. Let each of us put our country ahead of our party, and ahead of our own personal interests. I had the honor to be a Member of the Senate during World War II, and I know from experience that unity of purpose and of effort is possible in the Congress without any lessening of the vitality of our two-party system. Let us all stand together as Americans. Let us stand together with all men everywhere who believe in human liberty.

Truman then closes his address by widening the scope of his topic. After focusing for most of the address on the Korean conflict, fight against communism, and an economic war, he mentions the goal of peace. Notably, in the closing of his address he uses a religious reference, like many other presidents. After asking for the Congress to unify during the crucial days he reaches beyond congress and asks for all Americans to stand together.

Peace is precious to us. It is the way of life we strive for with all the strength and wisdom we possess. But more precious than peace are freedom and justice. We will fight, if fight we must, to keep our freedom and to prevent justice from being destroyed. These are the things that give meaning to our lives, and which we acknowledge to be greater than ourselves. This is our cause--peace, freedom, justice. We will pursue this cause with determination and humility, asking divine guidance that in all we do we may follow the will of God.

CHAPTER 5

REAGAN'S 1986 ADDRESS

5.1. Reagan's Character



Illustration 9. The Space Shuttle Challenger. The Spacecraft Exploded on January 28, 1986. As a result, Ronald Reagan postponed his address until February 4 (Associated Press)

On January 28th, 1986, just before President Ronald Reagan was scheduled to give his State of the Union Address, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after liftoff. Seven astronauts, including New Hampshire school teacher Christa McAuliffe, were killed in an event witnessed by millions across the country. President Reagan, sensing the tragedy and timing, decided to postpone his address for one week until February 4 in order to let the Shuttle Disaster to take precedence. Reagan, as a president and former actor, knew how important timing is to a speech. He was also fully aware of the impact that media has on a speaker's ability to connect with a large audience.

When Reagan became president in 1981 he became the first president to take part in the beginning of fully immersive media – a time when news became its own form of

entertainment. “His administration became the first twenty-four-hour-news-cycle presidency, winning the election the same year as the premier of Ted Turner’s Cable News Network (CNN)” (Bates 9). The presidency was subject to a public view it had never encountered before: every word was analyzed, news channels and press reported all day long, every day about what the president said and did. Fortunately for Ronald Reagan he had been an actor before entering politics and seemed to revel in front of the camera. Reporters now had to satisfy a hungry news cycle – whereas, before the 1980s, media had a down time each night where political stories could be crafted and fine-tuned. Those days ended in the early 1980s. “Led by earnest reporters such as Sam Donaldson, the press hovered and hounded, looking for a story and reporting every sound bite. For the most part, Reagan did not flinch” (Bates 9). Reagan, being arguably one of the most media-savvy presidents, capitalized on the attention from the press as a tool to connect to the American public.

“In 1986, newsstands across the United States received the latest issue of Time magazine, the cover displaying a picture of a beaming President Ronald Reagan. He had good reason to smile.” (*The Reagan Rhetoric* 5). Reagan enjoyed a strong approval rating for most of his presidency – even in 1986, as his second term began, Reagan enjoyed an approval rating of 68% (*The Reagan Rhetoric* 5). The United States had also bounced back from the recession of the early 1980s and the dark shadow on the presidency created in the wake of Richard Nixon had waned. Reagan, a cheerful man known for his ability to connect with his audience, was the oldest president to serve.

In a 1986 Time magazine article, the author, Lance Morrow, discussed the issue of Reagan’s popularity. He claimed that Ronald Reagan was liked more for his character

than anything else. Morrow said, “Ronald Reagan has found the American sweet spot.” Morrow recognized an intangible but very real connection between this president, trained as an actor, and a nation now serving as his eager audience. “The actor enters into the minds of others and leads them through drama, making them laugh or cry, making them feel exactly what he wants them to feel. It is a powerful primitive transaction, a manipulation, but at its deepest level, a form of tribal communication.” (“Yankee Doodle Magic”, *Time*, July 7, 1986).

Morrow did not attribute all of Reagan’s achievements to his abilities as an actor. He also suggested that the president’s consistency of message helped form a connection to voters, helping them to believe that Reagan “does exactly what he says he will do.” As a result, Americans responded to the “predictability of his resolve.” Morrow continued that, in his ability to reach the nation through his use of language, Reagan is “a Prospero of American memories” who “possesses a sort of genius for the styles of American memory”, but he “does not delve cynically into the layers of American memory”. Morrow’s words turned nostalgic as he likened Reagan’s presidency to “the illusion of a long summer celebration of the past” (“Yankee Doodle Magic”, *Time*, July 7, 1986).

Reagan’s Speaking Ability. Reagan’s ability to connect with his audience has received a great deal of discussion and research: Michael Rogin (1987), Sidney Blumenthal (1988), Robert Denton, Jr. (1988), Haynes Johnson (1991), Wilbur Edel (1992), and Douglas Brinkley (2005) to name a few. All of these authors note Reagan’s talent of being able to connect to his audience.

Scholars of Rhetoric have made important contributions to the study of Reagan's presidency. "However, only limited sources focus on the subject of his language, and only a handful of sources examining his language have been published since his presidency." Most studies and discussions of Reagan's Rhetorical Talents conclude that Reagan was a master rhetorician in terms of the style of his language and details of what he had to talk about (*Reagan Rhetoric* 5). Reagan was also noted for his ability to sway and influence the public through his speeches and public appearances – something many politicians would hope to achieve. Reagan's words, however, did much more than serve a call to arms during war or garner support for a piece of domestic legislation. His speeches touched upon and affected existing national perspectives regarding numerous subjects. According to Bates, "In other words, for millions of Americans he forged new interpretations that superseded preexisting recollections. His vision seemed to become reality" (Bates 7).

Scholars from various disciplines have examined Reagan's often given title of "the Great Orator." Some scholars have attempted to demonstrate the flaws in such a characterization of his rhetorical ability. According to Bates, "In other words, George Washington is the father of the country, Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, Franklin Roosevelt won World War II, and Ronald Reagan made the country feel good again" (Bates 9). However, this kind of simplistic label lacks an understanding of how Reagan was able to gain this title. What remains to be done in the study of Reagan and his influence on the nation is to understand better the connection between Reagan's communication style and consistency of message and the American people's reception of that rhetoric.

Views: Open Society to Religion. Long before Reagan entered the national arena as a potential candidate for public office, he was a strong advocate of an open society. That concept had an important place in his 1964 speech in support of Barry Goldwater for president. His slashing attack on the incumbent Democratic administration, which endeared him to the Republicans whose party he had joined only two years earlier, included the charge that government in the U.S. “to an ever increasing degree interferes with the people’s right to know” (Edel 1992).

Particular care was taken with the staging of press conferences, each which was preceded by two days of rehearsals in which answers were supplied for all the questions that the White House staff could anticipate. Even the president’s entry into the press room and his position in front of the open doors, Mike Deaver later explained, was part of an effort to present the best possible picture for a television audience. Reagan’s chief press spokesman for six years put the case in a single sentence: “Underlying our whole theory of disseminating information in the White House was our knowledge that the American people get their news and from their judgments based largely on what they see on television” (Speakes 220) and (Edel 263).

Connection with Audience. Reagan was a master of connecting with his audience. He characterized his listeners as an audience and himself as an actor who used words not just to convey ideas but to achieve a subliminal identification. Kenneth Burke, scholar of rhetoric, sees political address and dramatic acting as two forms of the same thing. In both cases, Burke argues, speakers aim for what he calls consubstantiation, a super-identification of the audience with the actor/orator in which listeners suspend their

sense of individuality and see the speaker as a projection of themselves as a group (Erickson 13).

“Ronald Reagan is by far the most persuasive political speaker of our time. He derives remarkable power from his use of language. Even his opponents grant him the title Great Communicator. To better understand how Reagan’s rhetoric functions, though we should remember that the word communication means more than clear speaking or writing” (Erickson 1).

Reagan’s voice and ability to use language to establish this emotional link with listeners lies behind every success he has ever attained. As Roger Rosenblatt wrote in *Time*, Reagan’s voice, “...recedes at the right moments, turning mellow at points of intensity. When it wishes to be persuasive, it hovers barely above a whisper so as to win you over by intimacy, if not by substance...He likes his voice, treats it like a guest. He makes you part of the hospitality. It was that voice that carried him out of Dixon and away from the Depression...” (Rosenblatt, *Time*, January 5, 1981)

Reagan knew full well the power of language “in the press and on the airways” to affect public opinion. His anticommunist speeches reflect this. In his confrontation with communism in Hollywood, Reagan characterized the politics and suspicions of his day as part of an apocalyptic confrontation. “There can only be one end to the war we are in,” he vowed. “It won’t go away if we simply try to out-wait it. Wars end in victory or defeat. One of the foremost authorities on communism in the world today has said we have ten years. Not ten years to make up our minds, but ten years to win or lose – by 1970 the world will be all slave or all free” (Erickson 23). Any assessment of the Reagan administration must include an analysis of its rhetoric. All presidencies since Kennedy’s

have been “rhetorical,” (Hart, Roderick, *The Sound Leadership...*) and all presidents use many genres of discourse in which to accomplish their “deeds...into words” (Campbell and Jamieson 1).

