

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Chelsea J. McLennan for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies in Speech Communication, Speech Communication, and Political Science presented on May 24, 2012.

Title: Guilt and Redemption in a National Eulogy: President Obama's "Together We Thrive: Tucson and Arizona" Address as a Call for Mortification.

Abstract approved:

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On January 8th, 2011 tragedy struck in Tucson, Arizona. A gunman opened fire on Representative Gabrielle Giffords' "Congress on Your Corner" event, wounding thirteen and killing six ("Arizona Shooting"). Four days later, President Obama spoke to a grieving crowd at the University of Arizona's McKale Memorial Center. This study seeks to demonstrate how the dramatic process and the pentad provide insight into how Obama guides the nation through the process of relieving the guilt. Specifically, Obama's call for mortification instead of scapegoating as the means for victimage is examined in light of the context and organizational structure of the speech. In addition, a pentadic analysis of the speech is conducted, showing Obama's stress on the agent-agency ratio and a corresponding idealist-pragmatist outlook. Finally, conclusions are drawn about what this study adds to the academic literature on national eulogies, the presidency, and rhetorical studies at large.

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Guilt and Redemption in a National Eulogy: President Obama's "Together We Thrive:
Tucson and Arizona" Address as a Call for Mortification

by
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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Presented May 24, 2012
Commencement June 2012

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies thesis of Chelsea J. McLennan presented on May 24, 2012.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Chelsea J. McLennan, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincerest appreciation to the following people. I owe special thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. Mark Moore, for listening to me, bouncing ideas around, and putting up with my grammatical errors and passive voice. To Dr. Robert Sahr for helping me understand the complexities of the presidency. To Dr. Elizabeth Root for making me question the world around me. And, to Dr. Emily van Zee for her genuine interest in my topic and time.

I thank my family – Dad, Mom, Kyle, all my grandparents, Maggie, Mojo, and Jewelz – for your support and for encouraging me to be the best I can be. I love you all!

Thanks to my graduate cohort, especially Anna Thompson, Erika Hanna, Kim Coffey, Matt O'Brien, and Scott Anderson. I hope you have learned from me as much as I have learned from each of you.

Thank you to my running partners who have not only helped me manage my stress but also been there during moments of clarity while pounding the pavement.

And finally, thank you to my fiancé, Robbie. I feel truly blessed to have found someone who shares my passion for learning.

This thesis is dedicated to Grandma Jane.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On January 8th, 2011, a peaceful event hosted by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona's Eighth District ended with six people dead and thirteen more wounded ("Arizona Shooting"). The perpetrator was a 22-year old college dropout, Jared L. Loughner, who opened fire into the crowd gathered for the Congresswoman's "Congress on Your Corner" event outside of a local supermarket ("Arizona Shooting"). As media speculation into the causes of the shooting grew, from political vitriol to inadequate gun control laws (Pew Research Center), members of the Tucson community organized a memorial service to honor the victims.

As part of this memorial service, President Obama gave an address aptly titled "Together We Strive: Tucson and America." Speaking to the grieving audience and nation, Obama expressed the gravity of the situation when he states, "The hopes of the nation are here tonight. We mourn with you for the fallen. We join you in your grief. And we add our faith to yours that Representative Gabrielle Giffords and the other living victims of this tragedy will pull through" (par. 2). However, Obama went beyond simple condolences. Embodying the role of empathizer-in-chief, Obama articulates how the audience should move forward from the tragic event to make America a better nation and live up to the expectations set forth by the victims. Just as presidents have done before him, since Abraham Lincoln gave the "The Gettysburg Address" and George W. Bush offered "A National Day of Prayer," Obama faced the challenges put forth by dire circumstances and attempted to offer hope for the future to the audience.

Purpose Statement

This study examines President Obama's address at the Tucson, Arizona Memorial Service as a national eulogy within the genre of epideictic speaking. The primary focus will be on President Obama's suggestions to the nation about how to deal with the tragedy. Burke's conception of the dramatic process will be used to demonstrate how Obama argues that the nation should seek to restore a sense of order and achieve redemption through the process of mortification. In addition, a pentadic analysis will be conducted in order to illuminate Obama's purpose and philosophic school of thought.

Four days after the Tucson, Arizona shooting, President Obama spoke in front of an immediate crowd of 13,000 and another 13,000 in the overflow viewing area, at the McKale Memorial Center on the University of Arizona campus (Hennessy-Fiske, et al. AA1). His speech also drew a television audience of an estimated 30 million viewers (Pew Research Center). The draw that the memorial service and speech had offers a prime opportunity to examine how the role of national healer has been added to the expanding duties of the president. The tragedy also shows how President Obama's personal style and leadership contributes to his success during times of national strife.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do presidents guide the nation through the process of relieving guilt through victimage?
2. How does the pentad relate to the dramatic process? How does the pentad help us understand the motivations behind a rhetor's choice for purification?

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope in three primary ways. First, the genre of national eulogies is a rather new development in the expanding duties of the president. Thus, there have been relatively few opportunities for scholarly evaluation of speeches of this kind. Second, while other instances have warranted a memorial speech from President Obama, such as after the shootings at Fort Hood and the West Virginia Mining Incident, they did not receive the same amount of media attention nor did they meet all of the characteristics of a national eulogy. Therefore, since those speeches will not be examined, the time frame of the context is limited to the immediate time period of the shooting. Third, this study will focus on how Obama assigns blame and seeks to relieve guilt in order to deal with the chaos that manifested because of the shooting. By taking this narrow focus, the author hopes to explore a key element in national eulogies: how a president overcomes the complexity of the situation to restore order and relieve guilt after a national tragedy.

Significance of the Study

As a relatively new occurrence in the presidency, national eulogies offer a finite set of examples in which one can examine the president's rhetorical abilities. With the continuing rise of media coverage, the media will continue to cover events similar to the Tucson shootings and we can expect a president to feel increasing pressure to address the nation when these situations arise. Furthermore, as Campbell and Jamieson write, "the moment created by the events... is a powerful invitation to presidential response because

the calamitous deaths threaten our sense of ourselves as a nation” (76). In other words, the event offers a chance to reestablish the values that the president places upon the nation.

In the context of a president’s larger rhetorical obligations, national eulogies offer a unique insight into how a president views the current state of the nation and his/her construction of public values. As a rhetorical context where policy and political maneuvering is not the focus, national eulogies highlight a president’s rhetorical skill due to the time constraints for preparation and the epideictic focus on invention. Examining how a president seeks to console and reunify the nation in such a speech will lend insight into how he is constructing reality for the audience and, especially, American citizens.

Finally, academic literature does not discuss the concept of victimage through mortification as extensively as it does with scapegoating. Kathryn Olson writes “In the field of Communication, there are dozens of essays employing victimage, but only a few that look at mortification as anything other than an apologetic or image restoration strategy” (Olson 99). As such, this study hopes to add to the examination of mortification as a means of relieving societal guilt.

Literature Review of President Obama’s Rhetoric and Eulogies

President Obama’s Rhetoric

Since his keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Barack Obama’s rhetoric has gained national and scholarly attention. While some criticized Obama for having lofty rhetoric but no substance (Sweet and McCue-Enser 603), his

speeches reveal a clear indication of his vision for the country and his expectations of individuals. In separate studies, Murphy and Atwater note that, in general, Obama draws upon traditional American values to call people to improve the nation (Murphy, "Barack Obama" 402; Atwater 127). In addition, Sweet and McCue-Enser describe how "the themes of 'hope,' 'change,' and the need to strive toward a more perfect union emerged as Obama's unique clarion call" (603). But beyond these general trends, a review of the literature shows four primary characteristics of Obama's rhetoric: the construction of a developing nation, the use of his personal narrative, a belief that individuals have the power to take action, and a stress on the balance between community and individual.

First, Obama stresses that the United States is a nation constantly evolving. Sweet and McCue-Enser observe that Obama's rhetoric forges an identity of the United States "as a 221-year work in progress" (605) and as "an under-construction subject; imperfect, unfinished, and always in the process of revision" (606). John M. Murphy, speaking about Obama as a Joshua figure in the American narrative, writes that "he articulates not a people of bondage, but a nation on the move" ("Barack Obama" 388). For the citizens listening to Obama, his articulation of the American public as a "flawed and fallible constituency liberates political subjects from the overdeterminacy of a fixed national identity" (Sweet and McCue-Enser 618). This establishes the notion that Americans do not have to live in the past but can actively participate in shaping the future of the nation. Murphy argues that Obama's campaign stressed a "constitution of advocate and audience as responsible, moral agents in a living narrative" ("Barack Obama" 405). This places

Obama in the position of directing a nation full of powerful individuals who can construct a better nation.

Next, to meet the expectations set forth by his concept of a nation on the move, Obama often uses his own personal narrative to represent the path he wants Americans to follow. Referring to the 2004 Democratic National Convention keynote address, Rowland and Jones describe how “although his story was unique, Obama was on with every person, regardless of race, creed, religion, or political affiliation, whether born in America or in some distant land, who in the magical place had seen their dreams through to fruition” (435). In a way, Obama is able to reach out to a wide variety of people due to his own American story. His life represents the traditional American success that each citizen aspires to or has lived. This theme carries over into his presidential campaign rhetoric. Murphy argues that Obama’s identity as an African-American and his personal struggles placed him as the next generation where those who lived during the time of Martin Luther King, Jr. were the Moses generation, he would lead the Joshua generation to the promised land (“Barack Obama” 392). In essence, Obama’s life story of personal triumph becomes the model for all those who wish to follow him.

Beyond the 2004 keynote address and his campaign rhetoric, another speech worth mentioning that offers an inviting personal narrative is Obama’s March 18th, 2008 address in Philadelphia, entitled “A More Perfect Union.” Obama delivered this speech in response to the incendiary remarks made by his pastor of 20 years, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, which the media covered significantly (Terrill 366). In his article, Robert Terrill

argues that Obama took all of the identities present in the audience and absorbed “all of them into himself without resolving their contradictions, presenting his own doubled body as a metonymy for the divided yet whole, body politic” (369). In a way, Obama rhetorically embodied the differences within the audience as a whole, showing that they can coexist because those qualities coexist within him. This ability becomes very useful and powerful when he has to discuss issues of race or divisive political topics.

Another defining characteristic in Obama’s rhetoric is his belief in the power of the individual to better themselves and the nation through reflection. Sweet and McCue-Enser argue that “Obama’s epideictic discourse situates the people as an active site of national meaning construction, thus placing the responsibility for the national state of affairs, as well as any attempts to change those affairs, at the feet of the citizens” (618). Thus, Obama empowers the citizens to take responsibility for the well being of themselves and each other. Obama argues that the primary way citizens can take on the responsibility of bettering the nation is through personal reflection. He calls people to reflect on how to better society at times of importance: “In moments of individual and collective reflection, sometimes initiated by a rhetorical interruption of one sort or another (e.g. Obama’s discourse), the active human agent recognizes the need to move toward the horizon of a more perfect Union” (Sweet and McCue-Enser 620). The emphasis on personal responsibility and reflection serves to motivate people from within to improve the world around them.

More specifically, Obama uses this call to reflection as a way to deal with divisive or problematic issues. The need for reflection and improvement within Obama's rhetoric comes when people, the government, or the community do not live up to the expectations of the American dream, such as with issues of racism. When those failings come into fruition, Obama implies that "the protests of the people act as a constitutive corrective" or a united force that can fix the flaws in society (Sweet and McCue-Enser 616). Referring to Obama's "More Perfect Union" speech, Isaksen comments that "we witnessed a dramatic rhetorical shift as [Obama] challenged U.S. Americans to take a self-reflexive look at our nation's problematic approach to both understanding and communicating racial differences" (461). In essence, Obama turned the problem from one that existed outside of oneself, to one that each individual had the power to correct through personal reflection.

With his unique personal narrative and focus on reflection, Obama's rhetoric also demonstrates his ability to span differences. Isaksen characterizes this ability as essentially a dialectical approach (468). Not only does Obama consider all sides of an issue, he asserts that the only way to strengthen America is through dialogue. In contrast to those who assert their own opinions as the only ones necessary, Obama's message in his "More Perfect Union" address "is that the single-minded and monologic discourse apparently favored by those who are suspicious of rhetoric is simply not up to the task of perfecting the union" (Terrill 378). One way that Obama uses this theme throughout his rhetoric is with the issue of race in America.

As an African-American politician in the national spotlight, the way Obama deals with race is salient. Isaksen writes that through his rhetoric, Obama “inspired our nation to engage in a long-overdue productive dialogue about race and racism” (463). Based on his own personal experiences and ability to span divisions, “Obama appeals to the abstractions and ideals of a transcendent social contract while obscuring or ignoring altogether the traumatic causes and consequences of America’s racial past” (Frank and McPhail 573). Terrill argues that when he directly confronts race in his “More Perfect Union” speech, Obama “can be understood as offering an especially potent set of inventional resources through which we cultivate new ways of thinking and speaking about race and unity in America” (Terrill 365). To do this, Obama “asks his listeners to view themselves through the eyes of others, a tactic that critiques the cultural limitations of ‘oneness’ by constituting divided selves through which to confront our bifurcated culture” (Terrill 364). Thus, Obama does not dwell on the past or seek retribution for past wrongs but asks for understanding.

The messages that Obama puts forth offer a new way of viewing the relationship between individual and community in America. Rowland and Jones note that Obama’s words on “the responsibilities of all Americans to work to create a better community and of the extraordinary power and promise associated with being American” are similar to the messages conveyed by other presidents (433). Yet, the difference between Obama’s message and the traditional narrative of American individualism is that he also recognizes the importance of community as complementary, not contradictory, to it. In his speeches,

Obama asserts a balance between responsibility to the individual and responsibility to the community, altering the American Dream from the traditional individualistic approach (Sweet and McCue-Enser 607; Rowland and Jones 437). In fact, hope, one of his primary campaign messages, becomes a “metaphor for a balance between individualism and communal responsibilities” (Rowland and Jones 442). This articulation of the individual’s relationship with the community places reflection as a primary means of ensuring both individual and communal happiness.

To assert this balance, Obama places the success of the community as one of the most important endeavors. For Obama, this idea of the importance of the community comes from his interpretation of the Constitution which “envisions a road map by which we marry passion to reason, the ideal of individual freedom to the demands of the community” (Atwater 127). Throughout his rhetorical works, Sweet and McCue-Enser argue, “Obama downplays the role of the individual political actor and accentuates the hope inherent in the collaborative discernment of an American Dream informed by the transcendent national value of the public good” (608). By taking this stance, Obama asserts that the individual cannot have success without the community and vice versa (Rowland and Jones 437; Sweet and McCue-Enser 614). He places more emphasis on the community by also explaining how his personal success relies on the community. Referring to the 2004 DNC Keynote Address, Rowland and Jones note the established balance between the two that Obama presents: Obama “embraced the American Dream, labeling this nation as a place of infinite opportunity. At the same time, he also set up the

argument that... the opportunity to succeed depends not just on the individual but also on society” (435). So, not only does Obama argue that community and individual are intricately linked, his success represents the positive outcome of having this world view.

Eulogies

Epidictic rhetoric, as with other forms of speaking, has certain functions and elements that seek to persuade an audience. In its construction, Campbell writes that “the language of such rhetoric tends to be more formal, poetic, and figurative” (*Rhetorical Act* 161). These speeches seek to address situations where the primary focus is on praise and blame, not policy or judgment. Thus, their content includes elements that “are likely to emphasize what is psychologically appealing and what reflects cultural values” (Campbell, *Rhetorical Act* 161). Whether addressing the nation after a national tragedy or celebrating a triumph of a hero, epidictic speaking serves a purpose in society. Hauser, in an article on public morality writes that “before citizens can imagine the possibility of a vibrant public realm, they require a vocabulary capable of expressing public issues and experiences of publicness, which are civic needs...that epidictic addresses” (6). The role of the rhetor in such situations then is to express how cultural values can be enacted in public life.

In the category of epidictic speaking are eulogies that seek to honor the dead and console the living. In *The Rhetorical Act*, Campbell best expresses the overall purpose of these speeches when she states: the eulogy “acknowledges death; it reunites the sundered community; it shifts relationship between the living and the deceased and suggests that

although dead in the flesh, the deceased lives on in spirit...reassuring the living that a kind of immortality exists for all of us” (Rhetorical Act 161-2). Kunkel and Dennis outline six common components to eulogies: establishment of rhetor’s credibility; praise for the deceased; emotional self-disclosure; suggested actions for mourners; positive reappraisal (reference to afterlife, time spent with dead, etc.) and recognition of strong, past relationships with the dead, including flaws and personal anecdotes (7). It is important to note here that the rhetor speaks the address to and for the living audience, not to those deceased. A eulogy is essentially a “response to the rift death creates in community, an easing of mourners’ confrontation with morality, and a transformation of relationships between the deceased and the bereaved” (Jamieson qtd. in Kunkel and Dennis 3). A successful eulogy will reunite the community and reassure the individuals present that life will continue without the deceased and that the community is still strong.