A Storyteller. Reagan was a storyteller and he used anecdotes throughout his speeches to draw in and relate to his audience. Reagan was often able to use his storytelling abilities to draw in his audience. He would often talk to the audience as if they were kids getting ready for bed and their father was going to tell them a bedtime story. This rhetorical strategy was quite effective in drawing attention from the media and resonated with a lot of his audience. In 1989 the Center for the Media and Public Affairs reported that George H. W. Bush received only one third of the press attention that Ronald Reagan had received (Weiler & Barnett, 94). Therefore, it can be said that Reagan’s storytelling approach to talking to his audience was quite effective in getting attention. One of Reagan’s most used transitions in his speeches was “There’s a story...,” When using this approach he would introduce information about history, instances of pseudo history, jokes, excerpts from letters, folktales, and other exempla designed to give life to his principles. “Tales of courage, piety, charity, idealism, and the many virtues of Americans as well as the vices of their foes abound in his work. On some occasions Reagan would tell stories about storytelling, “There’s a lot of talk in the last several weeks here in Washington about communication and the need to communicate,” Reagan told the AFL-CIO in 1981” (Erickson 32-33).

It should not surprise us that during the Reagan years the role of factual documentation in presidential rhetoric diminished. Indeed, his frequent misstatements of

fact were treated by his handlers as unimportant. “The President misspoke himself” was considered an adequate excuse for even the most outrageous perversions of fact. (Ronald Reagan, *Public Papers*).

Those who did not agree with the president’s views on issues were excluded from his conversations. Neither dialogue nor forensic disputation played an important role in the administration’s public discourse. Scripted speeches were favored over press conferences.

5.2. Context of the 1986 Address



Illustration 10. *New York Times* Cover on Day of Shuttle Disaster. The Space Shuttle Disaster dominated the media in the days preceding Reagan's 1986 State of the Union Address (*New York Times*, cover, January 28, 1986)

Ronald Reagan's 1986 State of the Union Address was one of his high points as a speaker while he lead the nation in mourning the deaths of the Challenger astronauts. The evening of the tragedy, Reagan read his speech on live television – written by his chief speechwriter, Peggy Noonan – with a background of pictures of the Challenger crew and

the explosion of the Space Shuttle (Erickson 8). These props proved effective in conveying the solemnity of the moment. While Reagan was an actor and showman he was sincere in his mourning of the loss of the Space Shuttle. However, Reagan was well aware that a President needed a script in a media saturated environment.

When asked if he liked being president better than being a movie actor, he replied: “Yes, because here I get to write the script too.” (Hubler 299). To create an image that Reagan wrote all of his speeches the administration would release pictures of Reagan sitting at his desk writing. Before most major speeches a picture of Reagan writing became a common press release. However, this practice backfired in the lead up to the 1986 State of the Union Address. Before the scheduled January 1986 State of the Union Address, such a picture was published, creating the image that Reagan wrote his 1986 Address. However, because of the Challenger disaster the address was postponed, but before it was rescheduled (weeks after the president had been photographed supposedly completing the text) “the newspapers were ironically filled with reports of in-house arguments among Reagan’s advisers over which script should be chosen from among those submitted by two different teams of speechwriters who were competing for Reagan’s mind” (Weiler and Pearce, 110).



Illustration 11. “Reagan Writing His State of the Union Address.” Even though Reagan did not write his address the White House wanted to present an image that he did (Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum.)

Religion. In Reagan’s discourse references to religion and practice turned up much more frequently than in the rhetoric of most previous presidents. As we see in the historical study of State of the Union Addresses (Chapter 3), there was a sudden spike in religious indicators around the time of Reagan’s presidency. This spike was not a coincidence since Reagan was unabashedly religious in his discourse. One of his pet projects as president was getting the Pledge of Allegiance reincorporated into K-12 education. “The Pledge of Allegiance,” he noted, “now missing from too many classrooms, concludes with the affirmation that the US is ‘one nation under God...with liberty and justice for all.’ America embraces these principles by design and would abandon them at peril.” (Reagan, Public Papers). Another example of Reagan’s use of religion in his speeches was in his comments about the Battle of Arnhem. As noted by Weiler and Pearce in their study of Reagan’s discourse called “The Battle of Arnhem: An Example of Rhetorical Subtlety”, Reagan’s comments in Arnhem ended with a quotation from one of the battle’s surviving veterans (Colonel John Frost). Reagan regarded his annual reunion with other Arnhem veterans as a “pilgrimage.” Use of this term, and many

like it in his speeches had religious connotations. This reference to a pilgrimage provided a link to Reagan's concluding passage, in which he reminded us of the fundamental importance to our civilization of its Judeo-Christian basis and tradition:

As those veterans of Arnhem view their time, so, too, we must view ours; ours is also a pilgrimage, a pilgrimage toward all those things we honor and love: human dignity, the hope of freedom for all peoples and for all nations. And that I have always cherished the belief that all of history is such a pilgrimage and that our maker, while never denying us free will, does over time guide us with a wise and provident hand...I cherish, too, the hope that what we have done together throughout this decade and in Moscow this week helped bring mankind along the road of that pilgrimage (Weiler and Pearce 80).

5.3. Media Response

Coverage of Ronald Reagan's State of the Union Address was unusual from other modern addresses due to the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger. As a result of the explosion, Ronald Reagan postponed his State of the Union address from January 28 to February 4, 1986. Coverage and investigation into the Challenger explosion dominated the news – even when Reagan gave his address. Truman's 1951 Address was the main title on most major newspapers of the time (see Chapter 4). However, Reagan's 1986

address did not receive top-level headlines and as much attention and scrutiny from the press even though Reagan postponed his address by one week. In addition, press coverage leading up to his address was buried in the back pages of newspapers, for the most part, and follow-up was scarce due to public interest in the on-going recovery efforts and investigation into the Space Shuttle Challenge.

Washington Post

February 3, 1986

Reagan to Propose Substantial Increases for Defense, Space: Most Civilian Agencies Face Cuts, Freezes

“President’ Reagan’s fiscal 1987 budget is expected to propose Defense Department spending increases of nearly 40 percent over five years, plus a hefty boost for the space program. But most civilian agencies would be cut substantially or frozen in place, according to budget documents obtained yesterday” (*Washington Post*, February 3, Cover).

February 5, 1986

Reagan Calls for New Look at Poverty, Health

“In his fifth State of the Union message, President Reagan called last night for an “agenda for the future” that includes many of his past proposals plus new federal studies on the problems of poverty, catastrophic illness, and currency instability. ...Reagan made no mention of the Jan. 15 proposal by Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev calling for

staged reductions of the U.S. and Soviet arsenals by the end of the century. The president said at the time he was “grateful” for the proposal, but a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the speech yesterday said that the Soviet proposal was not an appropriate response” (*Washington Post*, February 5, Cover).

February 5, 1986

“Democrats Skeptical of Bipartisan Pleas: But GOP Sees Sign of Flexibility on Deficit Republican members of Congress said last night that they hoped President Reagan’s invitation to House speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O’Neill Jr. (D-Mass) to “work together” on the problems of the federal budget would lead to an early bipartisan “summit” on the deficit issue that dominates the 1986 session” (*Washington Post*, February 3, Cover).

“Democrats expressed skepticism about Reagan’s intent and said the blame for the deficits would come to rest on the Republican shoulders in the November election...
...In their formal, televised response to Reagan’s message, the opposition party spokesman argued that the president’s “failed fiscal policies” and massive trade deficits have “closed the door of opportunity to farmers, small businesses, and young job-seekers” (*Washington Post*, February 3, Cover).

5.4. Close Reading of the 1986 Address



Illustration 12. Reagan Delivering his 1986 State of the Union Address. (National Archives.)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Congress, honored guests, and fellow citizens: Thank you for allowing me to delay my address until this evening. We paused together to mourn and honor the valor of our seven Challenger heroes. And I hope that we are now ready to do what they would want us to do: Go forward, America, and reach for the stars. We will never forget those brave seven, but we shall go forward.

Ronald Reagan postponed his address because of the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger. The country had been in shock and mourning in the days prior to the address. Reagan's address starts with a brief eulogy to the seven astronauts killed in the explosion. He then attempts to direct the attention of the audience from the disaster to the matters at hand.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my prepared remarks, may I point out that tonight marks the 10th and last State of the Union Message that you've presided over. And on behalf of the American people, I want to salute you for your service to Congress and country. Here's to you! [Applause]

I have come to review with you the progress of our nation, to speak of unfinished work, and to set our sights on the future. I am pleased to report the state of our Union is stronger than a year ago and growing stronger each day. Tonight we look out on a rising America, firm of heart, united in spirit, powerful in pride and patriotism. America is on the move! But it wasn't long ago that we looked out on a different land: locked factory gates, long gasoline lines, intolerable prices, and interest rates turning the greatest country on Earth into a land of broken dreams. Government growing beyond our consent had become a lumbering giant, slamming shut the gates of opportunity, threatening to crush the very roots of our freedom. What brought America back? The American people brought us back with quiet courage and common sense, with undying faith that in this nation under God the future will be ours; for the future belongs to the free.

In an interesting move Reagan then recognizes his audience by saluting them for their contributions to the country. Reagan attempts to align himself with the general public by calling the Government a “lumbering giant” that, he implies, has grown too large. He assumes that the audience shares his opinion that the Government has become too large and was not responsive to the desires of the people – growing “without consent”.

Tonight the American people deserve our thanks for 37 straight months of economic growth, for sunrise firms and modernized industries creating 9 million new jobs in 3 years, interest rates cut in half, inflation falling over from 12 percent in 1980 to under 4 today, and a mighty river of good works—a record \$74 billion in voluntary giving just last year alone. And despite the pressures of our modern world, family and community remain the moral core of our society, guardians of our values and hopes for the future. Family and community are the costars of this great American comeback. They are why we say tonight: Private values must be at the heart of public policies.

The economy had bounced back from the recession of the early 1980s and this issue was a high point of Reagan's presidency. He wanted to capitalize on the improvement of the US economy early on in his address since many Americans were so aware of the improvements in the economy. Additionally, Reagan would temper the focus on money with recognition of charitable giving by Americans and moral values. He didn't want to appear too greedy by only talking about the increasing wealth of the country without acknowledging values. Reagan implies with this that the attainment of money is good, but that America must still be aware of our morals.

What is true for families in America is true for America in the family of free nations. History is no captive of some inevitable force. History is made by men and women of vision and courage. Tonight freedom is on

the march. The United States is the economic miracle, the model to which the world once again turns. We stand for an idea whose time is now: Only by lifting the weights from the shoulders of all can people truly prosper and can peace among all nations be secure. Teddy Roosevelt said that a nation that does great work lives forever. We have done well, but we cannot stop at the foothills when Everest beckons. It's time for America to be all that we can be.

Reagan uses generalities in this passage to imply that, though the economy has improved at this point, the country has a long way to go in terms of prosperity. Reagan appears to again temper the positive economic news for the United States by acknowledging that there are other nations in the world that are not peaceful. He uses imagery of the climbing of Mount Everest as an analogy to the United States and that the country is just beginning the climb. This imagery is utopian in that it offers an idea that the country can reach a better state of existence.

We speak tonight of an agenda for the future, an agenda for a safer, more secure world. And we speak about the necessity for actions to steel us for the challenges of growth, trade, and security in the next decade and the year 2000. And we will do it—not by breaking faith with bedrock principles but by breaking free from failed policies. Let us begin where storm clouds loom darkest—right here in Washington, DC. This week I will send you our detailed proposals; tonight let us speak of our

responsibility to redefine government's role: not to control, not to demand or command, not to contain us, but to help in times of need and, above all, to create a ladder of opportunity to full employment so that all Americans can climb toward economic power and justice on their own.

Reagan then looks to the future. Speaking generally again, Reagan defines the role of government. First, he defines government by saying what it should not be responsible for: control, demand, containment. Rather, he argues, that the role of government is to help people when they need help and to create opportunity for people. Reagan ends this passage with the words “on their own” - implying that the Government should stay out of the way of people and let them live their lives and make their own decisions.

But we cannot win the race to the future shackled to a system that can't even pass a Federal budget. We cannot win that race held back by horse-and-buggy programs that waste tax dollars and squander human potential. We cannot win that race if we're swamped in a sea of red ink. Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, I know, and the American people know the Federal budget system is broken. It doesn't work. Before we leave this city, let's you and I work together to fix it, and then we can finally give the American people a balanced budget. Members of Congress, passage of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings gives us an historic opportunity to achieve what has eluded our national leadership for decades: forcing the Federal Government to live within its means. Your schedule now requires that the

budget resolution be passed by April 15th, the very day America's families have to foot the bill for the budgets that you produce. How often we read of a husband and wife both working, struggling from paycheck to paycheck to raise a family, meet a mortgage, pay their taxes and bills. And yet some in Congress say taxes must be raised. Well, I'm sorry; they're asking the wrong people to tighten their belts. It's time we reduce the Federal budget and left the family budget alone. We do not face large deficits because American families are undertaxed; we face those deficits because the Federal Government overspends.

Something that never seems to change in Washington, DC and the Federal Government is the battle over the budget. In 1986 this was certainly the case. Reagan attempts to describe the Federal Budget as a “broken” system that is archaic. He uses the image of a “horse and buggy” that is holding back the country from development. Reagan, again, tries to align his stance with the American people in his audience. Showing that he shares their presumed point of view that the Government is dysfunctional and standing in the way, or holding back the people.

The detailed budget that we will submit will meet the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings target for deficit reductions, meet our commitment to ensure a strong national defense, meet our commitment to protect Social Security and the truly less fortunate, and, yes, meet our commitment to not raise taxes. How should we accomplish this? Well, not by taking from those in

need. As families take care of their own, government must provide shelter and nourishment for those who cannot provide for themselves. But we must revise or replace programs enacted in the name of compassion that degrade the moral worth of work, encourage family breakups, and drive entire communities into a bleak and heartless dependency. Gramm-Rudman-Hollings can mark a dramatic improvement. But experience shows that simply setting deficit targets does not assure they'll be met. We must proceed with Grace Commission reforms against waste. And tonight I ask you to give me what 43 Governors have: Give me a line-item veto this year. Give me the authority to veto waste, and I'll take the responsibility, I'll make the cuts, I'll take the heat. This authority would not give me any monopoly power, but simply prevent spending measures from sneaking through that could not pass on their own merit. And you can sustain or override my veto; that's the way the system should work. Once we've made the hard choices, we should lock in our gains with a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

Presidents, off and on, have asked Congress for the ability to veto specific sections of bills rather than have to approve or disapprove bills as a whole. Some major bills throughout US History have had additional spending attached as a way of getting funds to unrelated projects or provisions. Reagan used the example of the Governors of the states as evidence that the President should also have this power. However, the line-item-veto was never passed during Reagan's term. The line-item-veto did get passed under

President Bill Clinton, but was ruled unconstitutional two years later by the Supreme Court in the 1998 case *Clinton vs. The City of New York* (*Clinton v. City of New York*, 524 U.S. 417 (1998)). Reagan, and many other presidents, felt that their hands were tied when it came to passing bills. They would have to accept the bill as-is and not be able to strike out “pork-barrel” spending attached to major pieces of legislation.

I mentioned that we will meet our commitment to national defense. We must meet it. Defense is not just another budget expense. Keeping America strong, free, and at peace is solely the responsibility of the Federal Government; it is government's prime responsibility. We have devoted 5 years trying to narrow a dangerous gap born of illusion and neglect, and we've made important gains. Yet the threat from Soviet forces, conventional and strategic, from the Soviet drive for domination, from the increase in espionage and state terror remains great. This is reality. Closing our eyes will not make reality disappear. We pledged together to hold real growth in defense spending to the bare minimum. My budget honors that pledge, and I'm now asking you, the Congress, to keep its end of the bargain. The Soviets must know that if America reduces her defenses, it will be because of a reduced threat, not a reduced resolve.

At this point one hears Reagan talk about the threat of the Soviet Union. This section of the address is interesting from the perspective of the Cold-War because, in contrast to Harry Truman's 1951 State of the Union Address, the Soviet threat is just mentioned

briefly. Even though Reagan talks of the threat of the Soviets it is clear that this threat is not as imminent as it was in 1951. Additionally, Reagan recognizes that there are already agreements for arms reduction in correlation with Soviet force reductions. He attempts to recognize the continuing threat of the Soviet Union.