National Eulogies

Eulogies are given under a wide variety of circumstances, from a group of close family members to an international community. When a national tragedy occurs, the media’s attention is diverted from the day-to-day grind to the grim events that unfold slowly as more information is released. There have been too many occasions for national attention to be focused on a sad event, such as the passing of a great leader or military operation that resulted in death. But there are certain circumstances that seem to overshadow others in terms of media attention and public outcry. When this occurs, a president may decide that the situation warrants a response. In instances where national

attention is drawn to a tragic event, the event “imposes constraints that cannot be ignored--- the president must speak, and quickly” (Medhurst 219). Since the rise of television and the rhetorical presidency, the events that fall under this category are the Challenger Explosion, the Oklahoma City Bombing, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, and the Tucson, Arizona Shootings. There are other instances where Presidents have given eulogies, such as after the Fort Hood shooting, the West Virginia Mining Incident, and the explosion aboard the USS Cole. However, these events did not receive the significant media attention that the others did and they are either too small in scale to warrant a nationally televised, presidential response, or were the direct result of an institutional failure.

In a eulogy, the presidential response to a national crisis must serve the purpose of uniting a nation that has felt a significant loss in terms of safety and order. Campbell and Jamieson write that “the national eulogy takes the form of oral discourse predicated on the intimate relationship among the dead, the nation, and the leader who speaks for the nation and who can begin to heal its wounds” (80). Since the tragedy has been brought into the American home, so must the healer. National eulogies are one way in which the intimate relationship between presidents and the electorate can be strengthened.

Furthermore, national eulogies offer the chance for the president to address the nation without having to worry about policy issues. Rose writes that “the great challenge to the postmodern president is to be both responsive and effective. Responsiveness to the

national electorate does not guarantee international effectiveness” (29). But in the case of a national tragedy, the president can be responsive by addressing the nation in a timely manner. He can be effective by crafting a good eulogy that leaves the nation with a sense of renewed hope. But the international and domestic political benefit of the national eulogy is that there is little risk of offending other countries or of being blamed for being too lax on policy. In fact, the president can receive negative attention if the speech is too political. Pushing a personal agenda during a time of crisis appears insincere. The nation looks for the president to rise above the situation, not continue politicking.

When and why a president gives a national eulogy depends on the circumstance of the event. For most national tragedies, it appears that the standard time between the instance and the memorial address is four days (Appendix A). This gives presidents enough time to write the speech and for details about the event to be solidified. The reasoning behind a president’s decision to address a situation is a more complex question to answer. National eulogies tend to be given when “those who died can be seen as symbols for the institutions or ideals that others, especially terrorists, wish to destroy by their acts” (Campbell and Jamieson 85). National eulogies tend not to be given when the deaths were caused by a president’s actions, such as a military operation (Campbell and Jamieson 77).

News coverage and media attention may also have a significant impact on when national eulogies are given. When the president has addressed the nation after a national tragedy, coverage of the incident usually dominates the news cycle. When President Obama addressed the nation after the shooting at Fort Hood, the West Virginia Mining incident and the Tucson shootings, each incident was the leading news story for the week in which they occurred (Appendix B, Pew Research Center). In short, national eulogies tend to be given after a domestic attack on an American symbol not caused by the president receives significant media attention.

A significant amount of news coverage of a national tragedy that the president had no direct part in causing can boost the president's political capital. Writing about the decision to speak after the Oklahoma City Bombing, Waldman states that "it was the kind of galvanizing, traumatizing event that can put a president at the center of things" (81). If presidents choose not to speak at these times, they not only risk coming off as insensitive to the nation's needs but losing a prime opportunity for media coverage in a non-policy-based situation.

While some may argue that the president only chooses to speak during times of these national crises to boost his ratings, this is certainly not the case as there are always risks involved with any public address. Rose writes about the perils of the postmodern president when he states that "the underlying assumption of the White House is going public is that presidential activities favorably influence public opinion. But this

assumption is often wrong. Public opinion reflects many influences besides the words and actions of the President” (37). In other words, there is no guarantee that the speech will go well enough to gain political capital. For example, President Bush’s speech after Hurricane Katrina received mixed, if not negative, reviews. Stevenson reported that “if the speech helped him clear his first hurdle by projecting the aura of a president at the controls, it probably did not, by itself get him over the second: his need to erase or at least blur the image of a White House that was unresponsive” (A19). There are many factors that influence the success of such a speech including previous actions on the part of the government and President as well as the context of the tragedy. Thus, national eulogies need to be taken seriously as they do serve a purpose in contemporary American society and can serve as a way for the president to take charge of a nation looking for an explanation.

There are two primary works of scholarship that examine the different components of national eulogies. Both deal with national eulogies in similar ways and examine the same artifacts. One is by Campbell and Jamieson, who approach eulogies from a rhetorical perspective, and the other is by Kunkel and Dennis, who take a more grief management, emotional approach. Both points of view help understand the eulogistic structure of a speech and will be dealt with separately in this study.

In their book, *Deeds Done in Words: Presidents Creating the Presidency*, Campbell and Jamieson develop a general guide about national eulogies. They define

four common components to all national eulogies. First, a president speaks to the nation as individuals, not as a collective whole (Campbell and Jamieson 80). This is often times done by mentioning faith in God or praying (Campbell and Jamieson 80). Second, presidents attempt to make sense of the incident to “see the events in a larger, ongoing national perspective” (Campbell and Jamieson 80). In his “Challenger” speech, Reagan states, “But for 25 years the United States space program has been doing just that. We’ve grown used to the idea of space, and perhaps we forget that we’ve only just begun” (1986). This helps to bring the audience out of the moment and place the events within a larger context. Reagan’s attempt here placed the event as part of that 25-year process and reminds people that the space program is still an experiment and cannot be expected to be perfect.

Third, Campbell and Jamieson describe how a eulogy demonstrates that those who died represented the best of America, so that they are “surrogates for the rest of us” (80). In the case of the Oklahoma City Bombing, President Clinton drew upon the nature of the job the individuals were doing, serving the people in the social security building. Clinton states “they served us well, and we are grateful” (1995). Fourth and finally, a national eulogy “explains how the president and the government will ensure that the tragedy will not be repeated” (Campbell and Jamieson 80). After the Oklahoma City Bombing, Clinton promised to seek justice and to “purge ourselves of the dark forces which give rise to this evil” (1995), calling upon both individuals and institutions to

strengthen the American resolve. Taken together, these components are meant to serve as a cathartic experience for the audience present and the nation watching.

In their article “Fallen Heroes, Lifted Hears: Consolation in Contemporary Presidential Eulogia,” Dennis and Kunkel examine the eulogies of presidents and conclude that some components of their framework exist in national eulogies while others do not. National eulogies tended to have components of “praise and consolation in the form of problem-focused coping, positive reappraisal, and the affirmation and continuation of relationships among survivors and with the deceased are featured” (Dennis and Kunkel 722). These components are in line with what we would expect in any eulogy as they seek to praise the deceased and reaffirm the community. However, national eulogies are unique from other eulogies in that presidents do not explicitly establish their authority, mention the flaws of the deceased, nor disclose their emotions (Dennis and Kunkel 723). Perhaps these elements are not included as it would seem inappropriate or out of place if a president were to draw attention to his authority or comment on the deceased’s personal lives because he most likely did not know them.

Beyond their framework for analyzing eulogies, Dennis and Kunkel found that national eulogies tend to have three other aspects that are unique to its specific subset. To begin, presidents tended to include an “outright acknowledgement of audience perceptions and affect” (Dennis and Kunkel 723). In addition, Dennis and Kunkel found that there were “references to God in both Reagan’s and Clinton’s admissions of the inadequacy of their words to truly help the bereaved” (Dennis and Kunkel 723). For

example, in Clinton's address after the Oklahoma City Bombing, he states "And to all the members of the families here present who have suffered loss, though we share your grief, your pain is unimaginable, and we know that. We cannot undo it. That is God's work" (1995). This statement embodies the three elements that Dennis and Kunkel identify as unique to national eulogies and the tone Clinton's kept throughout his address. In summary, because the president is not directly connected to the tragedy in a direct way, there are additional considerations when crafting a national eulogy.

The goal of the national eulogy is to memorialize the loss of life and heal the nation. To do this, "the speech must facilitate the transformation of physical into spiritual being, the process by which body becomes spirit and the enduring meaning of the lives deceased can emerge" (Campbell and Jamieson 79). In other words, we must be given a way to continue on in the face of such a horrible tragedy. If all goes well, "the national eulogy performs the powerful function of epideictic discourse by unifying the country around the leadership of the speaker" (Campbell and Jamieson 78). The ability to unify the nation over a specific issue is a rare occurrence and makes national eulogies all that more important. Denton writes that "traditionally, communication is thought to be the primary means through which a nation forges a common identity, a common purpose, and a common resolve. However, it is becoming more difficult to provide a unified message to many different audiences simultaneously" (446). Yet, due to their non-policy based content and wide-reach, national eulogies offer a great opportunity to re-center the

American people on what it means to be American by drawing upon broad-reaching values that can avoid issues that divide.

National eulogies also offer a unique look into presidential speech writing abilities through the relatively short time they have to prepare and the qualities of ceremonial speaking. Because of the unexpected nature of the event and the need to speak so quickly afterwards, Medhurst notes, “in moments of crisis speechwriters must adapt to situational constraints that could in no way have been anticipated” (219). Thus, “a president’s earliest responses become a test of rhetorical dexterity” (Campbell and Jamieson 81). With this dexterity, there is also a sense of creativity that must be employed. Murphy, when discussing George W. Bush’s September 11th address, comments that “the epideictic genre provides extraordinary inventional resources for the definition of a new world or, perhaps more acutely, it offers a little rhetorical engine that can take the old world and make of it a bright and new creation” (Murphy 626). The national eulogy does not have to follow strict rules or explain complex terms, rather, the president has the freedom to develop a solution or make sense of the situation in an eloquent, unique, poetic way.

One of the key components of the national eulogy is the development and use of a symbol for the grieving nation. The need to redefine the attacked national symbol into something that symbolizes the best of America is inherent in the structure of national eulogies: “the national eulogy emerges only when someone must make sense of a

catastrophic event that unexpectedly kills U.S. civilians while also assaulting a national symbol” (Campbell and Jamieson 73). If a national eulogy did not address the attacked symbol, it risks not giving importance to the lives that were lost and the reason that the event occurred. If a president chose to speak at a time of national crisis, there must have been something of national interest within the tragedy that would warrant his “healing power.” Campbell and Jamieson argue that “implicit in many national eulogies is the notion that those who have died were killed because of what they symbolize” (85) and “the terrorist act assumes that each person killed is a symbol of what needs to be destroyed; the president reclaims those symbols, transforming each into a symbol of what needs to be preserved” (87). In national eulogies of the past, the symbol created out of a tragedy has usually been the location where it happened: the twin towers for September 11th, the federal building for the Oklahoma City Bombing, the space shuttle for the Challenger Explosion. All of these symbols become more than just the location of a tragedy in the president’s speech and served as a focal point for bringing the best out in America.

Literature Review of Dramatism

In his theory of dramatism, Kenneth Burke develops the idea that humans are unique from other living things because of their use of language. Part of this uniqueness is that humans are “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection” (Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* 16). These

observations about the human condition underlie Burke's theories about communication and the way humans interact and are best explained in light of the dramatic process. Burke views all human life as full of drama where humans communicate and construct the world around them. However, the drama of human life does not play out in a way that constantly maintains hierarchy and order, though we may strive for it. Within his theory of human relations, Burke develops the dramatic process of guilt-purification-redemption. Rueckert summarizes the process in the following way:

The whole drama is made possible -- or inevitable -- by language, which introduces the negative into human experience; with language and the negative man creates various kinds of hierarchic orders, all of which have hundreds of 'thou-shalt-nots' in them; every hierarchy is experienced by man as a kind of covenant, but no man is capable of meeting all the terms of the agreement and in some way he will fail or disobey. Failure or disobedience -- the 'fall' -- cause guilt, which in turn makes necessary the whole machinery of catharsis. The two principal means of purification are mortification and victimage; and the end result of both is redemption, or the alleviation of guilt. (131)

This process rests on the belief that our world is ordered and humans, because they are motivated ultimately by perfection, wish to maintain order. To understand this, it is best to break the above process into three main components: hierarchy, guilt, and victimage.

In human relations, hierarchy is a necessary condition. Burke argues that through the use of symbols, humans can claim property and rights that allows them to "own" parts of the physical or symbolic world (*Permanence and Change* 276). Burke then goes on to argue that because humans can own various elements, there is a sense of "order" among classes and "such 'order' is not just 'regularity.' It also involves a distribution of *authority*. And such mutuality of rule and service... takes roughly a pyramidal or

hierarchal form” (Burke, *Permanence and Change* 276). This established hierarchy serves as a guideline on how we are supposed to act. For example, in a traditional classroom, the hierarchical structure would include the instructor at the top with the students lower. There may also be some “ranking” of the students in the class, perhaps based on popularity or intelligence. Within that setting there are certain rules that must be followed, such as raising hands and deferring to the instructor. While this example has very clearly delineated structure, hierarchy is not always so easily identified. Rueckert provides the definition of hierarchy as “any kind of order; but more accurately, it is any kind of graded, value-charged structure in terms of which things, words, people, acts, and ideas are ranked” (131). Thus, our world is based off a perceived or explicit sense of societal norms that we construct through language.

When an individual does not follow the established hierarchy, he or she will experience guilt for their actions. This sense of guilt comes from what Burke defines as hierarchal embarrassment in the form of Original Sin or “one’s ‘guilt’ not necessarily as the result of any religious or personal transgression, but by reason of a tribal or dynastic inheritance” (*Permanence and Change* 278). Thus, a “violation of hierarchy, whether covert, overt, or vicarious, whether by oneself or in concert with others, leads to guilt” (Brummett, “Burkean” 255). While the idea of guilt has its roots in religious writings, it is also accurate to think of guilt as occurring when “man is alienated, not from God... but from natural condition” (Rueckert 138). Humans continuously experience this guilt because it “originates and is sustained through communication with others (real or

imagined) whose judgment weighs heavily upon us” (Duncan, *Symbols* 137). In other words, the transgression results in a strong desire to return to Order and achieve perfection.

Once guilt manifests, we must rid ourselves of it so order can be restored. Brummett writes that "guilt must be expiated, and the person or group must achieve redemption that leads back to a secure hierarchy (reinstatement of the old or establishment of a new one)" ("Burkean" 255). To achieve this, Burke writes that the dramatic process "proclaims a principle of *absolute* 'guilt,' matched by a principle that is designed for the corresponding absolute cancellation of such guilt. And this cancellation is contrived by *victimage*, by the choice of a sacrificial offering that is correspondingly absolute in the perfection of its fitness" (*Permanence and Change* 283-4). The process of victimage for the alleviation of guilt to achieve redemption takes on two primary forms: mortification and scapegoating.

Before getting into the discussion of mortification and scapegoating, it is important to notice where public address becomes fundamental in this process. While the release of guilt can be done at a personal level, there are often times when a group communally experiences a disruption of Order that creates guilt. Brummett argues that "when guilt is collective within a group or nation, the leaders of the group may, through rhetorical pronouncements, transcend, bemoan and redeem guilt *for* the group" ("Burkean" 256-7). Thus, one can analyze public addresses to examine how a public figure seeks to relieve his or her community of the guilt felt by a violation of their

hierarchy. Taking this idea one step further, Duncan suggests that the “transgression of social order must be defined clearly by those who would rule us, but they must, at the same time, make clear how we can absolve ourselves of such guilt” (*Communication* 125). In short, it is imperative for leaders to help their citizens deal with guilt. The examples in the following section provide insight into how a rhetor accomplishes this task.

Victimage

The first way that an individual or society can seek to alleviate guilt is through the use of a scapegoat. Burke writes that the process of scapegoating “delegates the personal burden to an external bearer, yet the receiver of this burden possesses consubstantiality with the giver, a pontification that is contrived... by objectively attributing one’s own vices or temptations to the delegated vessel... the scapegoat is taken to possess intrinsically the qualities we assign to it” (*Philosophy of Literary Form* 39). In simpler terms, scapegoating “requires the guilty to find and punish some person or object which represents their own guilt” (Brummett, “Burkean” 256). For example, assume two friends, A and B, get into a fight where A hurts B’s feelings. A could scapegoat B through the justification that B started the fight or deserved to have his/her feelings hurt. This process would relieve A of the guilt of violating the principles of friendship.

While the scapegoat assumes the blame for another’s transgression, it must meet certain criteria in order to be effective. Based on the details of the situation, the rhetor must choose an appropriate scapegoat. First, the scapegoat needs to represent the guilt

associated with the act of disobedience. The entity that the individual or community seeks to blame must be linked to the cause of the guilt for “a scapegoat cannot be ‘curative’ except insofar as it represents the iniquities of those who would be cured by attacking it” (Burke, *Grammar of Motives* 406). Second, it must also be powerful enough to assume all of the guilt placed upon it. Burke writes that absolute redemption can be achieved “through the sacrifice of a speciously ‘perfect’ victim, the material embodiment of an ‘idealized’ foe” (Burke, *Permanence and Change* 288). In order to be an effective scapegoat, “the victim... must be prepared for his ritual role, for only a powerful victim can effectively purge the community of great evil” (Duncan, *Communication* 125). A scapegoat can be a person, group, idea, system or anything the individual chooses it to be. But if guilt is truly to be relieved and the redemption achieved, the scapegoat must meet the aforementioned conditions to a great degree because the final test of a scapegoat is if the audience believes the blamed entity caused the guilt and that its removal will bring forth redemption.

In his article about 1980 presidential campaign rhetoric, Barry Brummett writes how John Anderson uses scapegoating to deal with the divisive politics during the campaign. In this case, Anderson articulates the source of guilt as “a failure to pursue the *common interest*” (Brummett, “Burkean” 261). Since he felt society seemed unable to work together, Anderson places the guilt from violating the principles of democratic life on the current political system: “Anderson places the guilty public in the position of an incipient hierarchy united by common ground that is frustrated by contentious parties;

guilt of factionalism has been transferred to the parties and can now be punished” (Brummett, “Burkean” 261). Once he transfers the guilt to an external bearer, Anderson then offers a chance for redemption in the form of a vote for him in the election (Brummett, “Burkean” 261). In short, Anderson labels the guilt in society, finds a scapegoat to assume the characteristics of society causing the guilt, and then offers his campaign as a means of redemption.

However, Anderson’s strategy to paint his campaign as the way to relieve guilt was a poor choice, demonstrating the importance of finding the appropriate scapegoat. The division between the two parties did not function as an effective scapegoat in this case because “it was sanctioned, even required, by that enduring American hierarchy, the two-party *system*” (Brummett, “Burkean” 263). The source of guilt that Anderson identified was part of the order that citizens wished to return to so it could not be blamed for the current problems for then it would necessarily be outside the hierarchy. Brummett suggests an appropriate scapegoat could have been the sitting government since the public already held negative views of it (“Burkean 263). Thus, a rhetor must choose the correct scapegoat if he/she wishes the audience to follow in his/her plan.

Brummett also examines the role of scapegoating in the early 1970’s “Zebra” murders by Mayor Joseph Alioto. In this case, the guilt produced by the shootings originated from three sources: each incident involved a black person shooting a white person, the historical context of race relations in San Francisco, and the ensuing manhunt ordered by Mayor Alioto (Brummett, “Symbolic Form” 67-68). Mayor Alioto then

relieved these sources of guilt rhetorically through the creation of a scapegoat. He constructed a conspiracy theory around a group called the Death Angels that “created an anecdotal and powerful scapegoat, representative of the guilt of white racism” (Brummett, “Symbolic Form” 70). The creation of the scapegoat relieved the San Franciscan community of guilt by placing the blame on a group that was not within the community.

While scapegoating can be an effective means for dealing with guilt, it can also have negative implications for society. Robert Ivie writes about the power of the scapegoat in President Bush’s rhetoric after September 11th. Ivie describes how “George Bush’s unmitigated rhetoric of good versus evil is a perfect specimen on which to experiment. He spoke extensively, explicitly, and consistently about evildoers to justify total war on terrorism, and he did so in a polarizing manner of speaking that completely vindicated the United States” (229-30). Bush’s rhetoric placed all responsibility for the guilt of wartime actions on the enemy, relieving the audience of any guilt associated with the war on terrorism.

This articulation of the scapegoat illuminates how President Bush sought to establish characteristics of the American people in order to justify certain actions. Bush’s rhetoric simultaneously defined America and the enemy and argued that they were not similar. Ivie writes that “this is the discourse of danger that fixes who we Americans are and tells us whom and what we most fear; it tells us even that guilty fear of damnation is the appropriate response to the situation at hand” (237). In addition, “this rhetorical

cycling between the extremes of good and evil alienates the nation from an aesthetic of humility and thus from identifying with a common humanity” (Ivie 236). Therefore, this scapegoat becomes so evil and distant from the group that there is no chance for identification, negotiation, or peace. While humans need to deal with guilt, the scapegoat can begin to be so evil and distant from us that blaming the powerful scapegoat becomes the only legitimate response.

In the case of the “Zebra” murders, the rhetor and society were able to find an external entity to place the guilt upon. However, this is not always the case. If there is no plausible person, idea, or thing to place our guilt upon, how do we find a way to return to order and achieve redemption? Duncan answers this question when he writes: “When our society fails to supply us with such victims, we must find them within ourselves. Until we have destroyed our guilt and fear, we cannot communicate openly and freely, and thus cannot act as citizens of a democratic community” (*Symbols* 150). And this leads into the discussion of mortification.

The second form of victimage, as defined by Burke, is mortification. Through the process of mortification, the individual blames his/herself rather than placing the blame on a sacrificial other. Returning to the previous example of the two friends, A could choose to mortify by reexamining her actions and apologizing to B. By choosing to relieve guilt this way, an individual is reasserting his/her belief in Order: “mortification is the exercising of oneself in ‘virtue’; it is the systematic way of saying no to Disorder, or obediently saying yes to Order” (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 190). Whereas scapegoating

only requires the individual to place blame, mortification requires the individual to take responsibility and action for disobeying the order. To relieve guilt through this process, mortification must be internally motivated (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 190). That is, to carry out the process of mortification, one must exhibit extreme self-control and self-punish the senses or desires that one feels (Burke, *Permanence and Change* 289) and deny their inclination to relieve guilt through the process of scapegoating (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 191). Brummett writes that this can manifest itself through the "open confession of one's 'sins' and actual or symbolic punishment of them" ("Burkean" 256). Through the process of mortification, an individual can "'redeem' oneself, to cancel one's debt, to ransom or 'buy back'" (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 176). It cannot be said enough that mortification is the harder of the two forms of victimage for people to choose to do because it requires the individual to "feel pain" and admit guilt. This offers a unique challenge to rhetors who bring guilt to the forefront as they must convince the audience to believe sincerely that mortification is the correct action.

Another way to think of the process of mortification is as an expression of an internal struggle between good (order) and bad (disorder): "mortification originates in a dramatic struggle between good and evil within the self, for within the self, as on a stage, hero and villain struggle for victory before inner audiences whose approval brings sorrow or joy" (Duncan, *Communication* 307). Rueckert emphasizes this personal aspect of mortification when he writes how "even in its most extreme form of suicide, or self-victimage, nothing outside of the person involved needs to be polluted or destroyed in

order for the purification to take place” (147). Thus, there is something to be said for an individual who chooses to mortify instead of scapegoat because it does not affect anything outside of him/herself. A person going through the process of mortification needs nothing but his/her own mind and body. The individual must be willing to deny some feeling or desire that he/she identifies as the cause of the guilt in order to achieve redemption. Hugh Duncan writes that “we *organize* mortification into a program for defeating the power of the senses over the spirit” (*Communication* 130). The “senses” that we have to “defeat” in any case are based on the violations of a hierarchical order. To identify the appropriate response, if we accept the hierarchical structure of authority and wish to obey it, we must “kill within us motives we think unruly or impious” (Duncan, *Communication* 395). The desires that the individual needs to eliminate are dependent on the situation and the nature of the transgression, just as it was with determining the scapegoat.

Just as a rhetor can make guilt an issue, so can he/she make a case for mortification as a means of achieving redemption. For mortification to be an effective persuasive strategy, the audience must believe that they are responsible for the problem and that no one is taking advantage of their personal sacrifices (Check qtd. in Olson 100). Within a persuasive text, there are certain qualities that “must be present for mortification to work as a strategy of social advocacy that encourages individuals to assume responsibility for an take action on a complex social issue” (Olson 107). The following

two examples, one involving President Carter and the other Al Gore, demonstrate how two rhetors had varying degrees of success calling for acts of mortification.

As an instance of a failed attempt at convincing the public to mortify, Carter's addresses regarding the energy crisis highlight the importance of personal investment and an accurate assessment of the situation in determining if mortification is the appropriate response. Within his speeches, Carter places the guilt of overconsumption on both the citizens and the government who must share in the guilt (Brummett, *Burkean* 257). Brummett argues that "Carter offers a strategy of mortification for restoring that social order: conversation and restraint designed practically and symbolically to correct destructive overconsumption" (*Burkean* 257). Thus, individual actions on the part of the citizens, namely defeating their desires for energy, could fix the energy shortage. To emphasize this fact, Carter outlines the actions citizens could take where their "choices are expressed in a number of self-punishing ways and signaled by heavy use all through the speech of the terms 'discipline' and 'restraint'" (Brummett, *Burkean* 258). As such, through the construction of his speech, Carter signaled to the American populace that they needed to make changes in their current energy consumption.

Carter did not fail in his attempt to persuade people to relieve guilt through mortification because he was asking the American people to sacrifice something (Brummett, *Burkean* 262). Instead, he failed because the audience did not believe Carter would carry out the plan to mortify at a legislative nor personal level in order to deal with the crisis (Brummett, *Burkean* 263). Thus, Brummett argues that "the first lesson to be

learned from Carter about mortification is that it must be real” (*Burkean* 263). If the audience members do not believe that the speaker his/herself is committed to the process with them, then there exists little reason for them to believe their actions will solve the problem. The rhetor must convince the audience that the guilt-causing situation is significant and that he/she also has a personal commitment to achieve redemption through mortification.

In contrast to Carter’s failed call for mortification with the energy crisis, Kathryn Olson writes about Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth* as a persuasive text that encourages the audience to engage in mortification to achieve redemption. Gore’s documentary exemplifies how a rhetor can establish a means of redemption through mortification instead of scapegoating (Olson 97). She argues that there were four reasons why Gore was successful when Carter was not. First, “Gore’s *dignitas* or consistent public character in relentlessly fighting for the environment and... shows him as a good man of good private moral character” (Olson 99). Second, he took a simple and clear approach to the issue (Olson 100). Third, he places the people as responsible actors in the environmental debate by “calling for individual action and decisions rather than imposing a top-down plan” (Olson 100). Fourth and finally, he asks the audience to assume guilt and take part in a process of mortification that they “are inspired *from within* to take” (Olson 100). In other words, the audience does not see their mortification as motivated by Gore; instead, they are persuaded by their own desire to change the world around them and believe they can have a significant impact.

These findings demonstrate the role of the rhetor in persuading the audience to choose a process of mortification instead of scapegoating. Olson argues that Gore's documentary takes the guilt felt by people for contributing to global warming and lets the audience "have the chance to connect the dots foretelling this crisis before the worst hits and to mortify themselves to divert or soften the impending consequences" (101). Therefore, while the situation may appear to be overwhelming, Gore presents mortification as a viable and effective option. Olson concludes that her findings demonstrate "the effectiveness of drawing out the concrete, individual stakes of a huge social issue and simultaneously balancing the magnitude of the problem with good reasons to believe that one's personal efforts can make a difference" (105). The speaker has incredible power in determining how the audience views the situation that he or she is asking them to correct.

While the cases examined thus far have shown how a rhetor uses one path to relieve guilt, mortification and scapegoating do not always have to be mutually exclusive processes. While Alioto created a powerful scapegoat and Carter and Gore called upon people to mortify, the process of mortification and scapegoating can be combined to relieve both an individual and community of guilt. Moore writes about the role of mortification in Illinois Governor George Ryan's decision to abolish the death penalty in his state. While Ryan had always supported capital punishment (Moore 312), "the prospect of a wrongful conviction leading to capital punishment constituted a fundamental source of guilt, and consequently he set an ideal in 2000 that would become

the basis for rejecting the death penalty altogether, because it could not be attained” (Moore 316). The guilt he felt because the system was flawed led to his moratorium on capital punishment, which Moore argues was a form of mortification since it went against a policy he had always supported (317). Thus, the first step in Ryan’s dealings with capital punishment was one of self-victimage, where he took personal actions to alleviate any future sense of guilt on *his* part.

After Ryan relieved any source of guilt that could come from the flawed system due to his own actions, he turned to scapegoating to complete the redemptive process. Moore argues that “on his road to redemption, Ryan offered a final ideal condition for allowing the death penalty to continue, no mistakes” (Moore 319). However, Ryan could not guarantee a perfect system and he attributed the wrongful deaths and unfairness “to the judicial system along with factional scapegoating to heighten the incongruity of a wrongful conviction” (Moore 320). Therefore, the problems within the system were not the fault of Ryan personally, but that of the system that contained capital punishment as an option for justice. Ultimately, the combination of scapegoating and mortification served to relieve Ryan of the burden of guilt associated with the imperfect system of capital punishment. In summary, Moore writes: “this self-imposed punishment serves as a symbolic death that then combines with the factional scapegoating of a designated group, as the mortified feels the urge to be further cleansed by passing the buck in a way that externalizes an internal turmoil” (Moore 324). While this represents a unique situation where the rhetor employed both forms of victimage, it shows how guilt acts as a

motivational force for change and the many choices present to a rhetor for the placement of guilt.

The Pentad

In order to determine the motives behind a rhetor's words, Burke offers a set of five terms known as the pentad. He writes in *A Grammar of Motives*:

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. (Burke xv)

Their application by a critic to a rhetorical text offers a simpler way of looking at a situation and the complexity that often shrouds an individual's motives (Burke, *Grammar of Motives* xvi). Each symbolic act will have all five components presented, some to a greater degree than others, and the ordering of the terms will help highlight the intentions of the speaker.

The assignment of different components of a situation to the different elements of the pentad is not always straightforward nor the same in every situation. An agent in one particular presentation of an act could be part of the scene in another text. It all depends on how the rhetor in the specific, examined text conveys the purpose of each of the components. This is the job of the critic: to determine the elements of the pentad in a given text and then assert claims about the motives of the speaker. The difficulty comes with the ambiguity of the terms and their amorphous qualities. David Birdsell writes "a great deal of the pentad's explanatory power rests upon the assumption that the terms in

fact are ambiguous, that there is no consistent rule for applying the terms across situations, and that there is not necessarily a single, 'correct' rule for applying the terms in any particular situation" (277). Thus, the job of the critic becomes to find the "best" pentad that illuminates the nuances of the text.

Once a critic has determined the appropriate pentad for a text, he/she can ascertain information about the speaker's view of reality. David Ling writes that "as man describes the situation around him, he orders these five elements to reflect his view of that situation" (81) and "what he regards as the appropriate response to various human situations" (82). As such, through the process of careful examination of the content of rhetorical act, a critic can better understand how the speaker constructs reality and seek to determine his/her motives. This serves as a powerful tool for the rhetorical scholar who is concerned with the notion of persuasion. The pentad offers a way of "examining how the persuader has attempted to achieve the restructuring of the audience's view of reality" (Ling 82). As the rhetor constructs his/her idea of reality, he/she is arguing for the audience to view reality in the same way. This is why a pentadic analysis can help the critic understand the true meaning of the text.

Since the pentadic elements are assigned based on a particular rhetor's presentation of a situation, the description provided can offer a new way of looking at human drama. For instance, Janis Edwards in her article on the 1996 presidential campaign notes that a reconstruction of the traditional pentad of presidential elections placed Colin Powell as a candidate even though he was not officially running.

Traditionally, the act is the campaign with the purpose of winning the election in the scene of the democratic process where the agent, the candidate, controls the media as agency (Edwards 169). However, in 1996, the news media redefines the situation where the media does not place “Powell as its favorite-son candidate, it’s The People” (Edwards 169).

In her analysis of *TIME* magazine’s portrayal of Colin Powell’s “campaign,” Edwards concludes that aspects of the agent (candidate) became part of the scene (politics) to deal with the oddity of an unannounced candidate (171). With this, “the ‘Public,’ who formerly constituted the SCENE of campaign events, is position as the AGENT who drives the ACT in absence of the Candidate’s initiative,” placing Colin Powell within the scene (Edwards 171). Placing the candidate as part of the scene dramatically changes ideas concerning who or what is in control of the political process. In this case, the author argued the reassignment was problematic. If public opinion represents the driving force in a campaign, Edwards concludes that “although polls are routinely reported as monolithic representations of a consensus, they are the sum total of many individual and independent responses” (172). In other words, this new construction of a pentad of a political campaign implies consensus when one may not exist.

Even within the same speech, seemingly similar components of similar situations can be assigned to different pentadic elements if the rhetor’s motives differ for each description. This is most clearly highlighted in David Birdsell’s analysis of Ronald Reagan’s speech on Lebanon and Grenada. In this case, the American military was

involved in both instances but depending on the situation, Reagan delegated the military to different functions through his construction of reality.

In the section of his speech devoted to explaining the crisis in Lebanon, Reagan places American troops and enemies as part of the scene: “neither group’s specific activities, routine procedures, or personal traits are as important as the simple fact of their bodily presence in the scene” (Birdsell 268). This placement has the effect of removing agency from the American troops and placing them at the mercy of an uncontrollable scene in order to explain the deaths of the Marines (Birdsell 269). In the second section of the speech, Reagan focuses on the agent, demonstrating the overwhelming strength of the U.S. forces. Birdsell then argues that Reagan’s third section resolves this contradiction by placing act as a transcendent term: “By basing the Soviet Union in agent/agency and the United States in act, Reagan establishes a formal difference between the two nations...the Soviet Union contaminates with its presence. The United States redeems by its actions” (272).

This example highlights the role of the critic in a pentadic analysis in determining which parts of the situation get assigned to the various elements of the pentad. In Reagan’s speech, the ambiguity of the pentadic terms allowed “for the collection of what in other contexts we might interpret as agent or agency under the heading of scene in the speech on Lebanon and Grenada. This flexible perspective on scene explains the malign forces operating against American interests in Beirut” (Birdsell 273). However, if he had determined a different pentad for Reagan’s speech, a different interpretation of the text

would have resulted. Thus, “whatever term the critic decides to use will influence the nature of the criticism as surely as the pentadic alignment characterizes the subject under study” (Birdsell 274). Just as the text is a symbolic act, so is the criticism of it so great care must be taken that the critic determines the pentad based on the content of the text.