Keeping America strong is as vital to the national security as controlling Federal spending is to our economic security. But, as I have said before, the most powerful force we can enlist against the Federal deficit is an ever-expanding American economy, unfettered and free. The magic of opportunity-unreserved, unailing, unrestrained-isn't this the calling that unites us? I believe our tax rate cuts for the people have done more to spur a spirit of risk-taking and help America's economy break free than any program since John Kennedy's tax cut almost a quarter century ago. Now history calls us to press on, to complete efforts for an historic tax reform providing new opportunity for all and ensuring that all pay their fair share, but no more. We've come this far. Will you join me now, and we'll walk this last mile together? You know my views on this. We cannot and we will not accept tax reform that is a tax increase in disguise. True reform must be an engine of productivity and growth, and that means a top personal rate no higher than 35 percent. True reform must be truly fair, and that means raising personal exemptions to \$2,000. True reform means a tax system that at long last is profamily, projobs, profuture, and pro-America.

After briefly mentioning the Soviet Union, Reagan spends as much time talking about tax reform in the United States. Reagan often spoke of government interference in the lives of Americans. Reagan equates tax reduction as pro-America. He also attempts to reach out to Democrats by mentioning the tax breaks instituted by President John F. Kennedy in the early 1960s.

As we knock down the barriers to growth, we must redouble our efforts for freer and fairer trade. We have already taken actions to counter unfair trading practices and to pry open closed foreign markets. We will continue to do so. We will also oppose legislation touted as providing protection that in reality pits one American worker against another, one industry against another, one community against another, and that raises prices for us all. If the United States can trade with other nations on a level playing field, we can outproduce, outcompete, and outsell anybody, anywhere in the world. The constant expansion of our economy and exports requires a sound and stable dollar at home and reliable exchange rates around the world. We must never again permit wild currency swings to cripple our farmers and other exporters. Farmers, in particular, have suffered from past unwise government policies. They must not be abandoned with problems they did not create and cannot control. We've begun coordinating economic and monetary policy among our major trading partners. But there's more to do, and tonight I am directing Treasury

Secretary Jim Baker to determine if the nations of the world should convene to discuss the role and relationship of our currencies.

Reagan then moves into a discussion of protectionism in the country. He argues that it is time to remove barriers to trade. He also connects labor movements and closed countries with a barrier to economic development. He also focuses on the US Dollar and exchange controls as a hindrance to trade. In this passage, Reagan takes a directive approach by announcing that he is ordering the Treasury Secretary to discuss currency relationships. This was a discussion that did actually take place – though more slowly than he had envisioned.

Confident in our future and secure in our values, Americans are striving forward to embrace the future. We see it not only in our recovery but in 3 straight years of falling crime rates, as families and communities band together to fight pornography, drugs, and lawlessness and to give back to their children the safe and, yes, innocent childhood they deserve. We see it in the renaissance in education, the rising SAT scores for 3 years—last year's increase, the greatest since 1963. It wasn't government and Washington lobbies that turned education around; it was the American people who, in reaching for excellence, knew to reach back to basics. We must continue the advance by supporting discipline in our schools, vouchers that give parents freedom of choice; and we must give back to our children their lost right to acknowledge God in their classrooms.

Reagan, expressing his opinion towards religion, mixes a discussion of religion and education. He starts the passage with a forward-looking view where he attempts to unite Americans into one group. He describes how things are getting better in the country and will continue to get better – another example of forward-looking.

We are a nation of idealists, yet today there is a wound in our national conscience. America will never be whole as long as the right to life granted by our Creator is denied to the unborn. For the rest of my time, I shall do what I can to see that this wound is one day healed.

Reagan was known as a supporter of pro-life initiatives. He gained the support of pro-life groups prior to his first election and continued as an outspoken critic of abortion. This passage reinforced his stance on abortion.

As we work to make the American dream real for all, we must also look to the condition of America's families. Struggling parents today worry how they will provide their children the advantages that their parents gave them. In the welfare culture, the breakdown of the family, the most basic support system, has reached crisis proportions—female and child poverty, child abandonment, horrible crimes, and deteriorating schools. After hundreds of billions of dollars in poverty programs, the plight of the poor grows more painful. But the waste in dollars and cents pales before the most tragic loss: the sinful waste of human spirit and potential. We can

ignore this terrible truth no longer. As Franklin Roosevelt warned 51 years ago, standing before this Chamber, he said, "Welfare is a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit." And we must now escape the spider's web of dependency.

Using another forward-looking reference to 'the American Dream', Reagan was discusses his opposition to waste caused by welfare programs. He believed that welfare programs only perpetuated poverty and created a dependent society. In this passage he claims that the money aimed towards the poor is actually misspent. He also makes another attempt to connect with democrats by referencing a quote from Franklin Roosevelt – often referred to as the creator of the welfare system - as a critic of that very system. During his younger years, it is worth mentioning at this point, Reagan was a Democrat. His early connection to the Democratic Party gave him background knowledge that often allowed him to reference these types of issues.

Tonight I am charging the White House Domestic Council to present me by December 1, 1986, an evaluation of programs and a strategy for immediate action to meet the financial, educational, social, and safety concerns of poor families. I'm talking about real and lasting emancipation, because the success of welfare should be judged by how many of its recipients become independent of welfare. Further, after seeing how devastating illness can destroy the financial security of the family, I am directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Otis Bowen, to

report to me by year end with recommendations on how the private sector and government can work together to address the problems of affordable insurance for those whose life savings would otherwise be threatened when catastrophic illness strikes.

Reagan then discusses the issue of people on welfare and how they should become independent of the welfare system. Reagan sets a date of later in the year where his counsel will present a report on the state of welfare programs. At this point he does back off of his criticism of welfare programs by recognizing how illness can bankrupt a family.

And tonight I want to speak directly to America's younger generation, because you hold the destiny of our nation in your hands. With all the temptations young people face, it sometimes seems the allure of the permissive society requires superhuman feats of self-control. But the call of the future is too strong, the challenge too great to get lost in the blind alleyways of dissolution, drugs, and despair. Never has there been a more exciting time to be alive, a time of rousing wonder and heroic achievement. As they said in the film "Back to the Future," "Where we're going, we don't need roads."

This passage in his address was his attempt to connect with young people in the country. Reagan uses forward-looking visions to connect with the youth by referencing the movie

Back to the Future which had premiered prior to his address. He talks of the “call of the future” being too strong to get lost. His wife, Nancy Reagan, had been part of a drug prevention program. He references drugs and a “permissive society” that, he implies, lures young people in.

Well, today physicists peering into the infinitely small realms of subatomic particles find reaffirmations of religious faith. Astronomers build a space telescope that can see to the edge of the universe and possibly back to the moment of creation. So, yes, this nation remains fully committed to America's space program. We're going forward with our shuttle flights. We're going forward to build our space station. And we are going forward with research on a new Orient Express that could, by the end of the next decade, take off from Dulles Airport , accelerate up to 25 times the speed of sound, attaining low Earth orbit or flying to Tokyo within 2 hours. And the same technology transforming our lives can solve the greatest problem of the 20th century. A security shield can one day render nuclear weapons obsolete and free mankind from the prison of nuclear terror. America met one historic challenge and went to the Moon. Now America must meet another: to make our strategic defense real for all the citizens of planet Earth.

At this point, Ronald Reagan discusses the future technologies that Americans could see in the future. He talks about how travel times could be reduced and a missile shield could

protect the United States from nuclear attacks. One development in space he mentions, that later came true, was the development of the International Space Station.

Let us speak of our deepest longing for the future: to leave our children a land that is free and just and a world at peace. It is my hope that our fireside summit in Geneva and Mr. Gorbachev's upcoming visit to America can lead to a more stable relationship. Surely no people on Earth hate war or love peace more than we Americans. But we cannot stroll into the future with childlike faith. Our differences with a system that openly proclaims and practices an alleged right to command people's lives and to export its ideology by force are deep and abiding. Logic and history compel us to accept that our relationship be guided by realism—rock-hard, clear eyed, steady, and sure. Our negotiators in Geneva have proposed a radical cut in offensive forces by each side with no cheating. They have made clear that Soviet compliance with the letter and spirit of agreements is essential. If the Soviet Government wants an agreement that truly reduces nuclear arms, there will be such an agreement.

Reagan reaches out to the new leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, by saying that they will meet in Geneva for what he calls a “fireside” chat. This event did actually take place as Reagan forecasted in his address. In fact, the Geneva meeting with Gorbachev is often given credence as one of the beginning steps to end the Cold War and significantly reduce the armed state between the United States and Soviet Union.