Another step in a pentadic analysis is to assess which terms are stressed and which are not in the rhetor’s presentation of a particular act. This is where Burke develops the concept of ratios. Burke writes that “the ratios are principles of determination” (*Grammar of Motives* 15). Rueckert offers a clearer explanation of pentadic ratios: “the poetic act is charged, controlled, and limited in various ways and degrees by scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Each of these relations is described by Burke in one of the ratios, which is sometimes causal, sometimes equational, and sometimes both” (78). Thus, in any given symbolic act the components of the pentad have to be in relationship to one another and some will exert more “influence” over others. It is the critic’s job to discern, based on the content of the text, which ratios are present in order to gain a full understanding of a rhetor’s motives since “there is much more ‘there’ than meets the eye because of certain relationships which necessarily exist between the various terms of the pentad” (Rueckert 74). Birdsell goes one step farther in saying that “the critic who would make fullest use of the pentad must experiment with the ratios between the terms in order to find the most consistent or the most illuminating explanation for a given text” (Birdsell 277). Within any given text, there are several possible pentads, but some more closely reveal the true motive of the rhetor than others.

Through the discovery of the stressed term or terms of the pentad, Burke argues we can determine the philosophy that the rhetor espouses. He writes:

Dramatistically, the different philosophic schools are to be distinguished by the fact that each school features a different one of the five terms, in developing a vocabulary designed to allow this one term full expression (as regards its resources and its temptations) with the other terms being comparatively slighted or being placed in the perspective of the featured term. (Burke, *Grammar of Motives* 127)

In other words, if a speaker stresses a particular term for a given situation, he or she espouses an underlying philosophic tradition. The schools of thought and their corresponding elements of the pentad are materialism (scene), idealism (agent), pragmatism (agency), mysticism (purpose), and realism (act) (Burke, *Grammar of Motives* 128). By determining the dominate terms and understanding its corresponding philosophy, a critic can make a more informed decision about the motives of the speaker.

As an example of the application of the pentad to a symbolic act to determine motives, David Ling's article on Edward Kennedy's Chappaquiddick address shows how Kennedy sought to explain his actions surrounding the death of Mary Jo Kopechne and his continuing presence in politics. In the construction of his speech, Kennedy places himself as a passive agent in an overwhelming scene. In the first section of the speech about the car accident, Kennedy "ordered the elements of the situation in such a way that the scene became controlling" (Ling 83). Ling argues that "the description of reality presented by Kennedy suggested that he, as agent, was the victim of a situation (the scene) over which he had no control" (84). Thus, the scene controlled the agent. This ratio served to "minimize Kennedy's responsibility for his actions" (Ling 83). Following

this section, the speech moves on to Kennedy's political position where Kennedy continues to describe himself as dominated by the scene. Ling writes "the speech was also intended to place responsibility of Kennedy's future on the shoulders of the people of Massachusetts" (83). Therefore, just as Kennedy as agent was limited by the scene of the car crash, he was also limited by the feelings of the voting populace.

The relinquishment of control on the part of Kennedy accomplished the task of explaining how Kennedy crashed and then did not report the accident immediately and how he intended to decide to remain in office or resign. Since Kennedy clearly portrayed himself for the audience as a victim of circumstance (Ling 94), the guilt that accompanied the decision to remove him from office or not "shifted from Kennedy to the people of Massachusetts" (Ling 85). But, by placing himself as the victim of the scene, "the positive response of the people of Massachusetts was virtually assured" (Ling 85). This symbolic act is a prime example of how various elements of the pentad can control or dominate others to explain and highlight the motives of the speaker.

The assignment of certain elements within a situation to the various parts of the pentad can have serious implications for future actions. With Colin Powell and the "non-candidate," "the repositioning reflects questions about the nature of leadership that have increasing significance in a time of market-driven politics" (Edwards 173). In the case of Edward Kennedy, a carefully crafted speech had implications for his presidential bid beyond the incident described in the address. Ling writes that because the speech portrayed Kennedy as helpless, combined with public perceptions about how he wrote the

speech and the volume of unanswered questions, Kennedy's handling of the incident significantly reduced his chances of becoming president (86). Therefore, while a rhetor's view of reality and the critic's corresponding interpretation of it may not seem to be very meaningful or significant, these two cases show that it is.

Statement of Method

This study will examine how President Obama's address eulogizes the victims of the Tucson, Arizona shooting and how he rhetorically seeks to relieve the guilt felt by the community after the event. To do so, Burke's concepts of the dramatic cycle, victimage, and the pentad will be used to demonstrate how President Obama sought to deal with the guilt and restore order.

Chapter Two will examine the context surrounding President Obama's address. First, the role of the president will be examined to demonstrate the rising necessity for presidents to speak in times of national crisis. Second, the political, economic, and social context of the United States and Arizona before the shooting will be explored. And, finally, the context of the day of the speech will be described to show the specific rhetorical situation that President Obama had to address.

Chapter Three will be the analysis of President Obama's address. This section will apply the concepts of dramatism to President Obama's speech after the Tucson shootings to demonstrate how Obama sought to reunify the Arizona community and the nation by suggesting individuals go through a process of mortification and placing the scene as subordinate to agent and act.

Chapter Four will conclude the discussion of the eulogistic and dramatistic strategies employed in President Obama's address. It will also discuss how the concept of victimage and pentadic ratios can help to develop theories of national eulogies in cases where the deceased are victims of a violent crime. This chapter will finish with a discussion of the significance of the findings for rhetorical and presidential studies and a discussion of the areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Context

The Postmodern and Rhetorical President

From the days of newspaper to the days of television, the presidency has evolved to meet the demands of a changing society. Pious writes “the history of the presidency is one of constant innovation and adaptation” (76). With the rise of technology, the president is faced with challenges that George Washington could never have imagined. Throughout the course of its history, the presidency followed a trajectory with “a traditional president who had little to do; a modern president who had a lot to do at home and abroad; and a postmodern president who may have too much expected of him” (Rose 2). Pious describes the postmodern president as the concept that implies the shift in the presidency that began with Jimmy Carter where a president’s influence is limited by the realities of a globalizing world while the nation expects more of him or her (74).

The increased responsibility has not been one-dimensional either; we now demand more of our president in terms of policy, public appearance, and international relations. According to Rose, the postmodern president “*must go Washington, go public, and go international*” (emphasis in original, 31). The sheer number of tasks that fall under the umbrella of the presidency has increased the media coverage of the president as well as the pressure to perform well.

While international and domestic policy issues are important, one of the key duties of the postmodern president is addressing the nation at politically relevant times.

Rose writes that “twentieth-century presidents have increasingly made the presidency audible and visible, claiming that the white house speaks *to* the people on behalf of the government and *for* the people in Washington” (35). In other words, we expect the president to update us on what is going on in the nation’s capital and serve as the representative of the government as a whole. This is in contrast to a more traditional approach to the presidency where he was supposed to be seen, not heard (Rose 35). This change occurred due to the demands of the ever-growing news media presence and additional means available to reach the populace. In fact, “whenever a new mechanism of democracy or communication appeared, presidents (or presidential candidates) took advantage of it” (Pious 76). From the radio to the television to the internet, presidents have chosen more and more frequently to speak to the nation.

With the rise of the postmodern president and increased media coverage, the president has to take into consideration new concerns when constructing an address since the audience is no longer controlled neither to those in the immediate audience nor the nation. Pious describes the president’s expanding audience when he writes, “the modern president led by gaining public support for his policies: the postmodern president faces an international as well as domestic audience” (75). Thus, when crafting a speech or determining a policy decision, the concerned parties are no longer limited geographically. Larry Speakes, a press secretary of President Reagan’s “got it half right when he said that at every White House meeting there should be someone asking how a decision will play

on the TV news and the next morning's newspapers. His error was limiting his thoughts to [American media]" (Rose 29). The news from the United States now reaches international audiences just as quickly as it reaches those within the nation. This adds additional pressure to the crafters of a presidential address while it also spreads the president's message farther than it has ever gone in the past.

With the development of the postmodern president, the concept of the rhetorical presidency has also come into fruition. It would now seem odd if a president did not address the nation frequently through various forms of media, especially through television. Mary Stucky and Frederisck Antczak define the rhetorical presidency as the concept that embodies the trends we have seen in the duties of the presidency: "increase in presidential speech, a change in the nature of and meaning of that speech, an erosion of the traditional means of governance, and an increase in the president's ceremonial rather than substantive role" (qtd. in Denton 445). Medhurst writes "the use of the bully pulpit and the rise of the rhetorical presidency are hallmarks of the office as it has emerged from the twentieth century" (219). We expect our presidents to address us at politically, socially, and internationally relevant times. With these increased demands, we feel that we know presidents intimately, on a personal level (Denton 448). This has both positive and negative outcomes.

On one side, it is good that the president, as the only elected official voted on by the whole electorate, speaks to those who voted him into office. On the other side, the

president may have become too personal and lack persuasion and substance in his addresses in order to cater to a wider audience. This may not be the best way to serve and lead the country. Denton, in his work on the rhetorical presidency, suggests that with the way the presidency operates now, “audience appeals and identification are more important than argument. Narrative and drama are more important than reason and evidence. To appeal to and to build public coalitions, presidents tell stories, provide anecdotes, involve the audience, and reference historical myths” (449). He goes on to write that “mediated presidential conversation fails to properly inform and educate the public on political matters” (Denton 448). So, as the coverage of the president has expanded, the audience’s knowledge has become more limited. But, there are some circumstances that arise where the rhetorical presidency can serve to unite the nation without having to worry about informing the public, as in national eulogies.

As media attention on and the physical presence of the president becomes more noticeable, empathy as a necessary, presidential trait puts further importance on the response to national tragedies. In fact, Americans expect their president to serve as “empathizer in chief” (Fineman qtd. in Shogan 860). It is important to analyze empathy as a presidential trait when discussing the rhetorical presidency and national eulogies since many of the components of a eulogy require emotional investment. Also, Shogan observes that “empathy has played an influential role in presidential leadership throughout American history, and has figured prominently in recent presidential

administrations” (860). Empathy is distinct from sympathy. Shogan defines empathy as an emotion that “requires an individual to feel the emotions of another human being” and “enables [the person] to acknowledge and consider the problems of others” (860). In other words, when an individual empathizes, he or she is feeling what the other person is feeling instead of just understanding what the other person is going through.

For presidents, this can be a particularly useful emotion to display. As a representative of the whole electorate, empathy enables the president to reach out to a wider audience. Abraham Lincoln is a great example of the effective use of presidential empathy. Lincoln used empathy as a way to “turn opponents into supporters” (Shogan 864). Shogan writes that Lincoln’s ability to empathize allowed him to guess how his opponents would react, aiding in his legislative leadership (863). By examining Lincoln’s use of empathy, we can see how empathy “enables presidents to see the whole picture... comprehend the plight of others he does not know immediately... [and] facilitates and encourages insightful rhetoric” (Shogan 865). Yet, there is always a need to balance empathy with action.

While empathy has received more attention in recent years as a positive trait for presidents to have, striking a balance between empathy and decisiveness is a constant battle. If a president demonstrates too much empathy, then he can come across as insincere and indecisive. Clinton’s rhetoric demonstrated this pitfall. According to Shogan, his excessive expression of empathy came across as disingenuous and served as a “political crutch” (868). However, if a president does not show enough empathy

towards people, he can appear callous. On the other side of the spectrum from Clinton, George W. Bush did not convey empathy in a positive way. Unfortunately, the lack of empathy in his response after Hurricane Katrina did not convey the appropriate tone for those affected by the natural disaster. Shogan observes that “Americans initially responded favorably to Bush’s command and control decisiveness that emphasized toughness...however, the Bush administration’s reaction to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath threw his bleak assessment of empathy’s importance into considerable question” (870). In Clinton’s case, Morris and McGann argue that Clinton’s ability to predict his opponent’s moves due to his empathic abilities caused him to delay decisions almost to the point of ineffectiveness (qtd. in Shogan 868). The lesson to be learned from these two examples is that empathy is an important rhetorical tool if it is sincere and does not inhibit presidential decision-making.

When discussing President Obama’s response to national tragedies and his politics in general, empathy plays a central role. Shogan comments that while previous presidents have acknowledged the role of empathy in presidential leadership, Obama explicitly makes it an issue in both words and deeds (860) and he uses empathy as a way to achieve unity (872). So, when a national tragedy struck in Tucson in January of 2011, President Obama constructed an appropriate response to the loss. When President Clinton responded to the Oklahoma City Bombing, Shogan argues that he displayed the appropriate amount of empathy towards those present, because “Clinton did not claim to know the victims personally, but spoke to the survivors who did. He empathized with the

living, and found the right words both to share and separate his sorrow with the pain of those who had lost family members and friends” (867). To successfully eulogize and express empathy, President Obama had to strike a similar chord. This study seeks to determine if Obama achieved the appropriate balance.

National Political News Prior to the Shooting

The national government was in transition at the time the shooting occurred in Tucson, Arizona. The 2010 Midterm elections were just a few months past, the 211th Congress had just finished a lame-duck session, and the 112th Congress had just begun. This signaled a halfway point for the Obama Administration as well as a time where the nation wondered how the new Congress would change the political landscape.

Arguably the most important political news story at the end of 2010 and beginning of 2011 was the results of the 2010-midterm elections. In the Senate, the Democratic Party lost six seats and their strong majority of 60 votes (Hulse, “Taking” A1). While their losses in the Senate were significant, the results of the races in the House of Representatives were even more significant. After all the votes came in, Republicans gained 63 seats in the House of Representatives, leaving the final totals at 193 Democrats and 242 Republicans (“House Map”). The results of the 2010-midterm elections clearly indicate a shift in power between the two parties.

After the contentious midterm elections, the Congress that would soon see a major change in its composition held a productive lame-duck session (Calmes, “For the President” A24). Among the many pieces of legislation that Congress passed during this

time were the “New Start arms-reduction treaty with Russia...[and] legislation covering medical costs for rescue workers sickened after the 2001 terrorist attacks” (Calmes, “For the President” A24), the repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, and the extension of the Bush-era Tax Cuts. Speaking about the lame-duck session and its relationship to the previous two years of this Congress’s term in office, Ezra Klein writes, “what’s been uncommon about the past two years is that the Democrats in Congress managed to do more than argue: they legislated. They took the agenda they’d run on and made much of it law. This was no do-nothing Congress. This Congress did lots” (21). Thus, while the Democrats knew they would soon lose the legislative power they enjoyed the past two years, Congress continued to advance important legislation.

Arguably one of most widely publicized and contentious issues of the lame-duck session was the repeal of the military policy commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). On the 22nd of December, Obama signed a measure that ended the Clinton-era, 17 year-old policy that banned gay and lesbian servicemen and women from serving openly in the military (Calmes, “For the President” A24; Hulse, “Senate” A1). It was a policy that “forced thousands of Americans from the ranks and caused others to keep secret their sexual orientation” (Hulse, “Senate” A1). One of the reasons Congress had not passed this act before the lame-duck session was because of the concerns for how the policy change would affect military cohesion. However, the repeal came after “an exhaustive Pentagon review that determined the policy could be changed with only isolated disruptions to unit cohesion and retention” (Hulse, “Senate A1). Therefore, the

primary reason for not passing the bill did not exist anymore and the repeal of DADT soon followed.

While Congress dedicated a lot of time to social issues such as the DREAM Act, health care, and DADT, the economy and related policy concerns also drew considerable attention. The out-going congress just dealt with the passing of “a stripped-down spending bill that would finance the federal government through Sept. 30 of [2011], freezing the budgets of most agencies but including money for the war in Afghanistan. The Bill cuts nearly \$46 billion from the president’s requested budget, and includes provisions for a two-year pay freeze for non-military federal employees” (Calmes and Herzenhorn A36). In addition to decreased budgets, a report by the chairman of the Federal Reserve on January 7th, 2011 indicated that Obama “is likely to face relatively high unemployment rates for the rest of his term” (Calmes, “Obama Promises” A3).

The hardest battle of Obama’s economic agenda at the end of 2010 was over the extension of the Bush-era tax cuts. In simplest terms, the bill “extends for two years all of the Bush-era tax rates and provides a one-year payroll tax cut for most American workers” (Herszenhorn A1). Congress waited until the last second to approve the bill, passing it at midnight on Thursday, December 16th, 2010 (Herzenhorn A1). This bill included “\$801 billion package of tax cuts and \$57 billion for extended unemployment insurance” (Herszenhorn A1) and “cost \$858 billion over 10 years, would extend income tax cuts for two years, create a one-year, 2-percentage-point cut in payroll taxes and continue jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed for 13 more months” (Fritze 5A).

Also, the bill would add a possible \$900 billion to the deficit (Scherer and Newton-Small). Yet, despite the price tag, there were high hopes for the bill. For example, commentators speculated that the bill's passage "would boost the economy going into the 2012 elections, they argued, create an estimated 1.3 million more jobs and help reposition Obama in the political middle, putting the interests of American families before party priorities" (Scherer and Newton-Small). Despite the major implications of the tax breaks there was still some political unrest about how the negotiations happened.

While they wanted the tax cuts extended, Democrats criticized Obama for how he handled the negotiation of the tax cut extension. Jackie Calmes reported that "often cited is Mr. Obama's failure to act earlier in seeking an extension of the expiring Bush-era tax cuts except those on high incomes; delaying action until after the midterms gave Republicans more leverage to force compromise that also extends the high-end tax bracket for two years" ("For the President" A24). This resulted in many of the Democratic members of the house feeling as though the deal was too generous to the wealthy (Fritze 5A). In other words, Obama's delay in negotiating hurt the Democratic agenda. However, despite the dissatisfaction with the final structure of the tax cuts, Calmes observes that Democrats and Republicans alike agreed that "the next tax-overhaul would almost certainly have to raise revenues to address the nation's growing fiscal problems" ("Obama Weighing" A1). In the end, it appeared that the extension of the tax cuts was only a temporary solution to the larger problem of the suffering economy.

After the elections and the extension of the Bush-era tax cuts, Obama had to reevaluate his economic plan. One of the strongest indicators that Obama was developing a new economic strategy was his decision to name four new economic advisors (Calmes, “Obama Promises” A3). At the end of his first two years in office, Obama’s economic plan included “the two-year stimulus package...strong financial industry regulations; the overhaul of the health care system; and...the tax cuts that Mr. Obama and Republican leaders agreed to [in December 2010]” (Calmes “Obama Promises” A3). With all of these new economic policies to manage, it was clear that Obama needed a team to make sure they achieved the maximum economic benefit.

While the lame-duck session was productive and included many wins for the Obama administration, not all initiatives passed. Perhaps Obama’s biggest disappointment was the failure of the Dream Act that “would have provided a path to citizenship for college students who were brought to the United States illegally as children” (Calmes, “For the President” A24). The bill failed with 41 against and 55 in favor, just short of the 60 needed to bring it up for debate (Preston, “Immigration” A35). Julia Preston comments that this outcome served as a “rebuff to President Obama by newly empowered Republicans in Congress on an issue he has called one of his priorities” (“Immigration” A35).

One of the primary concerns of Democrats and President Obama was whether or not the Affordable Health Care Act would survive a Republican Congress. This bill served as one of Obama’s celebrated achievements during the first half of his term and, as

Klein notes, is “projected to cover 32 million Americans while cutting the deficit by about \$140 billion in the first 10 years--and by hundreds of billions more after that” (21). What made this issue so tricky to deal with was the fact that public opinion was about as divided as the members of Congress were when it came to repealing the health care bill. A Gallup poll found that “Americans are closely divided over whether the new Republican-controlled House should vote to repeal the health care law that was enacted last year” and that “nearly eight out of 10 Republicans support repeal. In contrast, about two-thirds of Democrats want the law to stay in effect” (Kennedy and Page 1A). After the lame-duck session ended, the Obama administration had to begin work to protect the past progress they had achieved during the first two years of the term. At the national government level, Democrats, geared up for a media blitz to save the bill while Republican’s sought to repeal the bill with their own aptly named bill, “Repeal The Job-Killing Health Care Law Act” (Kennedy and Page 1A).

The significant alterations that the midterm elections brought in the composition of both the House and Senate resulted in contentious and abrupt changes in procedure. For example, in a rush to try and lesson the political maneuvering of the previous Senate, Hulse notes “a coalition of Democrats threatened to try to force changes that would reduce filibusters and other procedural snags that have slowed the pace of legislation the past two years” (“Taking” A1). The Democrats in the Senate were now more concerned about the filibuster that forces “60-vote supermajorities to pass legislation” (Wolf, “GOP” 6A). In the House, tensions over political power were no less apparent. Hulse

observed at the swearing in of the new House of Representatives that “despite the good feelings and promises of cooperation traditional on opening day of Congress, the partisan tension broke into the open as Ms. Pelosi...praised the legislative record of the Democratic Congress” (Hulse, “Taking” A1). Before any legislating, members of both parties were already in disagreement.

The general tone within the first few days of the 112th Congress appeared to be one of strong political signposting. When it came to what issues each Party would pursue, the members of Congress were no less divided than they were on procedural issues. Obama called for the continuation of the “fights on immigration, spending priorities and more” (Calmes, “For the President” A24). While Republican members set forth an “economic agenda that call[ed] for tearing down the stimulus spending initiatives, the health care law and financial regulations, as well as any new administration regulations” (Calmes, “Obama Promises” A3). All of these disagreements dominated the news and dominated the general political climate.

Arizona at the Time of the Shooting

Before the shooting, there was significant news coverage of the general political discontent in Arizona. In particular, Representative Giffords’ district had “become a caldron of division over government spending, immigration, health care and Barack Obama” (Dolnick, et al 5). During the news coverage of the shooting, these topics played a prominent role in the discussion about the shootings and individuals often times blamed

the charged topics for causing the shooting. The issues of immigration and the economy represent the primary issues within Arizona at the time of the shooting.

Among the issues that spurred heated political discussion in Arizona was the state's immigration policy. There were several immigration bills facing Arizona's legislature and electorate that caused particularly strong political unrest that spread to other states as well. Preston of *The New York Times* writes that six other states were looking into introducing similar bills to the federal court blocked, Arizona bill ("Political" A1). The primary issue within the Arizona bill was that it "authorized the state and local police to ask about the immigration status of anyone they detained for other reasons, if they had a 'reasonable suspicion' that the person was an illegal immigrant" (Preston, "Political" A1). It seems as though legislators were taking these steps to protect Arizona residents from increasing violence. Nick Miroff comments on crime in Arizona as it relates to the immigration debate: "Although fewer illegal migrants are crossing and several large urban areas have become safer, drug seizures have increased and tougher enforcement is pushing traffickers into more remote rural areas. This has led to several high-profile killings that have fueled fears of encroaching violence" (Miroff A08). The violence and political turmoil that ensued to help solve the problem created a harsh social environment.

Another primary way that Arizona tried to deal with illegal immigration was through the issue of citizenship at birth. The Arizona legislature, as well as in other

states, were reviewing the 14th Amendment as a way to deal with the problem of what is termed ‘anchor babies,’ where pregnant, illegal immigrants travel to the United States to have their children be U.S. citizens (Lacey A1). The proposal of a group of lawmakers included a provision that would “create two kinds of birth certificates in their states, one for the children of citizens and another for the children of illegal immigrants. The theory is that this could spark a flurry of lawsuits that might resolve the legal conflict in their favor” (Lacey A1). Coupled with the policy that seemed to legalize racial profiling, this proposal kindled avid political discussion about how to best deal with the issue of illegal immigration in a border state.

The economy was another important issue in Arizona around the time of the shootings. Nationally, the economy was bleak and Arizona was not faring well. At the turn of the year, Arizona was “suffering a severe budget crisis, prompting even some lawmakers who have supported immigration restrictions in the past to question whether it is the right time for another divisive immigration bill” (Lacey A1). Furthermore, during the month of January, Arizona had a 9.6% unemployment rate (Bureau of Labor Statistic). This, combined with political turmoil, created an unstable climate where a lot of people felt frustrated with their current situation.

With the details of the event in mind, there are many reasons why President Obama saw the Tucson shootings as an appropriate time to address the nation. As discussed in the demands of presidential speechwriting, tragedies that draw national

attention demand a quick response. As the nation's eyes focused in on a small, political gathering in a state known for its volatile politics, the president and his public relations personnel had to decide on the appropriate action. A possible explanation for the decision to speak was the extensive coverage the media gave to the event. According to the Pew Research Center, 57% of news time during the period of January 10-16 dealt with the shootings, the third highest percent of coverage since they began collecting data in 2007. The incident's domination of the news cycle contributed to Obama's decision to speak in two possible ways. First, it would seem out of place if the president did not make a formal appearance during this time when so much of the news focused on the incident. And second, the amount of attention placed on the event offered a prime opportunity to get positive press coverage for the president. If the news media had not been so fixated on the shooting, the incentive for positive media coverage would not have been as strong.

Another possible factor that contributed to Obama's decision to speak is the events surrounding the shooting and the target of the shooting. As a member of the United States House of Representatives, Giffords serves in the government that Obama leads as the head of state. Unlike incidents where the lives of those who serve in the armed forces are lost, when national eulogies typically are not given (Campbell and Jamieson 77), Giffords represented the people who elected her and thus she had special status. Furthermore, the political context of Arizona offered a great chance to talk about

unity. Before the speech, Kornblut and Wilson noted that “with liberals and conservatives assuming their battle stations over whether gun laws and partisan rhetoric are to blame, the White House is undecided about the exact message the president will send” (A09). But despite the challenges, calling for national unity in the face of tragedy allows the president to rise above the daily grind of politics to reach out to the nation.

After the shootings, the issues of immigration and the economy in Arizona remained in the spotlight, though people began to examine them through a different lens. After the shootings, Dolnick, et al write that “given its locale and its demographic mix, the Eighth District long offered a stage for a combustible mix of issues that have torn apart other parts of the country. But the divisions seemed particularly searing here” (5). Writer David Usborne takes this commentary further. On the statements of people who visited the site of the shooting, Usborne writes “Everyone here on the corner of Swan and Pima seems eager to believe that to be the case, that the nasty politics of Ms. Giffords’ re-election campaign here last year and the incendiary rhetoric of commentators and some national leaders are somehow to be blamed for what happened” (Usborne 24). Whether or not the political frustration in Arizona continued after the speech, Obama’s address had a positive reception. Interviewing attendees after the address, Hennessy-Fiske, et al. reported that Obama “struck the right tone” (AA1). Thus, the question becomes how did President Obama’s speech reach out and console the audience.

Chapter 3: Analysis

When the University of Arizona president, Robert Shelton, announced that President Barack Obama had accepted his invitation to speak at the memorial service for the victims of the shooting on the university campus (Blue), Obama began to craft the message he wished to send to the American people and the Arizona community. So, four days after the event, President Obama took the stage to deliver what would be his most viewed national eulogy to date. While the alleged perpetrator was in custody, there were still issues for the audience: gun laws, extreme rhetoric, mental health policies, and other divisive political issues. As such, the speech Obama presented at the memorial service dealt not only with the consolation of grief, but also with the need for direction.

This study establishes how Obama's speech clearly follows the dramatic process in its organizational structure, guiding the grieving nation through the process of relieving guilt to restore order. Before delving into a systematic examination of the speech, it is necessary to explain the development of the presented analysis. Some may argue that a pentadic analysis could illuminate more clearly the motives behind Obama's speech and explain the means he employs to relieve guilt. However, by presenting the analysis in the following way, the author hopes to demonstrate how the first analysis of the dramatic process informs the assignment of the elements of the pentad.

To help clarify both the structure and content of the following arguments, Figure 1 summarizes the main conclusions drawn from the dramatic process analysis of "Together We Thrive: Tucson and Arizona." After an analysis of the dramatic process,

a pentadic analysis will be presented to highlight the unique elements that the speech contains and those results are summarized in Figure 2.

The Dramatistic Process in Obama's Address

Order

After the necessary expression of condolences, Obama begins his speech by characterizing Order and describing how the shooting is an act of Disorder. Obama develops his idea of the perfect democracy and perfect American in his characterization of Order. First, Obama establishes what he sees as the ideal expression of democracy through his description of “Congress on Your Corner” prior to the shooting. In his speech, he describes the event in the following paragraphs:

On Saturday morning, Gabby, her staff and many of her constituents gathered outside a supermarket to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and free speech. They were fulfilling a central tenet of the democracy envisioned by our founders—representatives of the people answering questions to their constituents, so as to carry their concerns back to our nation’s capital. Gabby called it “Congress on your Corner”—just an updated version of government of and by and for the people.

And that quintessentially American scene, that was the scene that was shattered by a gunman’s bullets. (pars. 4-5)

While the tragedy may have made it receive national attention, events such as “Congress on your Corner” exemplify how Obama sees democracy and government should work all the time. The references to traditional statements, “government of and by and for the people” and “democracy envision by our founders,” stress that Giffords and her constituents were acting in obedience to the Order of American democracy. Therefore,

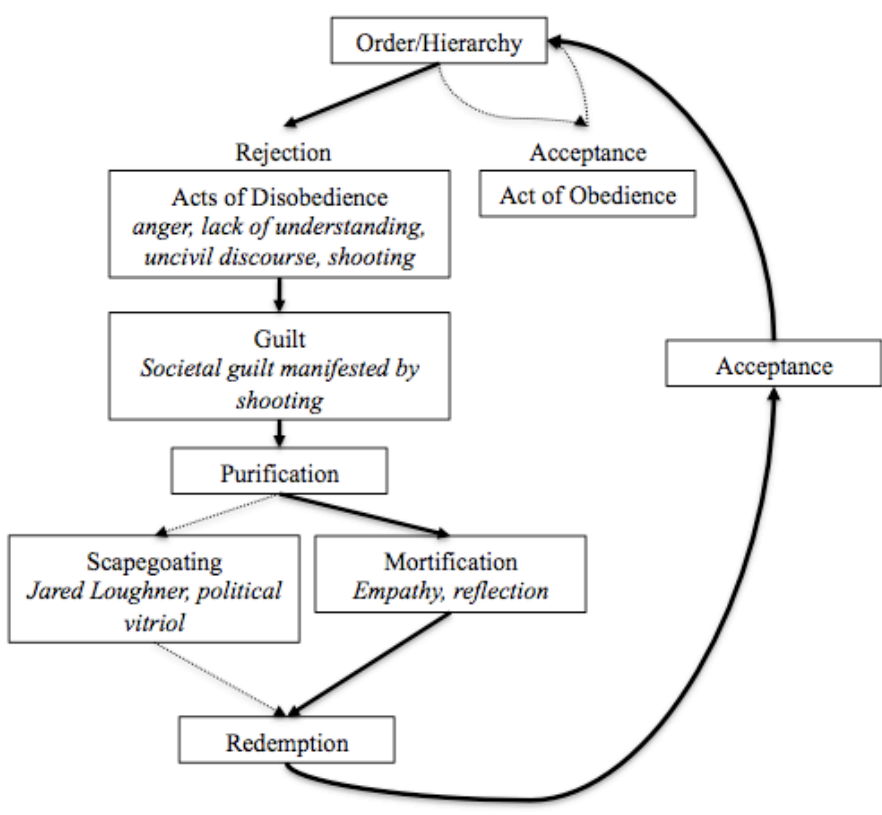


Figure 1. The Dramatistic Process and its Relation to President Obama’s “Together We Thrive”

This diagram shows the dramatistic process and President Obama’s conception of the societal guilt felt after the Tucson, Arizona shootings. The terms in normal font are the different steps of the dramatistic process as conceptualized by Kenneth Burke. The phrases in italicized font are the different elements as portrayed through Obama’s speech. The bolded arrows signify the path on which Obama chose to lead the audience. The dashed arrows represent the other choices available that Obama rejected in his construction.

participating in civil, organized political discussion, as those there to see Representative Giffords were, represents the ideal democratic act.

Second, Obama develops his ideal citizen through his lengthy description of the victims of the tragedy. President Obama's spends about one fifth of his speech characterizing the victims (pars. 6-14). The descriptions he presents of those who were there at the event focus only on positive attributes. This follows the general etiquette for a national eulogy (Campbell and Jamieson 80), demonstrates Obama's idea of Order, and serves as a guideline for how an ideal American should act.

The two salient characteristics of the victims in Obama's speech are their work ethic and self-sacrifice, which manifest through Obama's descriptions of their actions. To begin, the characteristic of the individual as hard working comes from a direct statement by Obama or examples of how the individual spent time. For instance, Obama takes a more explicit approach in the sections dedicated to Judge John Roll and Gabe Zimmerman. In the section on Judge John Roll's, Obama said: "Colleagues described him as the hardest working judge within the ninth circuit" (par. 7). And, when talking about Congresswoman Gifford's aide, he said, "Everything Gabe Zimmerman did, he did with passion" (par. 12). Both of these descriptions state that the two victims worked in a way that was purposeful and sought to achieve something.

In a more indirect way, Obama highlights how other victims spent their time in multiple ventures or giving back to their community. He describes Phyllis in the following way, "A gifted quilter, she'd often work under a favorite tree, or sometimes

she'd sew aprons with the logos of the Jets and the Giants ... to give out at the church where she volunteered" (par. 9). He also mentions how another man kept busy giving back to his community: "Dorwan spent his spare time fixing up the church" (par. 11). And the last person he describes was the 10-year-old girl, Christina Green: "Christina was an A student; she was a dancer; she was a gymnast; she was a swimmer" (par. 13). These statements characterize Phyllis, Dorwan, and Christina as busy, active citizens who are involved in their community. It is interesting to note that Obama gives a more explicit characterization of the victims as hard working when they were public servants, both Judge John Roll and Gabe Zimmerman were state employees. This serves to strengthen the connection between the ideal American and work for democracy.

In addition to hard working, Obama also characterizes the victims as self-sacrificing. The two individuals that Obama describes in this way are those who made heroic acts during the shooting. First, he states, "When gunfire rang out, George, a former Marine, instinctively tried to shield his wife. Both were shot. Dot passed away" (par. 8). Second, he tells the audience about Dorwan's actions during the shooting: His final act of selflessness was to dive on top of his wife, sacrificing his life for hers" (par. 11). Both of these cases demonstrate that these were individuals willing to lay down their lives for others in a time of need, a true act of American heroism. In a way, these two men serve as a model of behavior for all those in the audience and the nation.

In any case, expressing the full extent of someone's life is impossible when one must praise or memorialize given the time constraints of such a public address; therefore,

Obama had to pick the characteristics that he felt deserved the most attention. If we look at these two primary characterizations as indicative of what Obama views as worthy of praise, then we can draw the conclusion that these characteristics are what Obama views as acts of acceptance of the hierarchy. In other words, Obama saw the powerful agents who think of others, work hard, and participate in democracy as evidence of the Order of American democracy. The time he dedicated to the development of this concept serves the dual purpose of memorializing the lives lost and setting up his argument for the next steps in the dramatistic process.