But arms control is no substitute for peace. We know that peace follows in freedom's path and conflicts erupt when the will of the people is denied. So, we must prepare for peace not only by reducing weapons but by bolstering prosperity, liberty, and democracy however and wherever we can. We advance the promise of opportunity every time we speak out on behalf of lower tax rates, freer markets, sound currencies around the world. We strengthen the family of freedom every time we work with allies and come to the aid of friends under siege. And we can enlarge the family of free nations if we will defend the unalienable rights of all God's children to follow their dreams. To those imprisoned in regimes held captive, to those beaten for daring to fight for freedom and democracy—for their right to worship, to speak, to live, and to prosper in the family of free nations—we say to you tonight: You are not alone, freedom fighters. America will support with moral and material assistance your right not just to fight and die for freedom but to fight and win freedom—to win freedom in Afghanistan, in Angola, in Cambodia, and in Nicaragua. This is a great moral challenge for the entire free world.

Reagan then opens his discussion back to the rights of Americans and to expanding freedom to other countries and peoples. This section of his address has the most similarity to Truman's 1951 Address. Reagan talks about what it means to be part of the "family of free nations" and how people who live in the rest of the world are "captive" – creating an image of a prison. Even though most of the people he is discussing in this

passage were not listening to his address he makes a token reach by speaking directly to that group of people. He mentions countries that were in active wars between communists and non-communists, such as Nicaragua, Angola, and Cambodia. All three of these examples were chosen because at the time of the address they were involved in active civil wars or uprisings against their communist supported governments.

Surely no issue is more important for peace in our own hemisphere, for the security of our frontiers, for the protection of our vital interests, than to achieve democracy in Nicaragua and to protect Nicaragua's democratic neighbors. This year I will be asking Congress for the means to do what must be done for that great and good cause. As [former Senator Henry M.] Scoop Jackson, the inspiration for our Bipartisan Commission on Central America, once said, "In matters of national security, the best politics is no politics."

At this point in the address Reagan makes what could be seen as a confusing reference to a quote by former senator Henry Jackson. He said that he will ask Congress to support the efforts in the Nicaraguan uprising – likely on the side of the Contras. The confusing thing is the choice of quote that implies that politics should not be involved in national security – an oxymoron.

What we accomplish this year, in each challenge we face, will set our course for the balance of the decade, indeed, for the remainder of the

century. After all we've done so far, let no one say that this nation cannot reach the destiny of our dreams. America believes, America is ready, America can win the race to the future—and we shall. The American dream is a song of hope that rings through night winter air; vivid, tender music that warms our hearts when the least among us aspire to the greatest things: to venture a daring enterprise; to unearth new beauty in music, literature, and art; to discover a new universe inside a tiny silicon chip or a single human cell.

Reagan again looks to the future of the country. He employs forward-looking methods again. But this time he references literature and music. Probably, this was an effort to reach out to the arts – which were often subjected to government cutbacks in their support. Interestingly, he uses an image of discovering a new universe inside silicon chips. Computers, as a consumer product, were just taking hold in the United States. Even at this point it was already clear what impact computers were having on the country.

We see the dream coming true in the spirit of discovery of Richard Cavoli. All his life he's been enthralled by the mysteries of medicine. And, Richard, we know that the experiment that you began in high school was launched and lost last week, yet your dream lives. And as long as it's real, work of noble note will yet be done, work that could reduce the harmful effects of x rays on patients and enable astronomers to view the golden

gateways of the farthest stars. We see the dream glow in the towering talent of a 12-year-old, Tyrone Ford. A child prodigy of gospel music, he has surmounted personal adversity to become an accomplished pianist and singer. He also directs the choirs of three churches and has performed at the Kennedy Center. With God as your composer, Tyrone, your music will be the music of angels. We see the dream being saved by the courage of the 13-year-old Shelby Butler, honor student and member of her school's safety patrol. Seeing another girl freeze in terror before an out-of-control school bus, she risked her life and pulled her to safety. With bravery like yours, Shelby, America need never fear for our future. And we see the dream born again in the joyful compassion of a 13 year old, Trevor Ferrell. Two years ago, age 11, watching men and women bedding down in abandoned doorways—on television he was watching—Trevor left his suburban Philadelphia home to bring blankets and food to the helpless and homeless. And now 250 people help him fulfill his nightly vigil. Trevor, yours is the living spirit of brotherly love.

At this point in the address I begin to see Reagan wrap up his address. He brings the conversation back to the people of the country. This passage was one where Reagan recognized 'regular' people he invited to attend the address. He mentions four people: Richard Cavoli (21), Shelby Butler (13), and Trever Ferrell (13), and Tyrone Ford (12). Richard Cavoli, a 21 year old college student had designed a project that was going to be sent into space aboard the ill-fated Challenger Space Shuttle. On TV, and in the

Congress, Reagan pointed out these three people to drive home some of his main points:

1. recognize the Space Shuttle Disaster, but reinforce the country's resolve towards the space program and technology, 2. Show that regular people can make a big difference.

Using real-life examples was highly successful in connecting with the audience, as it was one of the more often referenced sections of his 1986 State of the Union Address.

Would you four stand up for a moment? Thank you, thank you. You are heroes of our hearts. We look at you and know it's true: In this land of dreams fulfilled, where greater dreams may be imagined, nothing is impossible, no victory is beyond our reach, no glory will ever be too great. So, now it's up to us, all of us, to prepare America for that day when our work will pale before the greatness of America's champions in the 21st century. The world's hopes rest with America's future; America's hopes rest with us. So, let us go forward to create our world of tomorrow in faith, in unity, and in love. God bless you, and God bless America.

At this point Reagan ended his address in the same way most of his modern predecessors ended their addresses – to recognize the country. In unifying statements he again uses future-looking and talks of “greater dreams” that the country can achieve. He also attempts to hold Americans responsible by saying that the rest of the world's hopes rely

on America. He ends with the traditional “God Bless America.” Most Presidents in the modern era end their addresses with this last line.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS THROUGH A UTOPIAN LENS

What makes human history such an uncertain and fascinating story is that we live in two worlds – the world within and the world without (Mumford 1).

Reagan and Truman's addresses take place at opposite ends of the Cold War period. However, they both share visions of what the United States hopes to achieve in the future. Both addresses look to a better future. Additionally, the two addresses benefit from the use of communism as a subject of opposition to American goals and as a tool of definition of a national vision. The State of the Union Address usually reports the current state of the country. However, the president must create and describe a view of what will happen in the future. Looking to the future is a rhetorical tool that can motivate an audience and inspire them to agree with the speaker or take action. Through a utopian lens – how the politicians motivate people with visions of a better future – analysts can understand how important utopian visions can be in State of the Union Addresses and other political discourse. In this chapter I can use utopianism for analysis, not as an absolute definition, but as a rhetorical tool of how author's look to a brighter future. Both the examples of Truman and Reagan demonstrate how utopianism can give purpose to a political speech. By inserting visions of a better future a political speaker, such as a president in their State of the Union Addresses, can motivate the country – whether this future is ever achieved or not.

So where does this forward-looking fit into State of the Union Addresses? When a president gives a State of the Union Address the general views presented look to the following:

The past: Look at what has happened since the last address.

The present: Report where the country is now.

The future: Describe a vision of what the country hopes to achieve.

It is in this third purpose - a view of the future - that I find the most effort for national change and agenda in the addresses. In this third purpose I find the most persuasive features of the text. The president, in anticipation of the future, applies the most persuasiveness and is able to embolden the audience. A view of the future – and a vision of what the future ‘could be’ – drives the speaker. Though they don’t necessarily explicitly describe a utopia – they describe how the country or world will become a better place.

These future views are subject to numerous factors such as personal ideology, political ideology, religion, and attitude. In State of the Union addresses the president must present a collective view of a future. Both Reagan and Truman employ views of a positive and peaceful future of the country and world: a utopia. The Cold War provided an added feature to utopian discourse: the use of the communists and Soviet Union to help define the American vision of the future. This chapter analyzes the two addresses through a utopian lens – where the speaker presents a better world that the country, people, and congress are moving towards or must defend from adversaries.

6.1. Utopian dreams: Aiming for a 'better' world

Ancient philosophers in Athens were *not* necessarily the first to analyze or dream of utopias, but I'll start there, with a discussion of Plato's *Republic*. The *Republic*, a dialogue on the philosophy of government, and written during the time of Athens' disastrous war with Sparta, describes an ideal city of "5040 individuals." Plato describes a tranquil setting for his perfect city – one with "no hail, rain, or snow and where the land is good" (Mumford 31) – a commonwealth of fellow citizens that avoids the evils that, as Plato implies, were ruining contemporary Athenian society (and he was right, as Athens faded on its own self-indulgence, greed, and shortcomings).