Recognition of Guilt

After memorializing the victims and setting up his idea of Order, Obama recognizes the guilt that this tragedy has caused the nation by characterizing the shooting as an act of disobedience that disrupted society. What made the Tucson shootings more profound than other tragic events was the its unique circumstances. Because it happened at a political function, the shooting threatened democracy. Hugh Duncan argues how an act of disobedience by an individual can threaten a larger body when he writes, “so long as a group is significant to us, disobedience threatens the group” (Duncan, *Symbols* 135). To argue this point, he gives the example of a child who disobeys his parents where the child “is made to feel that he threatens the existence of the family” (Duncan, *Symbols* 136). Therefore, when examining how Obama recognizes the shooting as an act of disobedience that threatens society, we can see how Loughner represents the child and democracy the parent. As such, his actions served to threaten the stability of democracy.

Since Obama characterizes the shooting as an act of disobedience, there must be a corresponding recognition of guilt. Obama uses the following phrases to describe how the event caused a disruption in the normal working order and produced guilt: “Nothing I can say that will fill the sudden hole torn in your hearts” (par. 2), “That was a quintessentially American scene that was shattered by a gunman’s bullets” (par. 5), “Our hearts are broken by their sudden passing” (par. 15), and “You ran through the chaos to minister to your boss” (par. 19). The terms “torn,” “broken,” “shattered,” and “chaos” elicit images of a loss of control and signify that there must be a corresponding sense of guilt. Democracy rests on the foundation that people can solve differences of opinion through civil discourse without resorting to violence. Therefore, the shooting represented a rejection of the normal working order of democracy, since it was a violent and terrorizing breach of the social order.

However, the speech takes on a different tone than one might expect based on the impetus for the memorial event. While Loughner’s actions clearly were the reason for Obama’s address, it was not the primary focus. After establishing his sense of Order and recognizing the tragedy, Obama argues that the group should not simply deal with the implications from the individual transgression of the shooting. He instead calls for the audience to feel guilt for the larger political context and society’s many acts of disobedience. This conclusion becomes clearer through Obama’s argument about how society should place blame and relieve guilt.

Alleviation of Guilt

Placing blame represents an essential step in the process of restoring Order. In the case of the Tucson shootings, President Obama faced the difficult task of not only offering condolences, but also providing a path for redemption. His construction of the situation would set forth his argument about who or what the audience should blame. Brummett properly describes the power of the rhetor in illuminating guilt and the corresponding role of the rhetorical critic when he writes "the detection and analysis of guilt which is hidden within the human psyche is a task for trained psychoanalysts. Rhetorical critics should be more concerned with guilt that becomes a public property by being talked about. . . . The speaker *makes* guilt an issue" ("Burkean" 257). Obama *had* to argue for either mortification or scapegoating as a means of relieving guilt.

When leading the nation through this difficult time, Obama argues for mortification over scapegoating. Before discussing why mortification manifests as an appropriate response in this situation, it is first important to recognize the options for a scapegoat in this case. Referring back to the case of the "Zebra" murders in the article by Barry Brummett and the writings of Kenneth Burke, a scapegoat must be powerful and anecdotal in order to relieve society of guilt (Brummett, "Symbolic Form"). When describing how humans relieve guilt, Burke writes that the dramatic process "proclaims a principle of *absolute* 'guilt,' matched by a principle that is designed for the corresponding absolute cancellation of such guilt. And this cancellation is contrived by *victimage*, by the choice of a sacrificial offering that is correspondingly absolute in the

perfection of its fitness” (*Permanence and Change* 284). In other words, the choice of a scapegoat must properly match the severity of the guilt.

In the case of the Tucson shootings, Obama hints at two possible scapegoats for the acts of disobedience: the physical shooter, Jared L. Loughner, and the political climate that caused Loughner to act. However, Obama clearly dismisses both of these possible scapegoats as options in his speech. In paragraphs 22 and 23, quoted below, Obama identifies the issues that are present within politics but then dismisses them as distractions to the true source of redemption. He also goes on to state, “Let us remember that it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy” (par. 36).

For the second possible option of blaming the shooter, Obama paints Loughner as a weak character. He states, “We are grateful to the men who tackled the gunman as he stopped to reload... We are grateful for petite Patricia Maisch, who wrested away the killer’s ammunition” (par. 20). This description of the shooting demonstrates how other people overcame him and a “petite” woman could take something away from him. In this way, Obama characterizes Loughner as feeble, one who could not serve as an effective scapegoat for society. In short, Obama clearly argues that the two most likely scapegoats in this situation are not fit enough to relieve society of guilt.

Since he dismissed scapegoating as an option, Obama chose mortification as the way to purify society of the guilt. Of course, Obama had to have known that this would be no small task. As will one will see in the following discussion, Obama constantly admits that the natural tendency in tragic situations is to blame others. But, Obama still

chose to argue that mortification was the proper and most promising way for society to achieve redemption. Shifting from the past to the present and future, the following paragraphs represent the key transition point in Obama's speech that highlight Obama's recognition of human nature and his alternative solution:

Already we've seen a national conversation commence, not only about the motivations behind these killing but about everything from the merits of gun safety laws to the adequacy of our mental health systems. Much of this process, of debating what might be done to prevent such tragedies in the future, is an essential ingredient in our exercise of self-government.

But at a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized – at a time when we are far too eager to lay blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who think differently than we do – it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we are talking with each other in a way that heals, not a way that wounds. (pars. 22-23)

The first paragraph comments on the nature of the current discussion about the cause of the shooting but then he urges people not to speculate about the various reasons behind the act. Instead of continuing to blame gun laws or mental health issues, Obama identifies the discord within the larger context of democracy and calls people to stop for a moment and think. He first mentions that “at a time when we are far too eager to lay blame” (par. 23) and then shifts to “it's important for us to pause for a moment” (par. 23). These phrases indicate the point at which Obama establishes that he does not want the audience to continue along the path their instincts are leading them but to make instead a conscious effort to do something different, namely empathize and reflect.

In order to set up his argument for mortification, Obama clearly identifies what is the “normal” reaction in situations such as the shootings in the sections quoted above

when he states: “It is part of our nature to demand explanations...” (par. 22), “At a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame...” (par. 23), and “It’s important for us to pause for a moment...” (par. 23). These excerpts imply Obama’s assumption that people tend to place blame on others in times of tragedy. The fact that the police had Loughner in custody, the justice department had charged him with crimes, and the media had extensively covered the shooting, further supports this assumption that blaming others is the natural response. But, as argued above, Obama dismissed Loughner as a scapegoat, Obama did not argue that the audience should blame him for the tragedy. In short, because Loughner was not powerful enough to assume the blame, Obama had to direct the audience elsewhere otherwise society would not have been able to relieve itself of the guilt and return to Order.

After Obama told the audience that scapegoating or blaming another is not the way to achieve redemption in this situation, he offers a means of proper mortification that is “perfect in its fitness.” Here, it is important to remember that mortification, just like scapegoating, can take many forms. Carter argued that the proper path for mortification was to use less energy (Brummett, “Burkean” 257). In other words, curb the desires of consumption. In the case of the Tucson shootings, Obama argues that the proper form of mortification is to empathize with others and reflect.

This decision to argue for a change of action shifts the means of purification from scapegoating to mortification. Brummett writes that “restraint and its variants also suggest mortification, for they mean punishing oneself” (“Burkean” 258). The statements

listed in paragraphs 22 and 23 show how Obama calls for people not to react instinctually but instead “punish” themselves. Obama characterizes this punishment as refraining from assigning blame and not looking to others to carry the burden of societal guilt. The word “pause” in paragraph 23 supports this conclusion because it implies a restraint indicative of mortification.

After the disclosure of what appetites he wishes the audience to curb, Obama begins to develop his conception of what the processes of mortification in order to achieve redemption should involve. In the same paragraph where he shifts attention away from Loughner as a possible scapegoat, Obama begins to foreshadow his idea of mortification, stating, “We should be willing to challenge old assumptions in order to lessen the prospects of such violence in the future” (par. 25). In order to “challenge old assumptions,” Obama argues that the audience must use empathy and reflection. With this call, Obama is essentially asking the audience to not blame others but to empathize with them:

Rather than pointing fingers, let’s use this occasion to expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy, and remind ourselves of all the ways our hopes and dreams are bound together (par. 26)

Again, this is a statement asking the audience to stop blaming others, “rather than pointing fingers,” and takes this opportunity to do something different, namely empathize and treat each other better.

To an audience that is already hurting through their shared grief of a horrific event, the call to empathize and reflect may seem to be an additional burden. In fact,

asking an individual who may have just lost someone or who is suffering because of another person's actions to further hurt themselves could have appeared callous.

However, Obama draws a parallel case between the Tucson shootings and losing a loved one to make the call for mortification seem more reasonable and familiar. He states that when we lose a loved one:

We reflect on the past. Did we spend enough time with an aging parent, we wonder. Did we express our gratitude for all the sacrifices they made for us? Did we tell a spouse just how desperately we loved them, not just once in a while but every single day? (par. 27)

These questions put Obama's call for mortification into perspective as well as put forth the idea that the victims were part of the American family. At the same time, he shifts the attention away from the actions of others onto individual choices each audience member can make. The questions Obama poses begin the process of reflection and show that the steps he is asking the audience to take are familiar and not new to the human experience of grief.

Listing the victims individually at the beginning of his speech in order to unite the surviving American citizens around the event, Obama places the victims within the larger context of the American experience by using their legacies at two strategic points. At the beginning of his speech, Obama states, "They too represented what is best in America" (par. 5). The descriptors of the individuals cause them to become symbols of something larger than they were in addition to being familiar. They are no longer individuals, but physical embodiments of the ideal American family member.

Obama returns to the family theme when he asks the audience to think that they should feel as though they had known the victims personally. He states, “For those who were harmed, those who were killed—they were part of our family, an American family 300 million strong. We may not know them personally, but surely we see ourselves in them” (par. 32). By describing the victims as part of the American family, Obama hopes the audience would become more invested in the actions he proposes to ensure that such an event would not happen again. Placing the victims within the family of the audience firmly establishes why Obama believes that the audience can mortify in order to set up his next argument for purification.

As such, Obama intimately links empathy and reflection in the process of restoring Order. In this case, both aspects are needed. Empathy can only take us so far in the process of relieving guilt because if we stopped at empathy, then we would remain in a constant state of pain and no change in action would result. Once we have felt another person’s pain, we must move forward and Obama offers reflection as the solution. In a way, Obama sees empathy as what helps us improve reflection.

Guided Reflection

While Obama offers empathy as the way to properly mortify, reflection provides the means for redemption through the purification of guilt. Once the audience understands what each person is going through empathetically, they can then move forward by reflecting on how to make the world better. As evidence of this, Obama states:

We recognize our own mortality, and we are reminded that in the fleeting time we have on this Earth, what matters is not wealth, or status, or power, or fame –but rather, how well we have loved—and what small part we have played in making the lives of other people better.

And that process—that process of reflection, of making sure we align our values with our actions – that, I believe, is what a tragedy like this requires. (pars. 30 and 31)

Therefore, after empathy, reflection offers the audience the chance to reevaluate their lives in light of the tragedy and move forward. It allows those present to become more aware of their actions as well as the feelings of others.

Yet, Obama did not ask the audience to reflect and move in any particular direction they saw fit. Instead, he guides the audience towards his conception of a perfect union without the negative components of the old Order. This allows the audience to view their actions in terms of the tragedy and as a way to deal with their grief. Obama describes what he wants the audience to work towards in the following section:

If this tragedy prompts reflection and debate, as it should, let's make sure it's worthy of those we have lost. Let's make sure it's not on the usual plane of politics and point scoring and pettiness that drifts away with the next news cycle...

Only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to our challenges as a nation, in a way to make them proud. (par. 35-6)

These passages highlight how Obama sees reflecting on how to improve America in order to honor the victims of the tragedy. Obama argues that empathy for others can inform our reflection on how to be more civil.

It is important at this junction to return to the question posed in the preceding section. How Obama chose to guide the audience shows that he sees the audience as not

dealing with the guilt from the shooting, but from the surrounding political culture. The shooting was simply the impetus on which the current discussion is based. While he did not place the blame on the political climate, Obama obviously sees it as something that needs to be fixed. Essentially, Obama chooses to fix the anger and frustration the audience felt instead of continuing to place blame.

A Powerful Citizenry

Throughout this process, Obama develops an argument that the audience is powerful enough to relieve guilt in this manner. Since he clearly argues that those listening need to take an active role, Obama takes pains to convince the citizens that they can meet the goals he sets forth. We have already seen how Obama painted Loughner as a weak character in the drama and how the actions of those who saved others' lives during the shooting demonstrate the power of self-sacrifice, but there are three key moments in which Obama gives everyone dominance within the context of the shooting.

The first instance comes just after he finishes with the descriptions of the victims, before he describes the process of mortification and reflection. Referring to those who helped save others' lives, Obama states:

These men and women remind us that heroism is found not only on the fields of battle. They remind us that heroism does not require special training or physical strength. Heroism is here, in the hearts of so many of our fellow citizens, all around us, just waiting to be summoned. (par. 21)

This statement makes everyone present a "hero-in-waiting" with all the capabilities to act just as those who performed bravely at the scene of the shooting.

The next instance is indicative of a powerful conception of the audience and comes in two consecutive paragraphs, right before Obama describes his ideal Order. Speaking about how citizens can create a more civil discourse through reflection, Obama states, “I know that how we treat one another, that’s entirely up to us” (par. 38) and “The forces that divide us are not as strong as those that unite us” (par. 39). The phrases “strong,” “entirely up to us,” and “heroism is here” indicate the power that Obama places in the hands of the citizens to proceed through the process of mortification. Without the ability to do anything, the audience would be left with the societal guilt. But the heroism and strength of the American people that Obama describes shows how they can restore Order.

And finally, the story of Congresswoman Giffords serves as the ultimate metaphor for survival, perseverance, and strength. As the target, victim, and survivor of the tragedy, Giffords plays a key role in convincing the audience that empathy, reflection, and perseverance are key steps in making their world a better place. Obama describes Giffords in the following passages:

In Gabby, we see a reflection of our public-spiritedness; that desire to participate in that sometimes frustrating, sometimes contentious, but always necessary and never-ending process to form a more perfect union (par. 33)

We should be civil because we want to live up to the example of public servants like John Roll and Gabby Giffords, who knew... that we can question each other’s ideas without questioning each other’s love of country and that our task, working together, is to constantly widen the circle of our concern (par. 37)

In essence, if Giffords can pull through, certainly those in the audience can as well.

Furthermore, as a member of the democratic government, Giffords' strength shows that democracy can endure despite overwhelming odds.

The Restored Order

After establishing what he saw as the appropriate response for the audience to take, Obama then concludes his speech by defining his idea of a perfected Order. In contrast to his articulation of the previous parts of the dramatic process, Obama does not clearly establish what the new Order should look like. Also, he hints at what perfection looks entails when he outlines the goals for reflection as described in the previous section but never frames it in a way that would indicate complete release of guilt. However, Obama does describe a vision of an improved America through the eyes of one of the victims of the tragedy. To do this, he uses Christina Green, the 10-year old girl, as the standard bearer. He begins by describing how she saw the world: "She saw all this through the eyes of a child, undimmed by the cynicism or vitriol that we adults all too often take for granted" (par. 41). In other words, she possessed an untainted view of the world. In a way, Christina was the true victim of the tragedy since she never had the chance to stop caring about those around her. This places Christina as the calm among the chaos and allows Obama to transition to his final calls to action:

I want to live up to her expectations. I want our democracy to be as good as Christina imagined it. I want America to be as good as she imagined it. All of us—we should do everything we can to make sure this country lives up to our children's expectations. (par. 42)

Obama also stresses Christina's special birthday: "Christina was given to us on September 11th, 2001, one of 50 babies born that day to be pictured in a book called 'Faces of Hope'" (par. 43). This statement emphasizes the fact that Christina's life began and ended with tragedy yet she was still able to have a positive outlook on the world around her and Obama sees her life as a model for the grieving nation. Viewing the preceding excerpts together, Obama carefully characterizes Christina as an innocent with the spirit of democracy. All of these careful descriptions contribute to Obama's final, declarative statement for what he wants the audience to do after hearing his speech. He states, "We commit ourselves as Americans to forging a country that is forever worthy of her gentle, happy spirit" (par. 44). One can see how the descriptions that Obama provides do not offer a straightforward answer to the perfect Order that Obama suggests we work towards. Instead, he offers the audience the chance to imagine their own idea of what an innocent child's democracy should look like and work towards it.

The preceding pages illustrate how President Obama sought to relieve guilt by mortifying and reflecting. The following section offers a pentadic analysis to help discover the outlook that President Obama possessed when he wrote this speech and to help provide further implications.

Pentadic Analysis of President Obama's Address

Burke clearly saw the pentad and the dramatic process as complimentary. While he is referring to the concept of scapegoating as a means of relieving guilt, the following passage is worth quoting at length here:

Next, since the idea of an *agent* is implicitly in the idea of an *act*, we can say that in the idea of *redemption* there is implicit the idea of a personal *redeemer*. Or, if you think of redemption as a condition or situation (a ‘scene’), then you may extract the same implication by thinking of a redeemer as an instrument, or agency, for bringing about the condition. And this step, you will note, automatically includes the idea of a substitution: the possibility that one character may be redeemed through the act or agency of another. (Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion* 176).

From this quote, it appears that the main distinction between choosing to scapegoat or mortify comes from how one places the agency and agent in the construction of reality. This is arguably the key intervention point for a rhetor in times of crisis or when an entity violates Order. The choice in any redemptive process rests at the point of victimage. We *must* relieve guilt and we *must* return to hierarchy but it is our choice how to do so. Here exists the need for rhetoric since a rhetor can choose to argue for mortification or for scapegoating when constructing his/her conception of the situation.