Plato proposed that the rulers of his republic would be philosophers since he believed that monarchs, aristocrats, or elected officials were self-serving and didn't ultimately have the happiness of the people at heart, but rather masked their own goals in 'procedure.' Plato's *Republic* is often misunderstood as being a model for society (as more modern utopian visions presented), but perhaps it wasn't written as a proposal, but rather a venue for a discussion of solving or countering his society's ultimate shortcomings (Ross 33) – and this is what utopian visions are used for in State of the Union Addresses and other political speeches. Plato's *Republic* was, especially with a postmodern view of the complexity of 'communication' in mind, simplistic (and any utopian model will be overly simplistic, but that shouldn't stop us from looking at them), but Plato was still able to use his dialogue to gain insight into power relations in discourse in Athens.

The concept of utopia was already prevalent in early societies, but was defined in the English language in the 16th Century. Sir Thomas Moore, in his 1516 work *Utopia*,

devised the term 'utopia' out of the Greek for 'no place' – indicating that utopia is a place that does not exist, but one that can be looked to as a dream or as a model in which to understand the current - a 'what if' ('if' indicating social and historical reasoning).

Moore used his work, similarly to Plato in the *Republic*, as a venue of criticism of the state of England and downfall of morals – a logical proposal or social paradigm. Sir Thomas Moore probably did not believe his utopia was achievable, but instead gained better understanding of the difficulties and constraints of English society (Ross 55).

In European society, before the 16th and 17th Century, utopian visions and paradigms were often used as a discussion or commentary on the current world. However, as Europeans gained new lands in the New World, the idea that utopias could be created gained prevalence. After the Spanish landed in the New World stories of a secret Native American utopia called El Dorado circulated among conquistadors who spent years conquering and pillaging Native American societies in search of an elusive gold-filled paradise. The colonial era opened vast new lands (recently taken from native inhabitants). Open lands allowed European settlers to attempt to actually create their own utopias away from their motherlands.

Both Reagan and Truman – and perhaps all presidents - use utopian views to direct the goals of the Congress and American audience. These utopian views are not new – and are a part of American discourse. The concept of utopia prevailed in the English Colonies – political predecessors of the American Republic. Several of the English colonies of the East Coast of the current United States were founded with utopian goals of a 'New Jerusalem' – a Protestant Christian utopia 'free of the influences of the rest of the world'. Isolation was the key as Protestant groups such as the Puritans, Presbyterians,

Shakers, and Amish attempted (and some still do still attempt) to create their own utopias (Rokicky).

Colonists, and later Revolutionaries, were often aware of previous utopian visions – namely the sometimes misread and misused *Republic* by Plato – and the ‘City on the Hill’ concept, also a Puritan ideal, prevailed in the United States before and after American Independence. It was in this context that the United States was born. The founding fathers of the country had a vision of a just and equitable Republic. A utopian tone has, since the formation of the country, permeated American political discourse. This concept, often used by Ronald Reagan, was influenced by both the *Republic* by Plato and the biblical line: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (*New Jerusalem Bible*, Matthew 5:14).

The ‘City on the Hill’ concept was a common theme in Ronald Reagan’s political discourse and, as a result, formed a core of his views of the purpose of America. Additionally, a common belief in the United States still persists from this era – a personal utopia called the ‘American Dream’ where those who achieve the dream have a nice house with free-flowing water, electricity, food, entertainment, education, and happiness. Truman also used this image in his discourse, and State of the Union Address by using the term “Free World” and often looking forward to a future of world peace after the demise of Communism.

In Truman’s address we hear, multiple times, the concept of the “Free World” and how this must be defended from the threats of the Soviets and communists – who, it is implied, offer an anti-utopia to the world. Truman spends much time in his 1951 address describing the ills of communism and the world that they would create – a dystopia

where the people are used as “cannon fodder” for a communist empire. Additionally, in Reagan’s 1986 Address, I saw the concept of being in the “foothills” of progress with the goal of attaining a “Mount Everest” of perfection. In Reagan’s 1986 address, the Soviets and communists are no longer mentioned as a major threat to this utopian vision as Truman offers in his 1951 State of the Union Address. Instead, Reagan argues that the “broken” and archaic system of government is hindering our attainment of an American Utopia. He sees that government bureaucracy slows the people in their achievement of happiness and the ‘American Dream’.

Both Reagan and Truman allude to the concept of the United States and the Free World being capable of reaching a better state of being. A perfect society or a utopia is a dream of a more comfortable world: one in which people are happy, employed, fed, and where life is pleasant. Utopian views, though now often viewed skeptically in an often pessimistic consumerist society, still drive much of our politics (e.g. the United Nations’ attempts to eradicate malaria and hunger) or perhaps more simple daily actions (e.g. fixing potholes in the road); ‘Realists’ or ‘social relativists’ might argue that the world or countries will never actually achieve utopian societies – and they would be right because a utopia is better viewed as a mirage, a goal that shifts, changes, and shimmers as one moves towards it – the carrot on the end of the stick. The view of a better future motivates us in political discourse – and without these views an audience will wonder, “What is the point?”

6.2. Utopianism and Political Ideology

Most governmental and societal ideologies use some sense of a future utopia as a driving force behind their actions. Though their idea of what the government should be in such a utopia differs, their general model and impetus for utopia is similar. A utopian vision is created by a desire for a better world - a country or world where one no longer has to deal with X, Y, and Z, and has unhindered access to A, B, and C (fill in the variables) drove or drives many large-scale ideological movements (both political and social) such as Platonism, Enlightenment, Humanism, Marxism, Communism, Socialism, Affirmative Action, Capitalism, and even Fascism. One difference between the many views of utopia is *how* that utopia is to be achieved and *who* (if anyone) is left out. The politics of 1951 and 1986 were inundated with utopian goals. Reagan alludes to utopian visions in his 1986 State of the Union Address, effectively dangling the carrot on the end of a stick, with the lines:

We have done well, but we cannot stop at the foothills when Everest beckons. It's time for America to be all that we can be. We speak tonight of an agenda for the future, an agenda for a safer, more secure world. And we speak about the necessity for actions to steel us for the challenges of growth, trade, and security in the next decade and the year 2000. And we will do it—not by breaking faith with bedrock principles but by breaking free from failed policies. Let us begin where storm clouds loom darkest—right here in Washington, DC (Reagan 1986 State of the Union Address).

Reagan calls his audience to action to reach for a better world. However, perhaps unaware of it in his address, he promotes a necessity of the State in creating a bright future. Even though he critiqued the Federal Government, he still perpetuated the idea that a government can have some agency in the creation of a utopia through making people happier in a “safe and secure world.” Some postmodern theorists such as Foucault (in his work *Power*) say that the state survival relies on the happiness of the people (pessimists might say ‘pacification’ of the masses).

Truman, in his 1951 address, attempts to show the differences between the future world visions offered by the ‘Free World’ versus communist world. Though he does not define the role of government as readily as Reagan in his 1986 address, Truman defines the utopian vision of the ‘Free World’ in opposition to a dystopian world that would be created by a communist form of government:

The free nations believe in the dignity and the worth of man. We believe in independence for all nations. We believe that free and independent nations can band together into a world order based on law. We have laid the cornerstone of such a peaceful world in the United Nations. We believe that such a world order can and should spread the benefits of modern science and industry, better health and education, more food and rising standards of living--throughout the world. These ideals give our cause a power and vitality that Russian communism can never command. The free nations, however, are bound together by more than ideals. They

are a real community bound together also by the ties of self-interest and self-preservation (Truman 1951 State of the Union Address).

Truman, in this passage, implies that communist states are not real communities, but are destructive agencies that do not have the happiness of citizens as a concern. Foucault, in his work *Power*, says, "Happiness of individuals is a requirement for the survival and development of the state. It is a condition; it is an instrument, not simply a consequence. People's happiness becomes an element of state strength" (414). If the happiness of individuals is a requirement for the survival of the state then what makes us happy is what drives our discourse and rhetoric for social change to a better state of being. The goal of a happier population – whether attainable or not – is therefore a tool to motivate an audience. Truman also uses this tool while defining communism as an ideology that does not have the goal of people's happiness. Demonstrating that the communist aggression in Korea and the rest of the world stands in the way of the 'free world' and peacefulness:

Soviet communism is trying to make these nations into colonies, and to use their people as cannon fodder in new wars of conquest. We want their people to be free men and to enjoy peace (Truman 1951 State of the Union Address).

Interestingly, communist ideology that Truman spoke so strongly against in his 1951 address is also firmly rooted in utopianism. In 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich

Engels published their work *The Communist Manifesto* in which they outlined a course of action where the workers would overthrow capitalists and create a classless society. Out of Marx and Engel's utopian dreams grew political and economic ideologies such as Marxism, Communism, and Socialism. Recognition of the worker continued to develop in utopian views and the attainment of such utopias, as many post-enlightenment philosophers believed, was through a governmental model. The difference between earlier utopian visions and more modern utopian views was that people believed they could actually achieve the utopia through revolution rather than using utopias as forums for discussion about the current social and political set-up. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "utopias of reconstruction had a deadly sameness of purpose and a depressing singleness of interest; and although they saw society as whole, they saw the problem of reconstructing society as a simple problem of industrial reorganization" (Mumford 173).

As a reaction to industrial utopias common requirement of dismissal of human-ness, utopian visions began to be viewed negatively by many writers in the twentieth century as political and economic models competed – perverted utopic visions of Nazism, Japanese and Italian Fascism, Stalin's version of Communism, and American and British Consumerism clashed and climaxed in the Second World War and the Cold War – consumerism and capitalism being victors. In Reagan's 1986 address, given towards the end of the Cold War, the Soviets are not mentioned as much as in Truman's address – indicating that the United States and allies were in an advantageous position. The president at this point no longer needed to define the communists as an opposition.

The mentality in the late 1940s and early 1950s was entirely different than at the end of the Cold War. During the time of Truman's 1951 address philosophers and writers used dystopian nightmares instead of utopian dreams in order to scare and convince readers of a need to prevent or control certain social and technological change. Aldus Huxley, in his 1931 pre-World War II work *Brave New World*, describes another dystopia (or anti-utopia) where stability is achieved only through the elimination of the family, philosophy, arts, and war. This popular work of fiction was a cautionary tale popular in the 'free world' as a view of what would happen if communists took over the world. George Orwell's *1984*, published in 1949, offered a vision of a totalitarian dystopia in the future. *1984* was perhaps Orwell's way of warning that the attempt to create utopias can go too far, and that people cannot live without their vices and passions. Truman's State of the Union Address was presented in an era where popular writers such as Huxley and Orwell had presented dystopian visions – something that Truman used in his verbal attack on communism. Popular anti-communist views at the time lived in fear of the dystopia a communist take-over might create.

6.3. Technology and Utopia

From ancient Athens to the 20th social revolutions there have been views that technological 'advancements' make life better. These views of technology not only reveal how society might create a better world, but through what means. Ronald Reagan, in his 1986 address references technological advancements as being a positive movement for the country and making life better. He creates a vision of the future that is attained through technological advancements:

Well, today physicists peering into the infinitely small realms of subatomic particles find reaffirmations of religious faith. Astronomers build a space telescope that can see to the edge of the universe and possibly back to the moment of creation. So, yes, this nation remains fully committed to America's space program. We're going forward with our shuttle flights. We're going forward to build our space station. And we are going forward with research on a new Orient Express that could, by the end of the next decade, take off from Dulles Airport, accelerate up to 25 times the speed of sound, attaining low Earth orbit or flying to Tokyo within 2 hours. And the same technology transforming our lives can solve the greatest problem of the 20th century... Let us speak of our deepest longing for the future: to leave our children a land that is free and just and a world at peace (Reagan 1986 State of the Union Address).

The concept of technological progress and utopian visions of a strong economy are not met without skepticism, however. While looking to a bright future, In Reagan's 1986 address includes some cautioning that our monetary and technological achievements must be tempered with morality and family values:

And despite the pressures of our modern world, family and community remain the moral core of our society, guardians of our values and hopes for the future. Family and community are the costars of this great

American comeback. They are why we say tonight: Private values must be at the heart of public policies (Reagan 1986 State of the Union Address).

‘Progress’ and the movement towards a technological utopia was met with skepticism in the years following the Cold War. When Reagan and Truman gave their addresses they assumed that the audience still viewed technological advances positively. A positive view of technology and ‘progress’ is no longer the case. Neil Postman, in 1996, published a commentary on the dangers of technology called *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Postman implies that in a singular technology-obsessed world our media-saturated society is creating an entertainment-based dystopia where people can live their whole lives being entertained and not living for themselves. Postman also argues that rational argument is destroyed by media because it is essentially easier to be entertained than to be involved. Though these works might be presented as criticisms of utopic visions they are proposals as well. *1984* and *Brave New World* propose that in order to make a better world people need to work with their vices and pleasures rather than removing them, whereas Postman argues that people need to be careful with the media and entertainment and that their pursuit of pleasure can go too far.

6.4. Religious Views and Utopia

Both Reagan and Truman’s address make religious references as well - Reagan’s 1986 address uses the references more readily. Utopian dreams have also been catalysts of religions to drive human action. As people encounter darkness in their lives they often wish for something better. Even the hope of something better in the afterlife helps drive

action. Ancient Egyptian, Norse, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religions offer guarantees of utopias in the afterlife to drive the actions of the living (suggesting that humans are not capable of creating utopias on Earth.) Most Islamic sects offer entry to a ‘paradise’ as a reward for ‘good’ or ‘noble’ actions on earth. Catholicism and Protestantism (among others) center their beliefs around the idea that selected spirits will ascend to a heaven if they follow strict rules in this life – of course Christian views of afterlife utopias vary greatly – some guarantee that most people are capable of entering heaven (Mumford 59), whereas some Protestant groups believe that only a few perfect people will make it to heaven.

Ancient Egyptians had a more somber view of heaven – one where only the pharaoh and his queens could live with the gods if the people worked hard enough to get the royal family there (a.k.a. build a giant pyramid filled with treasures for the afterlife). The workers were not usually promised an afterlife. Likewise, in the ancient Norse world, only Viking warriors were offered entry into a hall of gods called ‘Valhalla’ if they fought gloriously and died in battle – the rest of the people would enter Hel, a frigid, persistently misty world (perhaps the opposite of a utopia). Valhalla, taking place at the time of Ragnarok (a final battle), would be one long party of warriors and gods supplied with endless amounts of mead, meat, and merriment (Colum 5). Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism offer the path to an ultimate utopia (though not necessarily a society, but rather a mental/physical state) called nirvana. Definitions of this state of being vary, but most versions hold that nirvana is an experience of perfection, and being one with the universe.

Siddhartha Gautama, in 500 B.C.E., describes nirvana as a place "where there is nothing; where naught is grasped, there is the Isle of No-Beyond. Nirvana do I call it -- the utter extinction of aging and dying" (Gautama). Achievement of nirvana is only attained via a lived path to enlightenment through many incarnations. Reagan, in his 1986 State of the Union Address offers an enlightened vision of the future:

America is ready, America can win the race to the future—and we shall. The American dream is a song of hope that rings through night winter air; vivid, tender music that warms our hearts when the least among us aspire to the greatest things: to venture a daring enterprise; to unearth new beauty in music, literature, and art; to discover a new universe inside a tiny silicon chip or a single human cell (Reagan 1986 State of the Union Address).

Additionally, in 1951, I found that Truman acknowledge the importance of religion in American politics and vision of the future. Truman positions the “great religious beliefs” in contrast to “the tide of atheistic communism” – frightening his audience into support for his agenda. Truman says:

Next to the United States, Europe is the largest workshop in the world. It is also a homeland of the great religious beliefs shared by many of our citizens’ beliefs which are now threatened by the tide of atheistic communism (Truman 1951 State of the Union Address).

Truman, though not as religious as Reagan in his discourse, attempts to defend his vision of the future with an appeal to Americans and their feeling of a threat to their religious ideology by communism.

6.5. A Necessity of Utopian Visions in Political Rhetoric

With the end of the Cold War came a shift in the political landscape that Reagan and Truman occupied. The use of utopias or ‘better futures’ in political discourse has changed. In the Cold War, Reagan and Truman and other presidents of that time could rely on the Soviet Union and Communism to define what America wanted to achieve in the world. However, some post-Cold War theorists speculate on the uses of utopian views and propose ways of including utopian goals into current multi-faceted post-modern affected discourse.

Wayne Hudson, in his book the *Reform of Utopia* says that without utopian views societies are aimless. Hudson starts his proposal by warning, “Only a decade ago or so many social theorists assumed that it was possible to improve human beings and their circumstances by bringing about a just society. Today, the discrediting of loose notions of ‘society’ and the impact of economic rationalism have combined to support a retreat from ethically-inspired reform” (59). Hudson believes that utopian views can still be used as a heuristic for realization of the future. “The utopian heuristic then draws on such materials in proposing organizational changes going beyond anything immanent in them” (3). Utopias, in this manner, could be used more realistically, not proposing an island, ‘free world’, or ‘City on the Hill’ free of human vices, but rather looking at current social

constraints and conditions and proposing how people might work as a society to better the situation overall.