The Elements of the Pentad in “Together We Thrive”

The following pentad reflects Obama’s construction of the situation surrounding the Tucson shootings as he describes them in his speech:

Agent: United States Citizens

Scene: Political vitriol, chaos, shooting

Act: Acts of disobedience, shooting, political vitriol, uncivil discourse

Agency: Mortification, empathy and reflection

Purpose: Redemption, purification, and return to Order

These elements follow directly from the dramatistic process described in the previous section and this section will further establish their relationship. As Obama deals with the grief the community feels, he clearly illuminates the path and purpose for all those

present. A justification for each assignment will be provided but Figure 2 represents a summary of the conclusions to aid in clarity.

There are two elements that are not identified as a step in the dramatistic process: agent and scene. Based on what Obama identifies as the act, the agents in this case are clearly the American people. Obama's focus on what the members of the audience can do indicates that they are the actors in the drama that resulted from the shooting. All future actions that Obama mentions are stated as actions that the collective "we" will do. For example, he uses phrases such as "That we cannot do" (par. 25), "we reflect" (par. 27), "let's make sure" (par. 35), and "we should do everything we can" (par. 42). While this is by no means an extensive list of the times Obama clearly indicates that the audience and United States citizens are the ones meant to act, it shows how the verbs used are ones of personal, collective action. There is no mention of what a particular subset of people can do; only what everyone can do.

As the other element that is outside of the dramatistic process, the scene signifies the place where the whole process takes place. In this particular case, the scene is the most nebulous element of the pentad because Obama carefully avoids focusing on concrete descriptors of the scene. Because there are numerous agents and the purpose of the speech is so lofty, the scene has to expand to incorporate all of it. If we return to *The Grammar of Motives*, Burke writes that the scene is "a name for *any* situation in which acts or agents are placed" (xvi, emphasis in original). While the shooting sparked the need for the speech and is the *reason* Obama is giving the speech, it is not the scene in

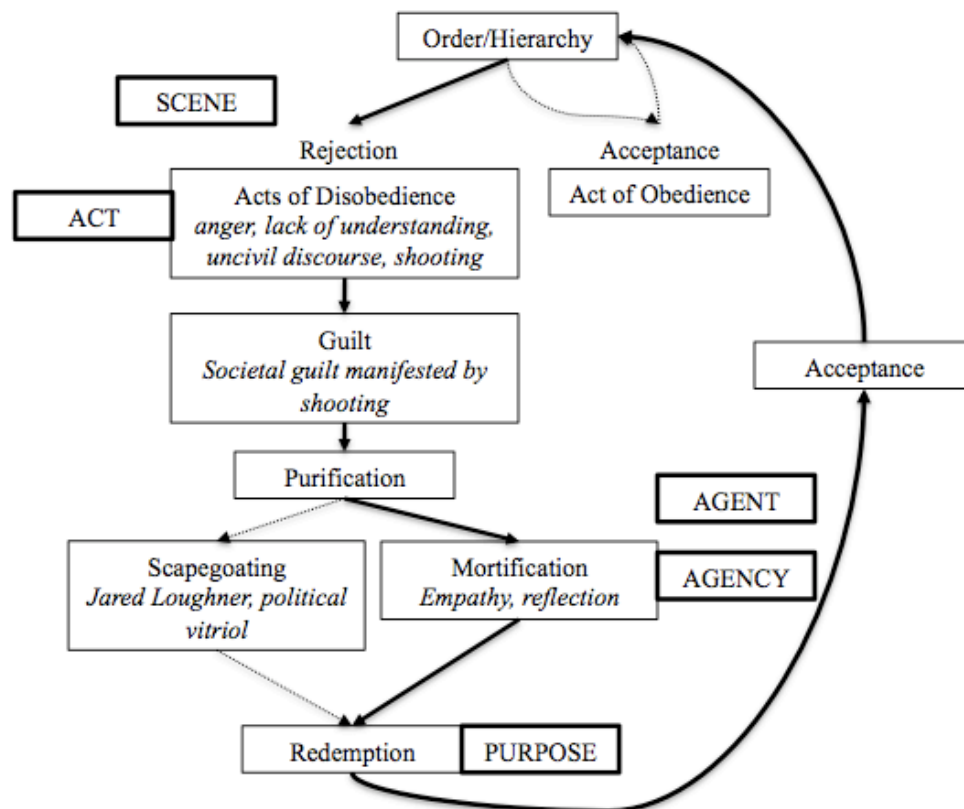


Figure 2. The Dramatistic Process and the Corresponding Pentadic Elements as Conceptualized in President Obama's Address

This diagram displays the pentadic elements and their corresponding steps in the dramatistic process. The bolded boxes represent the corresponding pentadic element for that particular step in the dramatistic process. Two elements are not represented within the dramatistic process. The agents are the American citizens in this case and they are the ones going *through* the process and therefore have no corresponding step in the cycle. The scene is the larger American society that is comprised of the political discord as well as the hope of the American Dream.

which the agents are performing the act. Instead, the acts of disorder take place within the context of the political angst that surrounded and encompassed the shooting. One can see this conclusion clearly in the following excerpts: “At a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized...” (par. 23), “Scripture tells us that there is evil in the world...” (par. 24), and “Only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation...” (par. 36). This broad construct of the scene fits within the general components of the national eulogy. Campbell and Jamieson note that one of the common characteristics of national eulogies is that presidents typically place the event within “a larger, ongoing national perspective” (80). Therefore, the focus, as it is in “Together We Thrive,” is on how the problems extend beyond the shooting to other areas of the audience’s lives.

Next, the act manifests in Obama’s speech as the acts of disobedience that culminate in the shooting. Obama assigns the element of agency as victimage through mortification. As argued above, it is clear that Obama sees the appropriate response to the situation as the alleviation of societal guilt felt after the shooting through communal mortification involving empathy and reflection. This assignment is clearly indicated by the extensive description of what Obama sees as the necessary steps that the audience must take. To signify the agency that he is constructing, Obama poses a set of questions. He states, “It raises a question of what, beyond prayers and expressions of concern, is required of us going forward. How can we honor the fallen? How can we be true to their

memory” (par 21). The next section of his speech is spent establishing the appropriate agency to respond to the act of the shooting and acts of political discord.

Finally, the purpose of the act for the agents is to achieve redemption and return to Order. While a rhetorical critic can often times not assign a purpose to a particular orator, the nature of the context and the clear indication of direction within the speech allows for this pentadic element to be assigned. The description of the restored order, as well as the means Obama sets forth for achieving it, support the conclusion that this is the purpose. It also helps to explain why the agents are the American people. The nature of the event called for healing and restoration and the agents could not be President Obama as the rhetor or Jared Loughner as the shooter.

The Agent-Agency Ratio

Based on the pentadic analysis of the speech, Obama stresses the elements of agent and agency. While all are present in the speech, these two elements not only are given the most attention but are also the more clearly defined elements. First, Obama constructs a powerful agent. Beyond the description of the empowered citizenry provided in the previous section, Obama uses the words “we” 63 times, “us” 24 times, and “our” 30 times. The only times when the noun of the sentence is not the collective is when Obama describes the victims or offers his own opinion. Secondly, Obama spends a significant amount of time developing how he wants the audience to go through the process of victimage in order to relieve guilt. As shown above, Obama clearly states that

he does not want people to scapegoat another entity but to take individual actions to return to Order.

The fact that Obama downplays the scene further supports the agent-agency ratio. Obama only briefly acknowledges the context in Arizona and the nation surrounding the shootings. If Obama had focused on the scene, then it would place the audience members as victims of circumstance, limiting their ability to move beyond the situation. Instead, Obama constructs powerful agents who can modify the scene. For example, Obama states “It’s important for us... to make sure that we’re talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds” (par. 23). Later on, he continues this construction with the statement: “We may not be able to stop all the evil in the world, but I know that how we treat one another, that’s entirely up to us” (par. 38). If the act of victimage takes place in extreme political discord and the idealized Order is to have more civility, then scene must be subservient to agent. The “Congress on your Corner” description that Obama provides as quoted in the previous section described the perfect scene, but other “things” present within it threaten the civil discourse and constantly disturb and override the scene. Obama consistently refers to the scene in the passive voice; the scene is always acted upon. For example, when Obama describes the shooting he states, “That was a quintessentially American scene that was shattered by a gunman’s bullets” (par. 5). Obama also paints the scene as weak and calls upon the agents to modify the scene.

Furthermore, Obama chose not to scapegoat the vitriol that surrounded the shooting and encompassed the American political landscape. While scapegoats are what

we blame in order to relieve ourselves of guilt, they are also powerful. Obama denied the scene any power by not only developing strong citizens but denying the scene the role of the scapegoat. Therefore, powerful agents act within a weak scene.

Summary

From the preceding analysis, the author has established how President Obama's address after the Tucson, Arizona shooting leads the nation through the process of relieving guilt through mortification. In addition, a pentadic analysis was undertaken using the foundational discoveries from the analysis of the dramatic process to highlight how Obama creates a powerful agent with the means to control the scene. The following chapter will highlight the implications for political and rhetorical studies about President Obama.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Discussion

The dramatisitic analysis involving both the guilt-purification-redemption cycle and the pentad is a unique combination that allows for a more thorough understanding of why Obama's "Together We Thrive" speech served the purpose of offering the audience a way to relieve the guilt caused by the shooting and achieve redemption. As such, there are several implications that the findings have for rhetorical and presidential studies, namely why mortification was used instead of scapegoating, how the pentad and dramatisitic process work together, and the rhetorical and political impact of the study.

Why Mortification Instead of Scapegoating

The fact that he addresses the guilt caused by the shooting is not surprising. Brummett provides two contexts in which public leaders use rhetoric to help society deal with guilt: "1) when pressing problems threaten the national well-being and raise the possibility that guilty action have caused those woes, and 2) when the national social order is under examination" ("Burkean" 257). The circumstance of the shooting meets both of these requirements. But, it is mortification as a means of relieving guilt that is unique to this particular context. As evidenced by the work of Robert Ivie and Barry Brummet, scapegoating tends to be the more common choice for relieving societal guilt. However, there are several factors inherent in the context and construction of the speech that made Obama's call for mortification appropriate.

One reason why mortification was suitable in this case was because empathy performs as the agency for achieving redemption; it functions as a tool. The Arizona

memorial speech contrasts with George W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's rhetorical usage of empathy. Bush did not express enough empathy, Clinton too much. However, Obama expresses empathy but goes beyond to argue that people should use it to better themselves and the nation. In other words, not only is he using empathy to express concern for the citizenry, Obama makes empathy a skill to use in the pursuit of democracy. Obama's construction of agency as mortification further supports that he saw the feeling of another's pain not as an emotion that he needed to express but as the means to redeem the union.

In addition, most of Kathryn Olson's conditions for Al Gore's successful call for mortification in *An Inconvenient Truth* are met by Obama's character and the context of the speech. First, Obama's call for empathy remains consistent with his previous discourse. In "The Political Utility of Empathy in Presidential Leadership," Shogan writes how Obama is the first president to go beyond simply expressing empathy to explicitly stating it is a requirement for a functioning democracy (860). Therefore, Obama's message that mortification through empathy was the correct way to alleviate guilt did not come across as insincere or surprising. Instead, Obama's insistence on empathy appeared as a continuation of his earlier arguments.

Second, Obama made mortification through empathy familiar by drawing the parallel case between losing a loved one and what he expected out of the audience after the shooting. As such, what he asked the audience to do was manageable and relevant to

the situation. And, this familiarity shows the audience that what Obama asked of them was not extreme or unattainable.

Third, just as Gore called for individual action in *An Inconvenient Truth* (Olson 100), Obama asks for personal contributions while at the same time empowering the audience to change the world around them. He demonstrates how their actions of empathy and reflection can help create a world that would make Christina Green proud. All of this contributes to Obama's speech meeting Olson's fourth characteristic of Gore's success. He inspired the audience to be motivated from within to mortify. Obama sought to make the audience believe they had the power to alleviate guilt and make the world a better place if they followed his prescribed plan. Obama also gave the audience control over the scene, which he described as chaotic and full of acts of disorder. Therefore, the audience had the authority to transcend what gave rise to the acts of disobedience and was motivated to make changes in order to work towards the goal of a more perfect union.

As such, the circumstances of the shooting presented an opportunity to urge the nation to mortify. As stated before, Obama could have chosen to scapegoat and it certainly would not have been difficult to place the blame on another. However, the two possible scapegoats, Loughner and the political climate, which Obama dismisses in his speech, may not have been appropriate responses. As one of the possible scapegoat in this situation, Jared L. Loughner could not represent all of the guilt felt by the Arizonan and American communities because he was not powerful enough. As noted above, in order to

effectively relieve guilt, the scapegoat must be “fit” enough to match the transgression. Beyond Obama’s characterization of Loughner as imperfect and unfit, the media’s coverage of Loughner portrayed him as a weak individual. The media showed Loughner as mentally unstable and a premeditated murderer. His classmates were quoted as saying he often made random comments in class and would demonstrate erratic behavior (“Rampage” 6). The *New York Times* reported that the FBI had discovered Loughner researched famous assassins days before he carried out his attack. In short, there were severe concerns over the mental state of Loughner that made him appear out of control. The development of Loughner’s character both in the media and in the speech, suggests that Loughner would not have been able to fulfill the role of scapegoat.

The political climate as a second possible scapegoat also fails. Just as John Anderson scapegoated the two-party system for the societal guilt that came from not being able to work for a common interest (Brummett, “Burkean”), blaming the political climate fails to produce a worthy scapegoat. While “vitriol” and “hateful rhetoric” are extreme forms of disagreement, they are ultimately byproducts of what makes democracies work. Disagreements, even passionate ones, cannot be removed from the system without hurting the integrity of the democratic discussion that produced it in the first place.

Furthermore, scapegoating the political climate would have incriminated the audience and President Obama. Since they were members of the community that produced the discourse, Obama would have implicated the people who are suffering from

the tragedy if he had used this scapegoating method. In addition, if Obama were to make the political climate a scapegoat, he would implicate himself because he is part of the system that deals with the issues that had caused political disagreement. If Obama had scapegoated the two parties for failing to live up to democratic standards, it would have further complicated the situation because elected officials would then have been complicit in the murder of innocent civilians.

In summary, while the available scapegoats may not have been able to relieve society of the guilt of the shootings, the right conditions were present for Obama to be able to call for mortification. All of this contributes to the idea that Obama had the opportunity to choose the path for purification and he selected mortification instead of scapegoating.

Significance of Using the Pentad

The fact that Obama's speech so clearly follows an organizational structure that mimics the dramatic process using mortification is a unique addition to the study of national eulogies. There are two main reasons why Obama was able to construct his speech this way. First, an identifiable person was responsible for the shooting. One could argue that the schools Loughner attended could have done more to help him or that gun and mental health laws needed to be stronger. But ultimately, Loughner represented the immediate cause of the event. Second, there was no continuing threat to the nation after the shooting. Unlike the attacks on September 11th, where the threat of terrorism from uncontrollable entities remained long after the act, the man who carried out the shootings

acted alone and was in custody at the time of the speech. The alleged perpetrator of the event was no longer part of the scene that the audience occupied. These conditions allowed Obama to focus on a more idealized future instead of having to focus on a more concrete solution to stop the cause of the event.

Furthermore, with the foundational knowledge from the discussion of the dramatistic process in the speech, the elements of the pentad flow naturally from the cycle. This is important for a pentadic analysis. As Burke wrote, “what we want is *not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise*” (*Grammar of Motives* xviii). The dramatistic process in this case helped to eliminate unnecessary ambiguities and allowed for a more conclusive determination of the motives. For instance, by analyzing the guilt-purification-redemption cycle within the speech, Obama’s construction of disobedience as act(s) extending beyond the shooting to larger political issues became clearer when one might have originally expected it (the act) to simply be the shooting. This conclusion indicates that both methods of analysis can offer insight into each other that helps the critic better understand the implications of the words.

The pentadic analysis also offers insight into a philosophical position that Obama espouses. While the purpose of this study is not to make larger assumptions about Obama’s decision-making process or approach to life, it is worth noting the significance of the results of the assignment of the elements. With the agent-agency ratio in mind, we can draw conclusions about the motives behind Obama’s speech. Since agent is stressed,

Burke would argue that Obama stresses the philosophic school of idealism. Burke writes that “idealistic philosophies think in terms of the ‘ego,’ the ‘self,’ the ‘super ego,’ ‘consciousness,’ ‘will,’ the ‘generalized I,’ the ‘subjective,’ ‘mind,’ ‘spirit,’ the ‘oversoul,’ and any such ‘super-persons’ as church, race, nation, etc.” (*Grammar of Motives* 171). By stressing agency, Obama also portrays a pragmatic school of thought, one where how actions are done and the means used are the primary foci.

Combining the two philosophies into an idealistic and pragmatic combination, we can see how this speech is further evidence of Obama’s larger philosophical approach as portrayed through his rhetoric. In his work on Obama’s political philosophy, Schultz describes how Obama displays a pragmatic approach to democracy that is “an experimental, open community of inquiry that through participation mobilizes our collective intelligence and problem-solving abilities” (169). The focus on reflection, empathy, and a powerful agent within the “Together We Thrive” speech continues this line of thought, where the ability to feel another’s pain improves the nation’s ability to address the issues of the day.

Significance for Rhetorical and Presidential Studies

What this study shows is that presidents have more options in how they construct their eulogies than was originally indicated by the works of Campbell and Jamieson and Kunkel and Dennis. Instead of a set of general components commonly found in eulogies, the organization of “Together We Thrive” offers a structure for the construction of a national eulogy when the proper conditions arise. When a controllable and easily

identifiable culprit of the tragedy exists, arguing for civility through some process of mortification, whether through empathy or another means, may be an appropriate response.

However, mortification may not always seem appropriate and presidents should take into consideration the nature of the tragedy when making the decision between scapegoating and mortification. For example, it would have been difficult for George W. Bush to argue that the nation should not seek to blame others after the attacks on September 11th. If the threat of another attack was still prominent, the enemy so elusive, and the tragedy so horrific, mortification may have seemed inappropriate.

It also shows that national eulogies can still argue for changes in action even though they are not supposed to be political. Olson poses the following question after her analysis of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*: "How can mortification that involves ongoing effort and self-discipline be made more attractive than apathy or self-interest..." (107)? A possible answer to this question may exist in the Tucson memorial speech. Empathy and reflection offer hope for a better future, a future where tragedies like the one at "Congress on Your Corner" do not happen. If framed and presented in the right way, mortification can appeal over apathy and self-interest, as this author believes it did in this speech, and can motivate the audience to change how they act and what they believe.

While Olson primarily deals with mortification as a means to deal with social issues, Obama's speech is not about advocacy, but about grief and guilt. This shows that

the self-discipline and personal responsibility that the process of mortification requires can transcend the traditional places we usually see mortification manifest. Olson states, “there is a great need for more research on mortification as an argument strategy. In particular, we need to identify and analyze successful instances of mortification used in social advocacy, not just in image restoration or apologia” (107). This study adds to our understanding of mortification in other genres.

The presence of mortification in a national eulogy has several implications for civil society. At a time when the nation is grieving and seeking to return to a sense of normalcy, the suggestion that the audience should work to treat each other better and not seek retribution implies a more congenial construction of the American public. By relating the deaths from the tragedy to the death of a family member, there is unique understanding that no matter the nature of the deaths, all instances where we lose a personal or American family member, the same chance for reflection and improvement exists. In other words, a focus on the past actions of others is not constructive and benefits no one, while seeking to improve yourself and the world around you benefits everyone.

In addition, the call for mortification demonstrates Obama’s resolve to end the constant cycle of blame and violence that he identifies as an issue within American society. It is important to remember that Obama could have continued to blame others and feed off of the emotions of the audience. Instead, he chose to quell the feelings of anger and hatred and seek patience and understanding. In a world where we are

bombarded with war, conflict, and fear, this speech stands in stark contrast and offers a glimpse of a hopeful and peaceful future.

Areas for Further Research

As stated in the first chapter, the research on mortification in national eulogies is lacking and this study offers just one more exploration of the genre. It would be interesting to review previous national eulogies and see if there are elements of victimage through mortification. Just as Obama calls for victimage through mortification in this case, any statement that involves stopping what one is doing at the moment or request not to blame another would signal mortification as a means of relieving guilt in other situations as well. This could also aid in a systematic characterization of the speeches based on the nature of the tragedy and the character of the rhetor.

For mortification, more research should be done about when it is appropriate to call for victimage through mortification and when it is best to scapegoat. Obviously, scapegoating appears to be the preferred method. Yet, Obama clearly saw something in this particular circumstance that allowed for mortification appear to be a reasonable approach. While it would have been a very different speech, Obama could have blamed Loughner, scapegoated, and then reminded the audience of the greatness of the American experience. Instead, he chose to highlight how Americans can work to improve a not yet perfect community.

In addition, more critics should conduct pentadic analyses on artifacts that clearly depict the dramatistic process to see if the placement of the elements remains consistent

between different acts of disobedience or if the terms shift based on the rhetor's construction of reality. For instance, if the rhetor employs mortification, is agency stressed and scene minimized? If the rhetor asks the audience to scapegoat, are agent and act stressed?

In terms of national eulogies, there is a clear need for research within the larger context of epideictic and presidential speaking. How do presidents attribute blame when a tragedy strikes? On who do they attribute the blame? How does the nature of the tragedy impact the organization of the speech? Do victims or audience members play a significant role? What purpose do narratives of the victims' lives serve when addressing a nation of strangers?

Overall, Obama's speech offers critics an example of an effective call for victimage through mortification in an unlikely context. It also shows how national values, personal choice, and presidential leadership are intertwined. It is clear that Obama sought to put the shooting within the larger context of the American experience and that he believes all Americans have an obligation to empathize with each other and work towards perfecting the nation through a strong democracy and hard work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Day of Tragedy and Corresponding Day of Address

Tragedy	Date of Tragedy	Date of Address	Words	Location
Challenger Explosion	January 28, 1986	January 28, 1986	648	White House
Oklahoma City Bombing	April 19, 1995	April 23, 1995	916	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
September 11 th	September 11, 2001	September 14, 2001	946	National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.
Hurricane Katrina	August 23-30, 2005	September 16, 2005	3342	New Orleans, Louisiana
Tucson, Arizona Shootings	January 8, 2011	January 12, 2011	2539	McKale Memorial Center, University of Arizona

Appendix B: Percent News Coverage for National Tragedies

Tragedy	Percent of News Coverage
Fort Hood	20
West Virginia Mining Incident	17
Tucson Shootings	57

Source: Pew Research Center

Appendix C: Transcript of President Obama's Address at the Tucson, Arizona Memorial Service

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (Applause.) Thank you very much. Please, please be seated. (Applause.)

(1) To the families of those we've lost; to all who called them friends; to the students of this university, the public servants who are gathered here, the people of Tucson and the people of Arizona: I have come here tonight as an American who, like all Americans, kneels to pray with you today and will stand by you tomorrow. (Applause.)

(2) There is nothing I can say that will fill the sudden hole torn in your hearts. But know this: The hopes of a nation are here tonight. We mourn with you for the fallen. We join you in your grief. And we add our faith to yours that Representative Gabrielle Giffords and the other living victims of this tragedy will pull through. (Applause.)

(3) Scripture tells us:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
 the holy place where the Most High dwells.
 God is within her, she will not fall;
 God will help her at break of day.

(4) On Saturday morning, Gabby, her staff and many of her constituents gathered outside a supermarket to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and free speech. (Applause.) They were fulfilling a central tenet of the democracy envisioned by our founders — representatives of the people answering questions to their constituents, so as to carry their concerns back to our nation’s capital. Gabby called it “Congress on Your Corner” — just an updated version of government of and by and for the people. (Applause.)

(5) And that quintessentially American scene, that was the scene that was shattered by a gunman’s bullets. And the six people who lost their lives on Saturday — they, too, represented what is best in us, what is best in America. (Applause.)

(6) Judge John Roll served our legal system for nearly 40 years. (Applause.) A graduate of this university and a graduate of this law school -- (applause) -- Judge Roll was recommended for the federal bench by John McCain 20 years ago -- (applause) -- appointed by President George H.W. Bush and rose to become Arizona’s chief federal judge. (Applause.)

(7) His colleagues described him as the hardest-working judge within the Ninth Circuit. He was on his way back from attending Mass, as he did every day, when he decided to stop by and say hi to his representative. John is survived by his loving wife, Maureen, his three sons and his five beautiful grandchildren. (Applause.)

(8) George and Dorothy Morris — “Dot” to her friends — were high school sweethearts who got married and had two daughters. They did everything together -- traveling the open road in their RV, enjoying what their friends called a 50-year honeymoon. Saturday morning, they went by the Safeway to hear what their congresswoman had to say. When gunfire rang out, George, a former Marine, instinctively tried to shield his wife. (Applause.) Both were shot. Dot passed away.

(9) A New Jersey native, Phyllis Schneck retired to Tucson to beat the snow. But in the summer, she would return East, where her world revolved around her three children, her seven grandchildren and 2-year-old great-granddaughter. A gifted quilter, she’d often work under a favorite tree, or sometimes she’d sew aprons with the logos of the Jets and the Giants -- (laughter) -- to give out at the church where she volunteered. A Republican, she took a liking to Gabby, and wanted to get to know her better. (Applause.)

(10) Dorwan and Mavy Stoddard grew up in Tucson together — about 70 years ago. They moved apart and started their own respective families. But after both were widowed they found their way back here, to, as one of Mavy’s daughters put it, “be boyfriend and girlfriend again.” (Laughter.)

(11) When they weren’t out on the road in their motor home, you could find them just up the road, helping folks in need at the Mountain Avenue Church of Christ. A retired construction worker, Dorwan spent his spare time fixing up the church along with his dog, Tux. His final act of selflessness was to dive on top of his wife, sacrificing his life for hers. (Applause.)

(12) Everything -- everything -- Gabe Zimmerman did, he did with passion. (Applause.) But his true passion was helping people. As Gabby’s outreach director, he made the cares of thousands of her constituents his own, seeing to it that seniors got the Medicare benefits that they had earned, that veterans got the medals and the care that they deserved, that government was working for ordinary folks. He died doing what he loved — talking with people and seeing how he could help. And Gabe is survived by his parents, Ross and Emily, his brother, Ben, and his fiancée, Kelly, who he planned to marry next year. (Applause.)

(13) And then there is nine-year-old Christina Taylor Green. Christina was an A student; she was a dancer; she was a gymnast; she was a swimmer. She decided that she wanted to be the first woman to play in the Major Leagues, and as the only girl on her Little League team, no one put it past her. (Applause.)

(14) She showed an appreciation for life uncommon for a girl her age. She’d remind her mother, “We are so blessed. We have the best life.” And she’d pay those blessings back by participating in a charity that helped children who were less fortunate.

(15) Our hearts are broken by their sudden passing. Our hearts are broken — and yet, our hearts also have reason for fullness. Our hearts are full of hope and thanks for the 13 Americans who survived the shooting, including the congresswoman many of them went to see on Saturday.

(16) I have just come from the University Medical Center, just a mile from here, where our friend Gabby courageously fights to recover even as we speak. And I want to tell you -- her husband Mark is here and he allows me to share this with you -- right after we went to visit, a few minutes after we left her room and some of her colleagues in Congress were in the room, Gabby opened her eyes for the first time. (Applause.) Gabby opened her eyes for the first time. (Applause.)

(17) Gabby opened her eyes. Gabby opened her eyes, so I can tell you she knows we are here. She knows we love her. And she knows that we are rooting for her through what is undoubtedly going to be a difficult journey. We are there for her. (Applause.)

(18) Our hearts are full of thanks for that good news, and our hearts are full of gratitude for those who saved others. We are grateful to Daniel Hernandez -- (applause) -- a volunteer in Gabby's office. (Applause.)

(19) And, Daniel, I'm sorry, you may deny it, but we've decided you are a hero because - (applause) -- you ran through the chaos to minister to your boss, and tended to her wounds and helped keep her alive. (Applause.)

(20) We are grateful to the men who tackled the gunman as he stopped to reload. (Applause.) Right over there. (Applause.) We are grateful for petite Patricia Maisch, who wrestled away the killer's ammunition, and undoubtedly saved some lives. (Applause.) And we are grateful for the doctors and nurses and first responders who worked wonders to heal those who'd been hurt. We are grateful to them. (Applause.)

(21) These men and women remind us that heroism is found not only on the fields of battle. They remind us that heroism does not require special training or physical strength. Heroism is here, in the hearts of so many of our fellow citizens, all around us, just waiting to be summoned -- as it was on Saturday morning. Their actions, their selflessness poses a challenge to each of us. It raises a question of what, beyond prayers and expressions of concern, is required of us going forward. How can we honor the fallen? How can we be true to their memory?

(22) You see, when a tragedy like this strikes, it is part of our nature to demand explanations -- to try and pose some order on the chaos and make sense out of that which seems senseless. Already we've seen a national conversation commence, not only about the motivations behind these killings, but about everything from the merits of gun safety laws to the adequacy of our mental health system. And much of this process, of debating what might be done to prevent such tragedies in the future, is an essential ingredient in our exercise of self-government.

(23) But at a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized -- at a time when we are far too eager to lay the blame for all that ails the world at the feet of those who happen to think differently than we do -- it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds. (Applause.)

(24) Scripture tells us that there is evil in the world, and that terrible things happen for reasons that defy human understanding. In the words of Job, "When I looked for light,

then came darkness.” Bad things happen, and we have to guard against simple explanations in the aftermath.

(25) For the truth is none of us can know exactly what triggered this vicious attack. None of us can know with any certainty what might have stopped these shots from being fired, or what thoughts lurked in the inner recesses of a violent man’s mind. Yes, we have to examine all the facts behind this tragedy. We cannot and will not be passive in the face of such violence. We should be willing to challenge old assumptions in order to lessen the prospects of such violence in the future. (Applause.) But what we cannot do is use this tragedy as one more occasion to turn on each other. (Applause.) That we cannot do. (Applause.) That we cannot do.

(25) As we discuss these issues, let each of us do so with a good dose of humility. Rather than pointing fingers or assigning blame, let’s use this occasion to expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy and remind ourselves of all the ways that our hopes and dreams are bound together. (Applause.)

(27) After all, that’s what most of us do when we lose somebody in our family — especially if the loss is unexpected. We’re shaken out of our routines. We’re forced to look inward. We reflect on the past: Did we spend enough time with an aging parent, we wonder. Did we express our gratitude for all the sacrifices that they made for us? Did we tell a spouse just how desperately we loved them, not just once in a while but every single day?

(28) So sudden loss causes us to look backward — but it also forces us to look forward; to reflect on the present and the future, on the manner in which we live our lives and nurture our relationships with those who are still with us. (Applause.)

(29) We may ask ourselves if we’ve shown enough kindness and generosity and compassion to the people in our lives. Perhaps we question whether we’re doing right by our children, or our community, whether our priorities are in order.

(30) We recognize our own mortality, and we are reminded that in the fleeting time we have on this Earth, what matters is not wealth, or status, or power, or fame — but rather, how well we have loved -- (applause)-- and what small part we have played in making the lives of other people better. (Applause.)

(31) And that process -- that process of reflection, of making sure we align our values with our actions — that, I believe, is what a tragedy like this requires.

(32) For those who were harmed, those who were killed -- they are part of our family, an American family 300 million strong. (Applause.) We may not have known them personally, but surely we see ourselves in them. In George and Dot, in Dorwan and Mavy, we sense the abiding love we have for our own husbands, our own wives, our own life partners. Phyllis -- she's our mom or our grandma; Gabe our brother or son. (Applause.) In Judge Roll, we recognize not only a man who prized his family and doing his job well, but also a man who embodied America's fidelity to the law. (Applause.)

(33) And in Gabby -- in Gabby, we see a reflection of our public-spiritedness; that desire to participate in that sometimes frustrating, sometimes contentious, but always necessary and never-ending process to form a more perfect union. (Applause.)

(34) And in Christina -- in Christina we see all of our children. So curious, so trusting, so energetic, so full of magic. So deserving of our love. And so deserving of our good example.

(35) If this tragedy prompts reflection and debate -- as it should -- let's make sure it's worthy of those we have lost. (Applause.) Let's make sure it's not on the usual plane of politics and point-scoring and pettiness that drifts away in the next news cycle.

(36) The loss of these wonderful people should make every one of us strive to be better. To be better in our private lives, to be better friends and neighbors and coworkers and parents. And if, as has been discussed in recent days, their death helps usher in more civility in our public discourse, let us remember it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy -- it did not -- but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation in a way that would make them proud. (Applause.)

(37) We should be civil because we want to live up to the example of public servants like John Roll and Gabby Giffords, who knew first and foremost that we are all Americans, and that we can question each other's ideas without questioning each other's love of country and that our task, working together, is to constantly widen the circle of our concern so that we bequeath the American Dream to future generations. (Applause.)

(38) They believed -- they believed, and I believe that we can be better. Those who died here, those who saved life here -- they help me believe. We may not be able to stop all evil in the world, but I know that how we treat one another, that's entirely up to us. (Applause.)

(39) And I believe that for all our imperfections, we are full of decency and goodness, and that the forces that divide us are not as strong as those that unite us. (Applause.)

(40) That's what I believe, in part because that's what a child like Christina Taylor Green believed. (Applause.)

(41) Imagine -- imagine for a moment, here was a young girl who was just becoming aware of our democracy; just beginning to understand the obligations of citizenship; just starting to glimpse the fact that some day she, too, might play a part in shaping her nation's future. She had been elected to her student council. She saw public service as something exciting and hopeful. She was off to meet her congresswoman, someone she was sure was good and important and might be a role model. She saw all this through the eyes of a child, undimmed by the cynicism or vitriol that we adults all too often just take for granted.

(42) I want to live up to her expectations. (Applause.) I want our democracy to be as good as Christina imagined it. I want America to be as good as she imagined it. (Applause.) All of us -- we should do everything we can to make sure this country lives up to our children's expectations. (Applause.)

(43) As has already been mentioned, Christina was given to us on September 11th, 2001, one of 50 babies born that day to be pictured in a book called "Faces of Hope." On either side of her photo in that book were simple wishes for a child's life. "I hope you help those in need," read one. "I hope you know all the words to the National Anthem and sing it with your hand over your heart." (Applause.) "I hope you jump in rain puddles."

(44) If there are rain puddles in Heaven, Christina is jumping in them today. (Applause.) And here on this Earth -- here on this Earth, we place our hands over our hearts, and we commit ourselves as Americans to forging a country that is forever worthy of her gentle, happy spirit.

(45) May God bless and keep those we've lost in restful and eternal peace. May He love and watch over the survivors. And may He bless the United States of America. (Applause.)