Utopian visions, whether as Hudson proposes as needing to be more realistic, or as many past philosophers and politicians such as Marx and Engels, relying on large-scale economic revolution, require transmission to the masses in order for them to take place. One person cannot instigate and develop a utopia alone (unless it is a private utopia), but rather utopias generally rely on movements within social and political groups. In order to move social groups we need to inspire and affect and create vision of the future. Teresa Brennan, in the introduction of her work *The Transmission of Affect* talks about how people affect each other, “Is there anyone who has not, at least once, walked into a room and “felt the atmosphere” (1)? Brennan talks about the manner in which affect moves among people in groups. Utopian visions and dreams also circulate among groups.

Take, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 speech *I Have a Dream*. King paints a picture of a utopia, a better world that is achievable through social freedom. His speech in Washington, D.C. managed to inspire and affect people into moving towards a racial utopia. King’s vision and the vision of everyone who was inspired by his words may have varied, but the overall movement was towards ending segregation and discrimination in the United States – a goal that, though not entirely reached has resulted in significant change.

So, how do utopian dreams fit into a post-Cold War world? In Reagan and Truman’s time the historical context and rhetorical situation offered a dichotomy between the United States and the Soviet Union – ‘free world’ vs. ‘communism’ and Christianity

vs. Atheism. However, presidents and other politicians can no longer rely on such a polarized perspective. But utopian models are still relevant in a post-Cold War rhetoric. Rajani Kanth, in her book *Breaking With Enlightenment*, suggests that the time is ripe for the rediscovery of utopian models. Kanth says, “We are in a state that physicists might call a singularity, where conventional wisdom (whether expressed in the form of ‘laws,’ or ‘models,’ or not) breaks down” (xiii). Kanth discusses how many modern and enlightenment era utopian models were based on Eurocentric modernist reductionism, “a reductionism that derives human conduct from material motives, as a sort of radical a priori, instead of viewing it only as a hypothesis to be tested against the actual, concrete experience” (xiv).

Views such as Kanth’s take us back to utopian discussions such as Plato’s *Republic* which was not supposed to be an ends, but rather a vehicle for change and discussion – a ‘what if’, not simply a map of inevitability. Hudson points out that in a deconstructionist postmodern view “Utopianism becomes a temporally complex operation of historical reason, whereby imagination beyond the currently feasible is read as evidencing both actual and virtual possibility contents, including possibility contents of which we are not yet fully conscious” (3). Hudson also predicts that utopian thought’s importance is growing today with the advance of technologies in medicine and science:

Today technical advances are exposing the inadequacies of traditional approaches to human self-interpretation. New advances in science and technology make possible modifications of at least some historical constraints on human life, even

if in the long-term implications of research on human embryos, bio-technology and psychochemistry are contested (Hudson 39).

In the post-Cold War era we live in strange times as technologies offer us greater control of our bodies and access to unprecedented amounts of information, but in many ways these advances simply provide the ruling and wealthy classes with more methods to separate people into haves and have-nots. Reagan and Truman benefited from their political adversary – the communists – who offered a springboard for motivating their audience into either creating or defending the United States' future utopia. In a post-modern discussion of the future our ultimate goal is to gain better understanding and different angles of our striving for complex and shimmering mirages people might call utopia – whether on a personal or large-scale. In a post-Cold-War world this must be achieved without a clear opponent that Truman and Reagan capitalized on in their political discourse at the beginning and end of the Cold War.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Overall Goals of the Project. The overall goal of this project was to demonstrate rhetorical analysis techniques of State of the Union Addresses and periodic texts. This research project was ambitious and just scratched the surface in terms of analysis of the State of the Union and understanding of how to analyze period texts in the fields of Rhetoric and Linguistics. However, the project did achieve the goals of answering the main research question: What analysis techniques can analysts use when examining periodic texts such as State of the Union Address, and how can researchers implement those types of analysis within the field of Rhetoric?

Additionally, this project showed how the presidents shifted their rhetorical proofs with the advent of media. Subsequently, the historical study showed that the State of the Union Addresses have become more of a platform rather than simply reporting the status of the nation. Finally, the close readings of the two case studies – Truman’s 1951 Address and Reagan’s 1986 Address – exposed the importance of future-looking discourse. Comparing the two case studies with a utopian lens showed that this technique, as a tool of persuasion by an author, needs closer study in the future.

Steps Taken. This research completed what I set out to accomplish in terms of examining the State of the Union Addresses. The process of analysis and discovery in this project involved the following steps:

1. Conduct a historical analysis of State of the Union Addresses
2. Carry out close-reading and situation analysis of two case studies, and
3. Do an examination and comparison of the two case studies (synthesis) through a utopian lens.

What the Analysis Revealed. Each of the steps taken in this project involved different types of analysis techniques. These techniques prove to be useful in different aspects of Rhetorical analysis. The historical study demonstrated trends in the author's approaches – in general. I showed, through the shifts in rhetorical proofs that the overall slant of State of the Union Addresses is from informative and logical reports to more emotional addresses aimed at connecting with the public through media rather than the members of Congress. The close readings of the two case studies revealed the complexities of the rhetorical situation in which each address was given.

Problems. There were several problems encountered while working on this project. First, the historical study of State of the Union Addresses revealed how looking at periodic texts from a long chronology (1790-2007) is impacted by shifts in language use. The vocabulary used two hundred years ago is slightly different from the vocabulary used today. Doing text-based computational analysis becomes problematic in this case –

especially when looking at rhetorical proofs. This problem can be compensated for by the use of word groups rather than single-words or word pairs. However, more study of these needs to take place. Additionally, the depth of understanding of the rhetorical situation is fairly shallow when using pure computational text-analysis. It is evident from the case studies that a richer understanding of the rhetorical situation is exposed by close-readings and situational analysis – looking at character, context, and impact of addresses.

Results. This project revealed the following results:

1. There is a clear shift in rhetorical proofs used by presidents in their State of the Union Addresses from logical, report-style, and low-persuasive content in the 19th and early 20th Century to a more emotional, persuasive, and forward-looking. This shift appears to take place around the advent of media (1930s -40s).
2. The case study analyses revealed that both Truman and Reagan employed forward-looking techniques. Truman, in the context of a state of war in Korea, relied more heavily on defining communism as a threat to the goals of the ‘free world’. Reagan’s addresses, while also using forward-looking strategies, did not need to define communism. It is apparent that towards the end of the Cold War, in 1986, the communists were no longer seen as great a threat as they were in 1951.

Reagan, therefore, looked forward to issues of development of technology and the economy.

My own views of rhetorical analysis techniques shifted as a result of this project. I have a greater understanding and respect for the time-consuming close-reading and situational analysis techniques. Though it would take many years to conduct such research on all State of the Union Addresses this might prove to be a valuable endeavor. Many studies of text-based computational analyses are out there, but there is a great need for close readings to couple with the results of computational analyses.

Additionally, this project revealed issues of forward-looking strategies in rhetoric. The concept of dangling a carrot on the end of a stick – describing how things could be better in the future, is a powerful strategy that both Reagan and Truman used in their addresses. Concepts of utopia, making the world a better place, and offering a bright future to the audience are powerful strategies in persuasion.

Future and Recommendations. This project revealed a greater need for correlating close-readings with computational analyses. The project also sits as a warning to researchers in rhetoric and linguistics that one cannot rely on text-based computational analysis alone. It is easy to press a button on a computer and create numbers from text-analysis, but it is much more meaningful to look at text in-situ: understanding the character of the speaker, the historical context of a text, and the response from audiences. Rather than simply reporting numbers researchers must ask ‘why’ it is like this.

The results of this research show that there needs to be a lot more work in the research of periodic texts such as the State of the Union addresses. Research into periodic texts and how a speaker such as the president of a person in power takes the reins of a position and reinforces that institution also needs to be conducted. This type of research would broaden our understanding of issues of power and rhetoric. Future studies of periodic addresses would need to include more close-readings and a much greater understanding of the impact of the texts on the audiences. Future studies would possibly include interviews with people who witnessed the addresses – both those in positions of power and those individuals not in power. Additionally, future studies would include analyses of how periodic texts such as the State of the Union addresses are written by teams rather than one individual. Rhetoricians need to understand how the texts are influenced by the speaker and his or her team of writers. As mentioned earlier in this project, the addresses were written by teams in each president’s administration. The names and backgrounds of these people is almost never mentioned in State of the Union Address analyses.

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